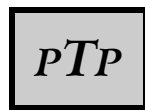


*From
New Birth
to
New Creation*

*A restatement of certain truths
brought out in the 1800s in
connection with dispensational truth*

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Preface

The Truths in This Book. This book is an expansion of articles that first appeared in the magazine *Thy Precepts*. It touches on a wide range of truth, some of which is common to all saints from Adam to the end of the millennium, but mostly on what is distinctive of Christianity. We must give room for what is true of all saints as well as what is distinctive now; and make room, also, for the differences in position before God concerning OT saints and millennial saints as compared to those whose position now is Christ's place before God. What is *distinctive* now is heavenly truth and we want to know what that truth is and walk in it. What is true of a Christian, one who is "in Christ," ought to have a corresponding display in the walk. Thus, we need to be instructed in the doctrines of Scripture, for they are meant to form our conduct here. The giving up of divine doctrine for the *feely, feely rage* sweeping the Charismatics, etc., is an affront to God who has deigned to reveal His mind in the Scripture of truth, and has given us His Spirit that we might freely know the things given to us (1 Cor. 2).

The Word of God is what teaches us, and we cannot despise doctrine, (sound, or healthy, words of teaching) from God without offering insult to Him, grieving the Spirit within us, and causing great damage to our souls. Let us seek grace and enablement to understand and practice the truths we shall have before us.

The truths regarding the heavenly position of the saints were involved in the recovery of so much precious truth during the 1800s, principally through the instrumentality of J. N. Darby. It is not surprising that these truths are set aside by one means or another. These truths involve the judgment on the flesh and the flesh rises up against such truth. They were fiercely opposed when being brought out and they have been corrupted since, or, in some cases, modified as some Christians picked and chose what they wanted -- and then thought to improve on what they selected. A most important and basic truth was thus ignored; namely, that the testing of the first man ended at the cross.

The reader will find many quotations herein, for it is purposed to restate these truths and do so largely with the pens of those who embraced them and taught them during the 1800s.

Editions of J. N. Darby's Writings.

Collected Writings refers to the Stow Hill edition, the Heijkoop/Believers Bookshelf edition being identical, as well as that which has the Bible Truth Publishers imprint.

Collected Writings, vols, 34 and 35 are *Miscellaneous Writings* vols. 4 and 5, respectively, published by Bible Truth Publishers.

Synopsis refers to the Stow Hill edition.

Notes and Comments refers to the Stow Hill edition.

Notes and Jottings refers to the Stow Hill edition.

Brackets { }. These brackets indicate material that I have added in the text, perhaps for clarification or for insertion of

Scripture references to assist location and for the Scripture index. If a footnote to a quotation has been inserted, that footnote is enclosed in brackets.

The Geographical Chart. A geographical map-chart has been included that relates to the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan. There is no attempt to trace the detailed route of the journey since it is beside the object herein. The purpose of the chart is to bring to bear the typical locations of the journey of Israel as it relates to the doctrine of Romans, Colossians and Ephesians.

Observe that the items listed under the word **EGYPT** and under the word **WILDERNESS** are connected with dotted lines. These respective words or phrases are connected by way of contrast. If the Lord will, this book will help to clarify these things.

Concerning the listing of items under *John*, they are placed on the chart only because when a quickened soul is sealed, those things also become true of him. Those things are taken up also in this book.

An instructive feature in God's dealings is the distinction between His *purpose* and His *ways*. His *purpose* was to bring Israel into the land -- as if Israel went through the Red Sea, came up out of Jordan and was placed in the land. This is illustrated on the chart by the shaded line from Egypt into Canaan. But that line does not describe the actual route of the Israelites. Their actual route is illustrative of God's *ways*. So is it with the Christian. Though seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, he is also looked at as in the wilderness (as, for example, in Hebrews and Peter). And there we learn God's ways with us.

R. A. Huebner, Oct. 1997

Second Printing. The second printing does not have any changes other than correcting some typographical errors.

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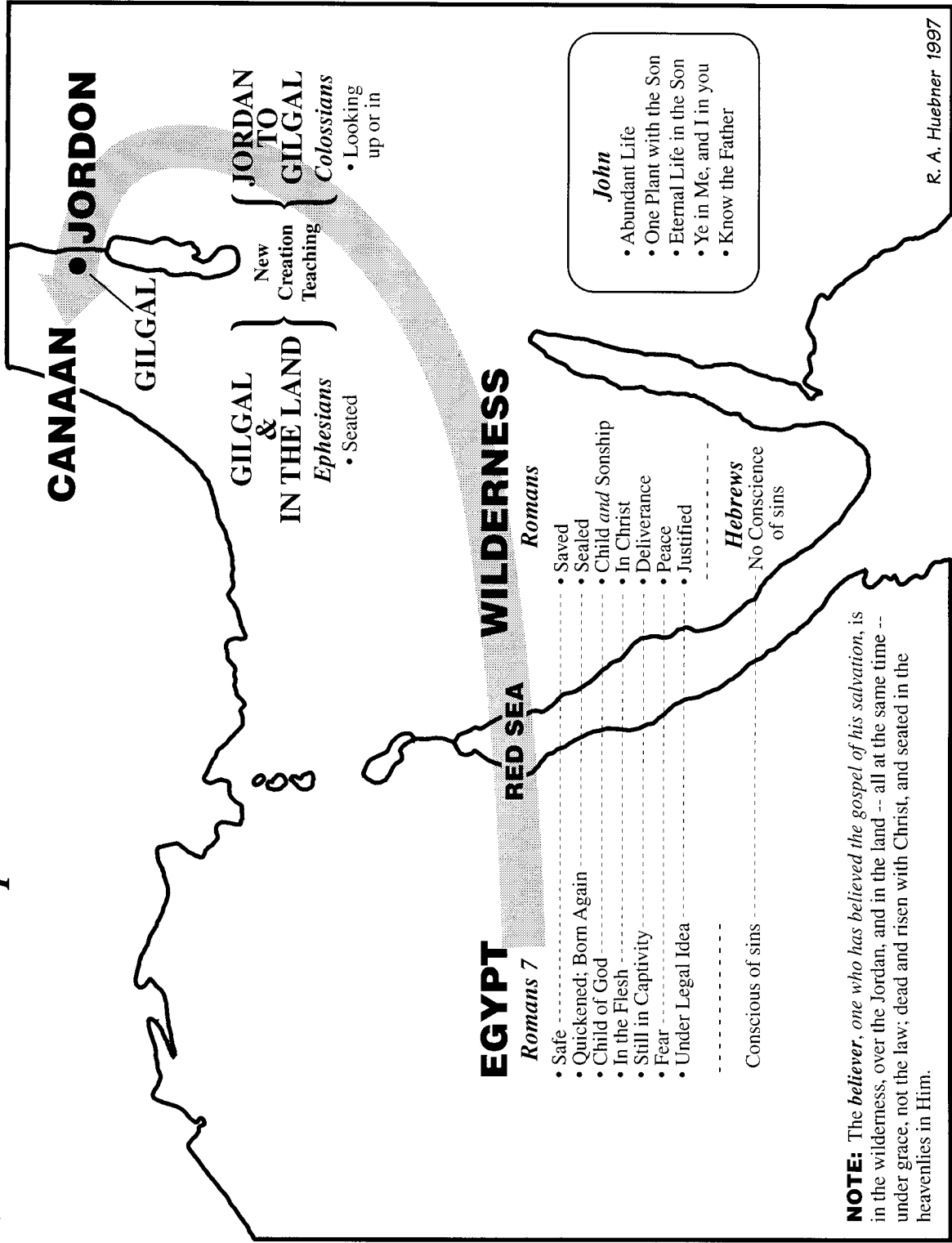
Israel's Four Locations Illustrating Some Truths in Romans, Colossians and Ephesians

PASSOVER
Safety from Judgment
Quickened, and Faith;
then Repentance

RED SEA
Christ's Death and
Resurrection for us
Redemption in type
accomplished, resulting
in the first recorded song
in Scripture -- Ex. 15

JORDAN
Our Death and
Resurrection with
Christ

CANAAN
Seated in the
Heavenlies in
Christ Jesus



Part One:

*New Birth,
Forgiveness of Sins,
and
Sealing With the Spirit*

Chapter 1.1

The New Birth and Sealing with the Spirit

Introduction

The general teaching maintained in this paper regarding life in the Son and sealing with the Spirit is that neither of these is the same thing as the new birth; nor does a person receive the seal with the Spirit at the same precise instant that the new birth occurs. God does not seal a sinner and so there must be an interval, be it unnoticeably short or be it very long, between when the sinner is made a saint by the new birth and when the saint is sealed. God seals saints, not sinners; He seals those who have been cleansed by the blood. Hopefully, it will also be made clear, among many other things, that though a person who is born again is *safe* for the glory, as made fit by the blood of Christ, the word *saved* includes more than being only safe. In other words, a person does not receive all at the instant the new birth occurs. Thus, for example, we want to know what happened when the risen Lord breathed on His disciples (John 20:22) who already had been previously born again. We want to know what the “new creation” is and when it began. Also, we shall see, the Lord willing, that the man of Rom. 7, who has the “inward man” (i.e., the new nature), is, in the position described, in bondage, and not in the position and liberty of sonship described in Rom. 8. The man in Rom. 7 has not the “Spirit of adoption,” i.e., the Spirit of sonship, as described in Rom. 8.

The general teaching maintained in this book was restored to the saints of God through the instrumentality of the same servant of the Lord through whom dispensational truth was recovered: J. N. Darby. Since the recovery of the truths regarding ‘abundant life,’ ‘life in the Son,’ ‘the new creation,’ etc., due to various causes (such as lack of teaching; or wilfulness, worldliness, slothfulness), there have occurred misapprehensions and ignorance concerning these precious truths. In view of this, we shall utilize many citations from those who ably expounded these precious doctrines. Footnotes will contain additional references in order to assist those who wish to locate more help on the various subjects that we shall examine. May our Lord make these truths to be valued by our souls.

What Is Involved in the New Birth?

The New Birth Necessitated by the Fall of Man

The fall of man in the garden of Eden resulted in a total change of man’s state before God. He had been *innocent*, i.e., ignorant of good and evil; but as fallen from innocence his

state became characterized by sin. He was then in a new position before God. Not merely was there a sinful act; there was now a change in man’s being. He acquired a sinful nature within himself that characterized his moral state before God. As J. N. Darby concisely stated:

There are three great points to consider as regards sin (and I speak and purpose speaking entirely in a practical way): sins actually committed, involving us in guilt as regards deeds done in the body; the principle of sin as a law in our members, sin in the flesh; and separation from God. But in this last respect there are two aspects, separation of heart, and judicial separation. Both must be remedied.

The root of all sin is not in the lusts in which it is so hatefully shown, but in having a will of our own, the departure of the will from God, the will to be independent, free to do our own will -- “who is Lord over us?” When we do thus separate from God, we must have something, we cannot suffice to ourselves, and we sink into lusts, lusts in which our will works.

There is indeed another element which seems to me to have preceded both lust and will in man’s fall, namely, distrust of God, which left him to the working of both.

Happy and confiding in God, he had no need to seek happiness in any other way; but Satan suggested to him that God had kept the forbidden fruit back from him, because if he ate it he would be as Elohim. Lust by this got entrance.¹ ♦

The knowledge of good and evil was not there {with Adam in innocence}. The enjoyment of a good conscience was not there in the exercises which keep it without offence; there could not be a bad one. The peaceful natural enjoyment of goodness was there, and no thought of evil disturbed it. God could be thanked and praised, His gifts enjoyed. Evil, sin, sorrow, conflict, passions were unknown. It was a peaceful scene and a happy scene, occupation in what gave natural pleasure, innocent pleasure. They were set to dress the garden and keep it, and all was pleasant there; no want was there, nor would suggest itself. One only moral point bore another character, and tested willing subjection to God, namely, the ready acceptance of the divine will by a confiding soul. If man was to be a moral being at all, he must have obligation and responsibility somewhere: not in any object which supposed evil lusts -- for he had none. It was obedience that was required, and simply obedience. What was forbidden would have been no sin, had it not been forbidden. It did not suppose sin in man: confidence in God

1. *Collected Writings* 23:134.

would have made it easy and a delight. A dutiful child assumes the goodness as well as the rightness of a command, and both as well as the duty to obey. In fact up to the temptation all went on in peace.

This was the difference of man's and Satan's sin. He abode not in the truth, for there was no truth in him. Man was tempted into the knowledge of good and evil. The destruction of confidence, as we have said, lets in will and lust. It was dreadful to belie God's goodness in the midst of blessing, and trust one who could call it in question. All was really over then; for man was away from God, had ceased to believe what He said, had ceased to believe Him good -- alas! no uncommon case since. But will and lust brought in this transgression at once, when the heart was away from God, and trusted itself and Satan -- the history of our hearts ever since. Man had departed from God, sin had come in, transgression, and (by the fall) conscience, or the knowledge of good and evil. Up to this, righteousness and holiness were unknown to man; they require the knowledge of good and evil. But thus the normal relationship of man with God had closed; his responsibility could not, for he was a creature, and God his creator: nor was that all. He had himself the knowledge of good and evil, or (to make it intelligible) of right and wrong. His responsibility had taken the form of conscience, and relationship to a God forsaken indeed, but known, so far better as conscience makes us know Him, as a judge.

Into God's rest, Heb. 4 teaches us, man in creation never entered. Such natural peacefulness without combat, as he may then have had for a moment, cannot be on earth now. There remaineth a rest for the people of God, where nature, then a new and divine one, will have it in fulness of blessing in God's own presence, where all will be according to the nature we have, without a disturbing element, yea, according to God's own nature, where we enter into *God's* rest.

But on the fall sin and responsibility ran on together in the place into which man, who had fled from God, was drawn out by God; and the world as such began. But man was separated from God, though He overruled all things. That which God has wrought for us as regards this state, and the accomplishment of His own counsels in grace towards us, is this: -- perfectly meeting, according to His own righteous requirements, our state of sin connected with man's responsibility; closing, as to our standing before Him, our whole Adam life; laying a foundation, according to His own glory, for our being with Himself in that glory, in a new state altogether; giving us the life in which we can enjoy it; giving us the energy, revelations, and power of the Holy Ghost, by which, in this scene of combat and ruin, we may (through what He has given and done) be in relationship with Him according to the place He has set us in, and look forward to the glory; and finally, introducing us into the rest with and like Him, who being our title, is also our forerunner in glory -- all in and through the second Man, the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As to responsibility and its effects, I may be brief. The place in which man was set according to God, the only place he had according to Him, he has wholly lost. He had turned away from God in heart, had fled from Him, through his newly acquired conscience, and has been driven out -- that life and sin might not go on, for ever, together in the world. Return was precluded. This state and standing was in itself that of one wholly lost. Man was away from God. Mercies

might and surely did remain, but place and relationship were wholly gone. In the judgment on the author of the calamity a promise was given, not to Adam, but on which faith might rest, that another should arise, and through His once suffering, totally destroy the power of him who had brought in the ruin. The Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. This was simple promise and grace in another than Adam.

The two great principles of responsibility and life-giving had been set up in the garden. Man had failed in the first; and, having failed, was debarred in that state from perpetuating evil by the second. He could not be innocent and die. He could not be a sinner, and allowed to live for ever in the place of responsibility in wickedness. It would have been a horror. Return to innocence is in the nature of things impossible when good and evil are known.

But man was to be tested, having the knowledge of good and evil, and the pretension with it to be good and righteous. The result, though of all importance, I state rapidly, because it is surely familiar to most of your readers; I only, as necessary, recall it here.

Man has been tried, left to himself, though not without ample testimony and ground for faith. The earth was corrupt before God and filled with violence; and the judgment of God, in the deluge, closed a scene which had become intolerable in every way.

But the world, yet again, would not retain God in its knowledge, and, in its various national divisions, worshiped devils; for man must have some god.

God then began the distinct history of grace.

Promises were given to one called out, who became the spiritual, and to some, even natural, head of a race set apart to God: Abraham became the heir of the world. The great spring of hope being thus established, as the apostle reasons in the Galatians, the question of responsibility on the footing of revelation and special relationship was renewed: first, on the ground of requirement, man's obligations according to the true and perfect rule of them; secondly, on the ground of promise and grace.

The law was given by Moses. Israel, God's called and redeemed people, undertook to inherit the blessing, on the footing of doing all that Jehovah said to them; and a just rule of outward relative conduct to God and their neighbor, and that reaching to desire or coveting, was given to them. We know the result. The golden calf began, the Babylonish captivity closed, their path.

The second trial was on the ground of promise and grace, when Christ came and presented Himself in forgiving mercy and healing to Israel. It resulted in His rejection by His people; and they were finally cast off, to be restored only by sovereign grace, the grace of One faithful, at any rate, to His own promises. Isaiah 40-48 treats one; chaps. 49-57 the other of these trials.

But this last proof of man's state went farther. It was really a trial of man as man. As regards the law, the blessed Lord brought out a deeper essence than the ten words -- loving God with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves; and, as regards grace, He was the goodness of God manifest in the flesh, the light of men. It was not promise, it was the love of God -- God present in love. But man's sin was thus fully brought out. For His love He had hatred. As God is love, He was hated, instead of loved with

all the heart; as man, in gracious goodness and righteousness, they were His murderers instead of loving Him as themselves; they hated Him without a cause. This was too in full grace, Gentile wickedness being full, law-breaking in Israel already accomplished. But, though in the way to the judge, they would not be reconciled; and man's heart was fully tested by God's goodness.

The cross was the distinct witness of Israel's and man's sin. The mind of the flesh, of what man was in himself, was enmity against God. It had been fully tried and tested, and that by goodness. Its evil and will were only more and more brought out. It was manifested in its will (pure evil in the presence of pure good), not only by sins, though these abounded, but by the principle of sin and hatred of God. Amiable creature qualities there might be; but enmity against God, and self, was its root.²

Man is wicked and totally lost. The Old Testament is the history of the first man (1 Cor. 15:47). He was tested in all ways and finally by the presentation of the Father Himself as revealed in the Son. That was the crowning test of the first man and it brought to an end the testing of the first man. And so the first man hated the Father and the Son:

But now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15:24; cp. John 14:7-11).

They crucified Him who so revealed the Father. That closed the history of the testing of the first man. Of course, God knew what would result from that long testing of the first man; and through the ages of testing there were those who were born again by the will of God -- were *saints*. But it awaited the coming of the Lord Jesus into the world to speak plainly about this, though Nicodemus should have understood that a change in man was needed (John 3:10). So it was man's lost condition, a state before God characterized by the sinful nature in man, that required God to act sovereignly to implant within a man a new nature. It was man's moral incapacity that necessitated the new birth by the sovereign act of God if there was to be something for God in a man. Let us now turn to the subject of the character of the new birth and God's sovereign communication of it.

The Character of the New Birth

BORN ANEW

What Is It to be Born Anew? *Born anew* is the Scripture expression which indicates the teaching of John 3:3-8.

Except anyone be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3).

The conventional expression in common usage is "new birth." This has less force than the words "born anew." A footnote in J. N. Darby's translation says:

Not only "again," but "entirely afresh," as from a new source of life and point of departure; translated in Luke 1:3. "from the origin." It is a new source and beginning of life.^{3 4}

Moreover, being *born anew*⁵ has reference to the Word of God and the Spirit of God as the source of a new life communicated, as well as to the fact that it is a new life come from outside of man and not something in man which is improved or sanctified in some way:

Except anyone be born of water and of Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

The new birth is not the reworking of something in the sinner or the improvement of something already there. No. It is the communication from God of something not possessed before; a new life. We are born of water (a figure for the Word of God -- cp. Eph. 5:26; 1 Pet. 1:23) and of the Spirit (John 3). "According to His own will begat He us by the word of truth" (James 1:18) leaves us with no doubt. Water baptism is not meant. It is the Word of God and the Spirit of God that cause the new birth to occur. (Sealing with the Spirit is, however, a distinctly different operation of God.)

The Two Natures Are Fixed in Moral Character and Action. While the person remains the same human person, the being *born anew* introduces into that person a new nature, one not possessed before. There are then two natures, the old sinful nature and this new one. One is sinful and the other is divine in moral character:

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:7).

The idea that the new birth means a change in the sinful nature or a purifying of it, or an ongoing change in the sinful nature, is totally false, as John 3:7 explicitly shows. The idea of mere change is a denial of this important and basic operation of the Spirit through the Word of God. The notion that the one born anew does not have an added nature implanted *anew* by God means that the sinful nature can be changed to please God. That flies in the face of Scripture:

Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be (Rom. 8:7)

While Rom. 7 will be considered in detail in Part 3, we need to observe here that in Rom. 7 we see the action of the two natures. "The inward man" (Rom. 7:22) refers to this new nature and the man of Rom. 7 knows within him the existence of the sinful nature also. He called it "the law of sin which exists in my members" (Rom. 7:24). In Rom. 8:2 it is called "the law of sin and death." The word *law* in such passages indicates a *fixed principle of operation*. The sinful nature acts in a fixed, uniform way; and the new nature also acts in a fixed, uniform way. The sinful nature cannot be changed so that it pleases God. It is fixed in character and operation. God sovereignly, through the Word, implants a new nature, and that also cannot be changed so as to sin. The saint, then, has two natures -- opposed, and fixedly so, to one another.

We have considered some things from John 3 and there is more to examine. This will be deferred to Chapter 1.4 where we shall consider a lengthy quotation from J. N. Darby. Hopefully, at that point we shall have gained in understanding

2. *Collected Writings* 23:135-139.

3. See J. N. Darby's strictures on the Wesleyan view of these things in *Letters* 2:503.

4. He wrote about this in *Collected Writings* 23:299 and 29:195.

5. W. Kelly remarked: "... the intimation was the birth, not from above, but again; else the reply could have had no place." *An Exposition of the Gospel of John, in loco*.

sufficiently to better profit from his remarks there.

BORN OF GOD

Born Again By the Act of God. The words *born anew* pointed us to a new source and beginning of life. Being *born of God* shows that God undertakes to cause the new birth:

According to his own will begat he us by the word of truth (James 1:18).

It was God's will, not ours; and he used the Word to do this:

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by [the] living and abiding word of God (1 Pet. 1:23).

Other Forces or Causes for the New Birth Are Excluded by Scripture. John 1:13 specifically excludes three things. "Who have been born," we read:

1. "*Not by blood*" -- not by natural birth; say, of Christian parents.
2. "*Not of flesh's will*" -- not by an act of one's own will. "No one can come to me except it be given to him from the Father (John 6:66, cp. v. 44) -- "because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be" (Rom. 8:7).
3. "*Nor of man's will*" -- referring to someone else's influence. Cp. John 5:4.

And what, then, remains as the power of the new birth?

Who have been born . . . of God (John 1:13).

Yes, "of God" as James 1:18 and other Scriptures show. All that is of man is excluded. All is of God and nothing of man's claim as if he has moral free-will: ⁶

So then [it is] not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy (Rom. 9:16).

a man can receive nothing unless it be given him out of heaven (John 3:27).

Neither the will of man nor his efforts ("nor of him who runs") can produce something acceptable to God. Cain tried that -- his own will -- in the face of the fact that God covered the nakedness of his mother and father with skins of an animal. An animal's life was taken to provide the covering -- and in this we see the deeper need of man's spiritual nakedness before a holy God. Abel, then, brought a sheep. Cain brought the efforts of his gardening in the cursed ground. That is "the way of Cain" (Jude 11). It was an insult to God, who alone can meet man's need. God's own will and work speaks volumes to the heart subject to the divine sentence:

The mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be (Rom. 8:7).

The words "neither indeed *can*" declare man's moral incompetency, incapacity, and inability. It is seen, then, that God needs to act sovereignly.

Partakers of the Divine Nature

Concerning 2 Pet. 1:4, J. N. Darby remarked:

It is the new birth, only it is looked at in its moral character rather than in the life-giving power of the Spirit's work; though they cannot be separated. ⁷

It is to be distinctly understood that we do not participate in deity. For if we did, that would mean a participation in omniscience, omnipotence, etc., and it is absurd to think that a saint ever will participate in deity. And that being made a partaker of the divine nature does not indicate participation in deity was pointed out by A. C. Ord:

Again, the apostle Peter says, "There are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by *these* ye might be partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). It has been observed that this is not θεότης, or essential deity, as in Col. 2:9, but θειότης, that is, divine quality; exceedingly blessed, because expressive of what God is, as the word of man expresses what he is, his ways, character, and mind, and much more so with God . . . ⁸

God's Seed in Us Cannot Sin

The new nature cannot sin:

Whoever abides in him, does not sin: whoever sins, has not seen him or known him (1 John 3:6).

Whoever has been begotten of God does not practice sin, because his seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God (1 John 3:9).

It is explicitly stated that one who has been begotten of God **cannot** sin! Yet believers do sin. Some person redefine sin in an attempt to avoid being lost again when, as a matter of fact, they do sin -- only they have redefined the sin so that it is not sin. The truth is explained by two facts:

- ❖ the new nature cannot sin;
- ❖ and here we see that what is true of the new nature is predicated of the person.

Let us now compare translations of 1 John 3:9 and 1 John 5:18 and ask ourselves if we could learn from the NIV that there is within us a nature that cannot sin. First, let us examine 1 John 3:9:

No one who is born of God will continue in sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God (NIV).

Whoso is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God (KJV).

Whoever has been begotten of God does not practice sin, because his seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God (JND).

Not only is the NIV wrong, it is even retrograde from the KJV. Not that the KJV translators understood the truth concerning the two natures, but one could see the fact from the KJV that the believer has a sinless nature communicated to him from God:

As to we "cannot sin," John always looks at truth abstractly; so he says, "he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" [1 John 5:18]. But both are *as* born of God; he cannot sin because he is born of God. But the flesh is not born of God, but is

6. The subject of man's alleged, moral free-will is considered in *Free-will? Or, Not of Him That Willeth?*, available from the publisher.

7. *Collected Writings* 25:270.

8. *Collected Writings of A. C. Ord*, p.26, available from the publisher.

of the flesh; and if we let it act we sin.⁹ ♦

The ascribing to a person what is true only of a nature, runs through all John's epistle. "He cannot sin"; "the evil one toucheth him not."¹⁰ ♦

God has begotten us of His own will. We do not beget ourselves. He does not believe in a life communicated, who does not believe that it is grace that communicated it. Wesleyans do not believe in a real life communicated: a result is produced by the operation of the Spirit, and this result can disappear and reappear. "Whoso is born of God," having received this life, inasmuch as born of God, "sinneth not"; also "the wicked one toucheth him not." In this life there is no sin, within it is the divine seed. There is no allurement for it in the things that Satan presents. As for deliverance and the seal of the Holy Spirit, it is not only having life that delivers me. It is indeed the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ that has set me free (further proof that I have life), but there is also redemption and the Holy Spirit.¹¹ ♦

This is the point which my soul clings to on this subject, the real communication in receiving Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost, so as to have what I had not before -- Christ become spiritually my life through the Holy Ghost acting in it in power; created again in Christ Jesus, though the flesh still be there. But I am not in it [in the flesh], but in Christ, and am bound and privileged to hold it dead. Of course, this does practically cleanse by and according to the word. I may not be able to explain it physiologically, but it is to me plain in scripture, and in it the saint will live eternally with God. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" -- partakes of the nature of that of which it is born. It is holy, loves, and, as in Christ as a man, obeys. In a word, it is the reproduction, as to its nature, of Christ's life. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; the Spirit is life because of righteousness." It is as new a thing as a graft in a wild tree.¹² ♦

Let us now compare 1 John 5:18:

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin: the one who was born of God keeps him safe,¹³ and the evil one does not touch him (NIV).

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not (KJV).

We know that everyone begotten of God does not sin, but he that has been begotten of God keeps himself, and the wicked [one] does not touch him (JND).

Here again we see that the NIV is retrograde. The above remarks regarding "cannot sin" apply here to "does not sin." A question that often comes up about this was answered by W. Kelly:

Q. 1 John 5:18. Here is a man who, born again, has gone on rejoicing in the knowledge of all his sins forgiven, yet at length gives himself up to evil (say, drunkenness), and dies in this reprobate state. Does scripture give us light on such a case?

A. Surely it does. He is one of the many who deceive

themselves, and say that they have fellowship with God while walking in darkness; whereas they lie and do not the truth (1 John 1:6). It is easy for unconverted souls, especially when emotional excitement prevails, to think themselves born of God when they are not, and never realized either their utter guilt and ruin, or God's grace in life eternal and remission. High pressure in appeal to feeling as in reasoning, on "the plan of salvation" tends to this imagination that all is right, which may carry souls along for no short time, and in zealous efforts to win others; though the conscience has never been before God either in true self-judgment or in submitting to His righteousness in Christ. There never was a seed of God remaining in such souls. It was but flesh, which perishes in the wilderness. It is too much to assume that they were born of God. They may have had joy in the thought of plenary forgiveness but not abiding peace with God, and so become castaway or reprobate. Heb. 6:4-8 is as strikingly solemn to show how far flesh can go in appropriating Christian privilege, *short of life eternal or the new birth*; as vv. 17-20 give strong consolation to the weakest believer, however tried. For it would be hard to find in the NT true faith set out in terms less bold than "having fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." Yet is it all-sufficient. Never does Scripture suppose one born anew perishing in his sins. But we may easily be mistaken in counting souls renewed who are not.¹⁴

So we see that the sovereign action of God produces the new birth; i.e., God communicates to the person a new nature, a nature that cannot sin. 1 John 3:9 in the NIV reads, ". . . he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God." JND has ". . . he cannot sin . . ." as have many others. John's thought (i.e. the Spirit's thought) is that the new nature **cannot** sin. John's epistle is mainly abstract (i.e., deals with truth in its principles) and draws a sharp distinction between light and darkness and between the old nature and the new. (Verse 6 in the NIV is bad also, together with the first half of verse 4).

Regeneration

The word regeneration is often used in a conventional manner as meaning the new birth. Actually, that is not the Scripture use of the word.

. . . but regeneration is not used in scripture for the communication of life but for a change of state and condition. It is only used once elsewhere in scripture, for the new millennial world; where Christ shall sit on the throne of His glory: "In the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory" (Matt. 19:28). Here it is evidently a change of state and condition, not communication of life. Hence, in Titus 3:5, we have the washing of regeneration. One, before a heathen or Jew, or at least born in sin, and outside the place of grace and God's dwelling, was admitted within it. His state was changed. He had been a heathen, a Jew, a sinner, away from promises and God and hope. He passed into that condition where all these were, translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Where being born of God is spoken of, it is another word, not *παλιγγενεσία*, but *γεννηθῆναι* *ἄνωθεν*, or *ἀναγεννάω*, never *παλιγγεννάω*. And with the laver of *παλιγγενεσίας* we have, "and the

9. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:140.

10. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:15.

11. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2: 146.

12. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:170.

13. [Who keeps who?]

14. *The Bible Treasury* New Series 5:320.

renewing of the Holy Ghost” as a distinct thing. New life is attributed to Him who can give it -- the Spirit of God, the Father, and the Son.¹⁵

In the next section, this point is touched on further.

Washed All Over

Jesus answered and said to him, What I do thou dost not know now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter says to him, thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, Unless I wash thee, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter says to him, Lord, not my feet only, but my hands and my head. Jesus says to him, He that is washed all over needs not to wash save his feet, but is wholly clean; and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew him that delivered him up: on account of this he said, Ye are not all clean (John 13:7-11).

NOT ABOUT LITERAL FOOT-WASHING

Peter knew that the Lord was washing his feet. Is that not obvious? Yes, and why did the Lord say to him:

What I do thou dost not know now, but thou shalt know hereafter (v. 7).

The first use of “know” in this verse is a Greek word signifying conscious knowledge. Peter did not have the sense within himself of what this was really about. The second “know” in this verse is a Greek word signifying objective knowledge. Even if we did not know that, it is still obvious that this verse shows that the foot-washing had a figurative meaning, and that Peter would subsequently learn what was figured by the act of the Lord Jesus. It has to do with the removal of defilement in our walk.

Not only does the Lord’s statement make quite plain that He is not advocating a Christian practice of literal foot-washing, the fact that He said:

He that is washed all over needs not to wash save his feet, but is wholly clean (v. 10),

raises the question: when was Peter washed all over? Are you going to imagine that the Lord literally washed Peter all over? The Lord said they were all clean except one. He certainly did not literally wash eleven of them all over but did not wash Judas -- who was the one who was unclean. This also shows that the real matter here is not literal foot-washing, but a teaching that the eleven were washed all over -- meaning they were born anew, -- they were clean, but defilement in the walk is picked up and needs the cleansing of the water of God’s word.

Ye are already clean by reason of the word which I have spoken to you (John 15:3).

WASHED ALL OVER ONLY ONCE

It is clear from John 13 that the saint is washed all over, only once; but there may be repeated washings of the feet. The one born again is looked at as washed all over; but going through this world there may be defilement in the walk -- and provision is made for this occurrence. What is needed is not another new birth, for that cannot be repeated. What is needed is the removal of the defilement. The Word of God, symbolized by water, is what did the washing all over, in the first place.

15. *Collected Writings* 15:326.

Subsequently, for the removal of the defilement, it is also the Word of God that is used. J. N. Darby remarked:

The Lord says, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” Peter says then, “Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” “Jesus saith to him, He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” The two words “wash” in verse 10 are different; the first is washing the whole body, “bathed,” and the second is washing hands or small objects. And you notice the “hands” are left out, for it does not apply to our works, but to our walk. It is bringing the light of the word to judge inwardly when a man has done wrong. Those who have received the word have been bathed, they are clean as chapter 15: 3. Here not all because Judas was still there. The statement alludes to the priests, who were washed bodily once for all, and afterwards whenever they went to any service, washed their hands and feet. The consecrating with water was done once for all. So with us; but we are set to walk through this world, and in danger of defiling our feet as we go.¹⁶ ♦

The words in Heb. 10, “bodies washed with pure water,” refer to the first bathing, and not to this action of Christ or what it signifies. It is “bathed” there. And then Christ comes in as an advocate, and cleanses me when defiled in walk, and restores me to communion. It is like the red heifer when a person touched death; there was no fresh death appointed for that, but the application of the word, moral cleansing based on the death already accomplished.

As to the washing of regeneration, the priests were not washed at the laver at their first consecration; but they had to wash their hands and their feet at the laver every time when they came to serve. “Regeneration” in Titus is the same word as in Matt. 19, and not used elsewhere. It is the millennium in Matthew, instead of the present state of things. It is a change of state in both places. It is connected with what you are brought into, and what you are brought out of; for you are brought out of one, and into the other.¹⁷ ♦

WATER AS WELL AS BLOOD FROM THE LORD’S SIDE

If you tell your child not to go into the mud puddle and he does it, there are two things to deal with. He is dirty and he is guilty. The death of Christ meets all the condition of lost, disobedient men. The water from the Lord’s side tells us that His work on the cross provides for our being washed all over. We are made clean. And His work provides for the expiation of guilt by blood, for we are both dirty and guilty. The application of the Word of God to our walk as Christians is for moral cleansing of any subsequent defilement in the walk, based on the once-for-all work accomplished on the cross.

Quickening

Quickening is, in the NT, the new birth looked at in reference to being made alive from a state of spiritual death.¹⁸ The Father, Son and Spirit quicken (John 5:21; 6:63). All

16. *Collected Writings* 25:269.

17. *Collected Writings* 25:270. See also 10:78; 23:287.

18. “Quickening with Christ” (Eph. 2) brings in additional things beyond mere quickening, but discussion of this is reserved until later. Obviously there is a difference. OT saints were quickened, but could not have been *quickened with Christ*, who had not yet come, died, and risen from the dead.

quicken souls are children of God, and this is true in all ages, for such are children of God (John 11:52; Rom. 9:7)¹⁹ though OT saints did not know that. Consult the word “Quicken” in *Morrish’s Bible Dictionary* for the use of the word in the OT.

A. H. Rule wrote:

The life is communicated to us through the Word and by the Spirit, the Spirit being the divine agent by whom the Word is made effective in the soul (John 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; John 5:24-25). Man is in a state of death, and if he is to have life, God must act sovereignly. God begins. Man himself is as powerless as was dead Lazarus, until the life-giving word is spoken. The power of God acts upon the dead soul by the Word, and God gives the faith that receives it. It is all above and beyond human reason. None can understand or explain. Humanly speaking a dead man cannot hear or believe; nor could man or angel make him hear or believe. But God moves in the scene of death, and all is changed. He who created when only Himself existed, and at whose word worlds sprang into existence, can make His word heard in the soul of a dead sinner. Dead Lazarus heard the voice of the Son of God, and came forth from the dead; and dead souls now hear His voice and live. The Word accompanied by the power of God produces its own effect in the soul; and this is so right on to the end. God acts in us by His Word, whether as dead sinners needing life, or as saints needing instruction and warning. We are vessels of mercy. But if He has wrought in us by His Word, that word has been received in the soul. It has been believed. If God gives, we receive, believe, though even this be by grace from Him, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). But man cannot explain the how of these things, any more than he can explain the mystery of natural life (John 3:18; Eccl. 11:5).

Notice, too, when the Lord is speaking of life, He says: “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life . . .”²⁰

Conversion

Conversion means that one is turned about towards God. All persons born anew are both quickened and converted. All quickened souls are both born anew and converted. One who is a child of God as Peter, having failed as he did, may upon repentance of that sin be, not born anew a second or third, etc., time but, converted (Luke 22:32). In such a case it means freshly turned about to God, from the sin; but there is no such thing as another new birth. Peter remained a child of God all through the sifting.

A Saint Has Two Natures

The previous considerations show that a saint has two natures. Of course, many do not believe this. Here is an interesting analogy of what some believe:

Ques. Has a Christian a new heart ?

Yes. But that is not a cleansing of the old one, just as if this table, say, was very dirty, and then the mahogany was well cleaned. That is the Wesleyan or Arminian idea of a new heart.

Ques. Then instead of mahogany, you would have rosewood?

Only the mahogany is there still.²¹

New Birth is not Baptism or by Baptism

W. Kelly has discussed this concisely and quite pointedly:

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say to thee, Except one be born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (vv. 5, 6). Words of incalculable moment to man, of deep blessing where grace gives him ear to hear, and heart to receive and keep. Yet I scarce know a Scripture more widely perverted than this has been to baptism, nor one where tradition is more dangerously false, though *quod semper, quod ab omnibus* be as true of this as of any interpretation of Scripture that could be named. A double result would follow, that not a soul could enter the kingdom of God save such as are baptized; and, secondly, as the context would prove, that, the new nature being identified with eternal life, none of the baptized could perish -- a statement which all but the most grossly ignorant or prejudiced must confess to be in both its parts opposed to other and clear Scriptures, and to notorious fact.

Christian baptism (and this is what it is traditionally conceived to mean, not that of John or of the disciples) was not instituted, nor did the facts exist which it symbolizes, till the Lord died and rose. How, then, could Nicodemus by any possibility anticipate them or understand what the Lord gives as the clearing up of his difficulty as to being born anew? Yet the Lord reproaches him as “the teacher of Israel” with his slowness of intelligence. That is, he should (even as teaching Jews) have known these things, which he could not possibly know if the Lord alluded to a Christian institution as yet undivulged.

The reasoning of Hooker²² (“Works,” ii. 262, etc.,

21. *Notes and Jottings of J. N. Darby*, p. 44.

22. Cartwright had said that irregular baptism had grown out of a false interpretation of John 3:5, “where certain do interpret the word water for (of) the material and elemental water, when as (whereas) our Savior Christ taketh water there by a borrowed speech for the Spirit.” This the reader will see to be imperfect; for water here is the figure of the word bringing the sentence of death on the flesh; and so is sinful man cleansed by Him out of Whose side flowed blood and water, as John testifies. On the general point says Hooker, “I hold it for a most infallible truth in exposition of sacred scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the meaning of words, as alchymy doth or would do the substance of metals, making of anything what it listeth, and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing. . . . To hide the general course of antiquity agreeing in the literal interpretation, they cunningly affirm that ‘certain’ have taken those words as meant of material water, when they know that of all the ancients there is not one to be named that ever did otherwise either expound or allege the place than as implying external baptism” (E. P. V. lix. 2, 3). Antiquity was perhaps as unanimous in applying John 6 to the Lord’s Supper with as little solid reason. In neither case is it a literal construction, but a mere catching at (continued...)

19. See *Notes and Jottings*, p. 41.

20. *Selected Ministry of a. H. Rule* 2:210.

Keble's ed. 5), as of others before and since, is beside the mark, and simply proves inattention to Scripture, and superficial acquaintance with the truth. It is not true that "born of water and Spirit," if literally construed, means baptism. Never is that rite set out as figuring life, but death, as in Rom. 6, Col. 2, and 1 Pet. 3.

Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death?

It is never the sign of quickening, but rather of identifying those quickened with the death of Christ; that they in virtue of Him might take the place of men dead to sin, but alive to God, and so reckon themselves by grace, for under this we are, not under law. Such is the apostolic doctrine. The words of our Lord do not, and cannot, teach otherwise, as they must if John 3:5 be applied to baptism. Take water here as figurative of the word which the Spirit uses to quicken, and all is clear, consistent, and true. Were it said in the Scripture that we are born of the Spirit by means of water, we should have some approach to what the Fathers drew from it, and what is necessary to bear the construction put on it in the Anglican and other formularies that apply it to baptism. Their dealing with it seems to be really "licentious," "deluding," and "dangerous," at issue with what our Lord says even in v. 5, still more with His omission of "water" in v. 6, most of all if it be possible with the place of baptism everywhere else given in Scripture. Baptism may be the formal expression of washing away sins, never of communicating life, which is unequivocally false teaching.

So it is in John 13 and 15, not to speak of chapters 4 and 7. Compare for the figure Eph. 5:26, for the truth couched under it 1 Cor. 4:15, James 1:18, 1 Pet. 1:23. It is not a rite giving honor to an official class, but the word of God applied by His Spirit, bringing death on nature that we might live to God in Christ.

For Christ came by water and blood; He purifies and expiates (1 John 5). He is the truth, which the word of God applies in the power of the Spirit, judging the old nature and introducing the new. "I live, no longer I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). One is the same²³ person, but a life is communicated which he had not before, not of Adam, but of Christ, the Second Man. He is begotten of God, made a partaker of the Divine nature through the greatest and precious promises, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Such is it to be born of water and of Spirit -- an incomparably deeper thing than any form of truth, however it be prized in its place and for the object the Lord Who instituted it had in view. Baptism was the formal

admission; it was the confession of Christ on the ground of His death and resurrection, not of quickening, which was true of all saints before Christ, when there was no Christian baptism. If baptism were really the sign and means of quickening, consistency would deny life to the Old Testament saints, or they ought to have been so baptized, which they were not. But this is clearly false ground. There is no reason to infer that the twelve were baptized with Christian baptism; they baptized others, but, it would seem, were not themselves. Were they not, then, born again? Nor did circumcision mean life, and so we know that souls were born anew even before it was imposed on Abraham already justified by faith.

Hence, too, it is important to observe that he who is thus born again is said to be born of the Spirit, omitting water, in v. 6. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The word (or water, emblematically) can do nothing toward quickening without the Spirit, Who is the efficient agent in communicating the life of Christ. Water cleanses, but of itself it is not capable of quickening; it is death to the flesh. There had been only flesh before; now, as believing in Christ, the man is born of God (1 John 5); and each nature retains its own characteristic. As flesh never becomes spirit, so spirit never degenerates into flesh. The natures abide distinct, and the practical business of the believer is to hold himself for dead to the one that he may live in the other by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved him and gave Himself for him.²⁴

Summary

God causes the new birth by His sovereign act, through the instrumentality of the Word. Something from God is believed by the soul. These two things go together. The new birth and faith go together. This is simultaneous. The soul is thus turned toward God (conversion).

The sovereign act of God, through His Word, which results in the new birth, means that the one who was spiritually dead towards God, who had not life towards God, is quickened, i.e., made alive towards God. He has a new life implanted within by this act of God. In this, the person is made partaker of the divine nature.

What the person understands about these things is another matter. And what the person's faith embraces is also another matter. This will come under discussion as we progress. Next, we will see that in order for a person to repent, he must be born anew.²⁵

22. (...continued)

a superficial resemblance; and in both cases the consequence is heterodoxy most perilous to souls, which has enormously helped on the mill of Christendom as well as of deluded individuals. To deny that the Lord often elsewhere employed water figuratively is impossible; to maintain that He meant it literally here is to lower the sense immensely and to involve the worst consequences, as of an ordinance saving *ex opere operato*. It is remarkable, I would add, that the Gospel of John omits even the institution of baptism and of the Lord's Supper, dwelling beyond all others on life and the Spirit.

23. {Observe that the human "I" does not change -- the "I" of identity is the same. Adam after the fall was still Adam as before the fall, only now he had what we call the old nature. When born again he still was Adam, had the old nature, but also had a new nature.}

24. *Exposition of the Gospel of John, in loco*. See *Collected Writings* 15:324, 327-329 for a discussion that water is used as a figure, and does not refer to baptism. See also 14:208, 246; 20:274, 284; 29:342; 31:51; 34:45.

25. See *Free-will? Or, Not of Him that Willeth*, available from the publisher.

Chapter 1.2

When Does Repentance Take Place?

What Is Repentance?

Ques. Do you separate repentance and faith?

Some try to do so, and they put repentance before faith; they say we must first have repentance before God, which is absurd upon the face of it; for if a person does not believe my message {faith in it}, there can be no repentance on the ground of it. When Peter said, "Ye . . . killed the Prince of life," they believed him, and then he added, "Repent."²⁶ ♦

Ques. What is repentance?

The judgment we have passed upon ourselves, and all that we have done, and have been, in God's presence under grace.

Even now, as under grace, there may be a legal repentance.

But if it is put before faith, it unsettles the whole ground we stand upon before God; it is then something that I am doing in my own heart, and that won't do. When I preach repentance, therefore, I must preach it in Christ's name, and so I said, "under grace."

As I get to God, I see what I am in true light, more and more clearly every day. It is infinite love, that, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; but if I carry God's message to others, I must carry God's claim, and I say, if you don't repent and turn to God, you will be lost.

Yet if I call on people to repent, in the name of Christ, they must believe in Christ in order to repent. As a man you have to say to God and what state are you in before God?

If your heart is not changed, what have you that is at all fit for God?

But if I call upon a man to be in God's presence with God's claim upon him, and that in grace -- perfect grace -- then if he returns, he returns to God. Repentance ought to be preached as God's claim upon man, but as putting in that claim in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God calls on all men to repent, but if they do not, they must come under judgment.

You cannot have your eye open on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not hate yourself as a sinner.²⁷ ♦

Repentance Follows New Birth

F. G. Patterson wrote:

There is one thing I would state, in beginning such a subject, that there is never a real effectual work of God in a soul apart from true repentance. Some have stumbled souls by saying that such a work is a necessary preparation for faith, and a reception of the Gospel. That is, that it goes before faith, and hence before the new birth in a soul. Now, without hesitation, I would say that in every instance, in all Scripture, where the work of repentance is spoken of as a doctrine, or the fruits of it spoken of in a soul, it invariably follows faith. I do not say but that it has gone before peace. Peace with God may not be known for many a day, but the work of repentance has always followed faith, and consequently accompanied the new birth in every instance.

Many have thought that repentance is sorrow for sin, and that a certain amount of it is necessary before the reception of the Gospel. Others have got into the other extreme, and have thought that it is a change of mind about God. Now, these thoughts are both wrong. No doubt, as the apostle says -- "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of" (2 Cor. 7:10). But the Corinthians had been converted long before, and their sorrow of heart for that for which he charged them, led to a judgment of their ways under the power of God's word to them through Paul. He says in another place that "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. 2:4). One then "works repentance," and the other leads to it, but neither of them are repentance itself. Repentance is the true judgment which I form of myself, and all in myself, in view of what God has revealed and testified to me, whatever may have been the subject He has used.²⁸

Repentance follows new birth. Before the new birth occurs a person has nothing with which to repent. The unbeliever is characterized by, and is under the domination of, the sinful nature. Man is totally lost and is characterized by the old nature within. He is a slave to it. He has not moral free-will,²⁹ hence God must act sovereignly (James 1:18) to communicate to the person a new nature, a new life. The person must be born anew, or quickened, by the action of God, Who uses the Word of God. Then the person can repent.

. . . and therefore the Scriptures show that until the new

26. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 308.

27. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 9.

28. *The New Birth*, Glasgow: Bible and Tract Depository, pp. 14, 15, n.d.

29. See my *Freewill: or, Not of Him that Willetth?* obtainable from Present Truth Publishers.

birth occurs, man cannot repent.³⁰

The idea that a man repents first, before the new birth has taken place, shows that he who so thinks does not understand what the new birth really is; and, moreover, thus in effect denies that man is totally lost. A lost man cannot repent. The inability is of the essence of his lostness. And thus repentance follows new birth. Yes, the first action is the sovereign act of God that implants a new life into the person, through the Word. Thus there is faith present with the new birth. Being thus born anew, the person repents.

Repentance Follows Faith

Here is a collection of extracts from J. N. Darby:

But that sentence (Acts 20:21) is abused in a violent way, putting repentance before faith; if it is faith in the full efficacy of Christ's work, of course it can, and will come after repentance; it is impossible that repentance can go before faith, because when a man goes with a testimony, if it is not believed, it produces no effect.³¹ ♦

Further, though all rightly preached together, we must not confound faith in the person, and faith in the work of Christ. The latter alone can give peace to the conscience (unless the direct revelation of God, as by Nathan to David, or Christ to the woman that was a sinner); but the former is always held out as the first proper object of faith; while scripture declares, that whoever believes on Him is under the benefit of His work. Faith in Him is quickening and saving. Peace of conscience according to God's declaration belongs to those who do in virtue of His work. This difference connects itself with the question of repentance. Mr. Trench makes it a sin in the "Plymouth Brethren," that they say that faith goes before repentance. He is extremely ignorant, as this pamphlet shows, of all the questions which have moved souls, and not a step beyond the lowest Wesleyan doctrines on these points. This question has been one on which all sticklers for the power of human nature, without grace, or to meet grace, have held with Mr. Trench. But all who know what grace is believe that faith precedes repentance, and everything else that is good and right in man. Otherwise he would have what is good before he believed the truth at all; he would have it without God. And as to repentance, substantially the whole moral change, the essence and substance of his return to God, would have been effected without any truth at all. For if he repents through the truth, he must believe the truth in order to repent. Nothing can be more absurd than putting repentance before faith; for a man then repents believing nothing at all. The word of God has not reached his soul, good or bad; for if it has, he is an infidel, or he believes it, and it has thus wrought repentance. That a man does not understand redemption and salvation before repentance, be it so; certainly, he does not really know it for himself. But that does not say faith does not precede it.

Dr. O'Brien leaves all ambiguous here. So much of change of mind, he tells us, as is necessary to make faith real, is essential to it. But what wrought the change? After describing very justly what a convinced soul must feel, as

one who knows it for himself, he says, This must be felt by all who can be truly said to trust in Christ, as knowing in whom they trust. Admit it all for a moment, for *such trust* cannot be without it; but how have they learnt that there is a Christ to trust in? Is it not by faith? Further, what produced these practical elements of repentance? Dr. O'Brien justly refers to the change of mind which the sinner undergoes under the operation of divine grace. Assuredly. But how does this divine grace operate? Is it not by the word; by the presentation of divinely given objects of faith? If faith is not the source of repentance (i.e., in the moral sense, precedes it), then the vital change in the state of a man's soul is without faith, without grace, or grace operates without any revelation of a divine object. The eye must be opened to turn men from darkness to light: is it opened on vanity, or on God's revelation of Himself in Christ? Hence I find that repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in *His name*. Am I to believe that the repentance was to be brought in unbelief in that name, or by faith in it? So in John 16. He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not on Me. And Peter, accordingly, having announced Jesus, charges them with having crucified Him; and then they are pricked to the heart. And then he tells them the way of escape. Philip goes down to Samaria to preach Christ to them. Did they repent through faith in it, or not? The goodness of God leads man to repentance. Is there no goodness to be believed in in this work? What led the poor sinful woman in tears to the feet of Jesus? She heard that Jesus was in the house. Satan, to bring in lust and sin, had first undermined confidence in God. God, he insisted, had kept back just what would make man like Himself. God is manifest in flesh, and moves in grace through the wretchedness of man, showing grace in Himself abounding over sin to win back the confidence of sinful man -- in spite of, yea through, the burden and shame of sin -- to Himself, while surely warning him of the consequences of abiding in it. The poor woman had felt this; she could go to God thus manifested (not explain it all, I dare say), and showing her to herself too, in the light, when she dared not to any human heart. She loved much. When she heard that Jesus was in the house, she came. What business had she there? When God and grace were there, for her He filled the place in His beauty and grace. He was alone for her soul. Its brokenness and renewed feeling in life fitted to the grace that was revealed in Him. God was there for it. That was all. The rest was all human vanity. Christ had a claim which made nothing of all the rest. Its glitter had found its truth in her sorrow; but Christ met what she was. She knew what the Pharisee did not, that grace and that God, morally speaking (for she might not know it doctrinally), was there. She did not know forgiveness; but repentance had been produced by the revelation of God in Christ to her soul. And Christ pronounced the forgiveness, and told her to go in peace.

Now, here we get faith, repentance, and forgiveness in their divine order -- now more clearly preached, no doubt; but not otherwise. Peter preaches Christ. There is faith; this works repentance (for the heart had been enmity to the Christ believed in); and then comes the knowledge of forgiveness through His work.

Faith, then, according to scripture, does go before repentance; peace may not, and surely will not. What was the first thought in the prodigal? His father's house; he had no best robe until he met his father. Mr. Trench has only shown that he is wholly astray from the truth (I trust

30. See *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2: 168, 478. See W. Kelly, *An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostle*, on vv. 37, 38.

31. *Collected Writings* 35:122.

neither he nor Dr. O'Brien will count it amiss that I speak plainly; nor any want of courtesy-I should be sorry to be guilty of any), that he charges an error, when it is only his own; and that the passage he quotes from Dr. O'Brien's book, in heart and substance sound, is not either clear or accurate. Such feelings must be before there is solid peace; but that does not touch the question -- What produces the feelings? The danger of the obscurity of Dr. O'Brien is seen in Mr. Trench's use of it, who will have repentance without any grace at all; or, if he deny that, without the word of God, or anything it reveals (for, if otherwise, faith goes before repentance). It is an open denial of grace to say it does not. I judge repentance to be a much deeper thing than is thought. It is the judgment of the new man in divine light and grace on all that he who repents has been or done in flesh. Law may be the means of bringing the soul to it; but, though salutary, it is made for the unrighteous { 1 Tim. 1:9}. The full knowledge of Christ gives a *far* deeper hatred of sin. And such is the Holy Ghost's way: all else, if true, is imperfect. "He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not me" {John 16:9}. To have hated good, seen no beauty in Christ to desire Him -- a nature which could do this is worse even than the lusts which the spirituality of the law so justly condemns. Lawless, law-breaking, and God-hating; such is the flesh's character in scripture, and the order of its manifestation for showing what sin is. Hence, repentance will, in one sense, deepen all one's life, as the knowledge of God grows. It is not a quantum of sorrow, nor even a perception of separation from God by sin. That leads to it. It is the soul of man judging divinely of sin, and that, in the consciousness, it had been self, when God is known in grace -- at any rate in some measure. ³² ◆

One text remains which gives its character and full force to repentance, "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). He looked, not merely that crimes and wickedness should be judged, but that a man should judge all his state in the light of God's own presence, and in reference to His divine character and authority over him, and in the thought of His goodness. This is true repentance; man judged and judging himself in the presence of God, to whom he belongs and to whose nature he has to refer with mercy before him. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ meets this; because there God has judged sin according to His own nature and authority, and His love is perfect, and we are reconciled to God according to that nature and righteous claim. But this requires a word of explanation. It is not that repentance comes first by itself and then in an absolute way faith. But that repentance, the judgment of what we are before God and in God's sight, is one great effect of the truth; it refers to God as God with whom we have to do; whereas faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is faith in that sovereign intervention of God in which in grace He has met our state in the gift of His Son. Repentance is not change of mind as to God, though this may produce it, but self-judgment before Him, the soul referring to Him who is over us, with whom we have to do. It is not that repentance precedes faith. We shall see that it is not so: but it is first the heart returned into divine light, and then faith in the blessed intervention of God that fitted the state it finds itself in. ³³ ◆

Conversion, repentance, being born again, and faith, all go

together; and yet I must believe in order to get it, and still they all go together. ³⁴ ◆

32. *Collected Writings* 10:128-131.

33. *Collected Writings* 10:223

34. *Collected Writings* 26:349.

Chapter 1.3

What Is the Difference Between New Birth and Salvation?

J. N. Darby wrote:

I should say a quickened soul was safe, but not saved.³⁵

We cannot say a person is saved until God has put His seal upon Him.³⁶

Distinctive Christian blessings are brought to the soul when the person is sealed with the Spirit. God does not seal a sinner; He seals a saint, i.e., one who has been born again. There may be cases where one is born again and sealed so soon afterward that we do not notice any lapse of time. In other cases there is a longer lapse of time. Whether the interval is but momentary or longer, the fact is that the person must be first born again in order to be sealed. The OT saints were born again (as we shall see in Chapter 2.1) but were not sealed with the Spirit. Obviously the new birth and the sealing with the Spirit can not be the same thing -- nor do they necessarily occur simultaneously. New birth involves the communication of divine life from God and thus the person has a new nature. He is quickened, i.e., made alive spiritually. Then when the Spirit is given the person is put into the place of sonship before God.

No doubt the interval between these two things accounts for the state of soul of some that we meet, with their continued ups and downs spiritually. Some are even taught to doubt and others are taught that one can be lost again. Happily, with some of these, their hearts are better than what they are taught; and in secret can utter the cry of the Spirit of sonship, "Abba Father."

Everyone who is born anew is **safe** for being in glory above. The blood of Christ makes such fit for heaven. But **saved** is a word that includes more than being safe, blessed and essential as it is to be safe for the glory. Being saved includes new birth but includes additional blessings with which our giving Father has richly endowed us. Indeed, we shall see that the new birth in itself does not include the blessings that are distinctive of Christianity, but that "saved," or "salvation," *coupled with the seal with the Spirit*, does bring the saint into the good of these distinctive truths. And this will help us to better understand the position of the OT saints as well as some of the children of God now. It is also a step toward understanding Rom. 6, 7, and 8.

The Red Sea

Many valued writers have commented on the typical teaching of the Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea.³⁷ With the blood on the doorposts the Israelite was *safe* from the judgment, but God was outside and apprehended as Judge. They experienced 'safety' that night but not 'salvation.' The word salvation is broader than *safe* but it includes *safe*. They did not yet know God as deliverer, though safe from judgment. Read Ex. 14 and see how they were still frightened by the **taskmaster**. Their condition as depicted in Ex. 14 typifies the condition of the man of Rom. 7, who has the "inward man" (has the new nature and is safe for heaven) but is not delivered from the power of the taskmaster -- i.e., he is not delivered from the law of sin and death (cp. Rom. 8:2). Such a one is not yet "saved" in the sense in which the NT speaks of a child of God who has been sealed with the Spirit, though such a one is safe and is born again. Such have not salvation (Eph. 1:12, 13). They have a part of salvation, i.e., safety for heaven, but salvation for the Christian is much more than that, though including it.

Israel faced the sea on one side and were hemmed in on the other while the power of the taskmaster pressed upon them from behind. But salvation, deliverance and redemption were about to be obtained through the sea of death. (We will consider deliverance through death in detail later. Suffice it to say here that the Red Sea typifies Christ's death and resurrection for us. This is the destruction of the power of the taskmaster, and deliverance for the saint). Concerning the relationship between deliverance from Egypt and redemption, W. T. Turpin wrote.

For remember, redemption always supposes change of place. The word "salvation," in scripture, always means a change in position, though, perhaps, we limit it in our minds to the thought of some favor or blessing that would extenuate our circumstances spiritually. I do not mean that in what concerns us in this world, but spiritually. And so the Passover, by itself, was not redemption. No doubt it goes along with the Red Sea in the history of redemption, and, in a certain sense, the Passover had a deeper aspect in it than the Red Sea. But still, the Passover was the shelter which God provided for that people whilst they were in Egypt, and God was only known in the character of an

35. *Collected Writings* 28:369. See also pp. 368-370; *Letters* 3: 118; *Notes and Jotting*, p. 186.

36. *Collected Writings* 26:275.

37. See the expositions by J. N. Darby, W. Kelly, C. H. Mackintosh, and E. Dennett on Exodus. See the index to *The Bible Treasury, The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby and Letters of J. N. Darby* under the words "Red Sea." Also see W. T. Turpin, *The Salvation of Jehovah*.

appeased judge in the Passover. He “passed over” the people when He judged Egypt, but they were not removed out of the place of bondage, their position was not changed; they were sheltered by the blood, but they were in bondage still. The Red Sea took them clean out of everything they were in as to bondage, the Passover met the deeper claims of God when He passed through the land as a judge. I say this to make it clear to you that when scripture speaks of redemption, it means not merely that God’s righteous, holy claims have been met, as they were by the blood of the Passover Lamb, but that the people themselves, who were sheltered by the blood, have been entirely extricated from the place of bondage, and completely brought to God. That is redemption. They left Egypt behind forever; they had done with it. And the place they were in, is typical of the position we are in, until we know redemption. Now it is a pertinent question to ask, Have you got in your souls the knowledge of redemption? I believe there are a great many people that have not. They know *shelter*, they are perfectly certain they will never go to hell, or come into judgment,³⁸ but that is not redemption. An Israelite was sheltered in Egypt but was in Egypt still. And shelter, wonderful and blessed as that is -- do not think I want to make little of it -- is short of what has been truly called “extrication”; redemption is extrication, by it we are clean out altogether by the mighty power of God, through blood and power. The blood has met His own righteous, holy claims; and the power has completely submerged every hostile foe that could raise up its head. Through blood and power we have been brought out of the house of bondage, and brought to God {read Ex. 15} -- that is redemption. Liberty, and freedom, and blessedness are all connected with it, but it is not a matter of experience. There is experience, but this is fact, and it is fact for faith to possess. Here is the wonderful thing that must underlie all experience, in order to have it upon its true and proper basis. I am speaking of a great reality that has been accomplished, whether I accept and enjoy it or not; and whether I possess it or not, at any rate it is there for me to take, possess, and know. And if I enjoyed it a thousand times more, it would not make it one single whit more true; and if I never enjoyed it at all, it would not take away from the truth of it. I am speaking of a thing that exists, and did in this day when God effected His own purpose -- He did redeem the people. And that is what faith always delights to rest in. It cannot take pleasure in the use it has made of it, but it always goes back to what God did; and there is no failure, nor flaw, nor imperfection, nor drawback in what He has done. And that is the estimate on which God looks at His people . . . For in Ex. 15 you find that in the very earliest moments of their victory, these were the notes of their song, “Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation,” that is to say, they were brought to God. That is the meaning of it. Though they had not trod an inch of the desert land, had not as yet got into Canaan, yet that is celebrated too, “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance.” No sooner do the opened waters of the Red Sea roll between the people and the hosts of Pharaoh, no sooner does God strike the keynote of that song on the resurrection shores of the Red Sea, than they

celebrate the whole thing, not part of it but the whole.³⁹

And so “Moses said to the people, Fear not: stand still, and see the *salvation* of Jehovah, which he will work for you today” (Ex. 14:13). So they were *safe* from judgment at the Passover, but not yet *saved* from the power of the taskmaster. “Thus Jehovah *saved* Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians” (Ex. 14:30). *Now* they were redeemed (in type, of course, Ex. 15:13) and in Ex. 15 we find the first recorded song in Scripture. Only the redeemed have a real song and a theme, praise God. When redemption in type was accomplished at the Red Sea, when the power of the taskmaster was broken, then the song of redemption began. *Now* God was become their salvation (Ex. 15:2); and “holiness” comes forward (v. 11) as does the “holy habitation” (v. 13), “thine inheritance” and the “sanctuary” (v. 17).

“Ye have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, and [how] I have borne you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself” (Ex. 19:4). Through the Red Sea they were brought to Himself, free from the power of the *taskmaster*.

The crossing of the Red Sea answers to the consciousness, the knowledge, of the forgiven status/position of the believer. When the soul rests not only on the Person, but on the finished work of Christ for the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, as Scripture speaks of that forgiveness, the person is sealed with the Spirit. And so Peter preached to Cornelius and those with him and the Spirit fell upon those listening. This is deliverance: “. . . knowledge of deliverance to his people by [the] remission of their sins . . .” (Luke 1:77). This is the salvation of God. This is peace and joy, liberty and song, redemption and the knowledge of eternal security. This is being brought to God and making merry with Him (Luke 15).

To be born again, but still to be in Ex. 14, on the road to the Father (Luke 15:18, 19), in the condition of Rom. 7, is not to have the Spirit of Sonship (Rom. 8). “For ye have not received a spirit of bondage again for fear, but ye have received a spirit of adoption” {i.e., sonship -- which is in addition to new birth} “whereby we cry Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15).

The Parable of the Prodigal

The case of the prodigal son illustrates the sequence. The words “he came to himself” (Luke 15:17) picture the moment of quickening (making alive spiritually in this case). Another wrote:

I find in the case of the younger son, in the parable (Luke 15), a happy illustration of the various divine actions of God with a soul. When he “came to himself” he was quickened, and faith was in exercise. This produced a judgment of his state before God, and, as measured by His goodness, when he said, “I perish with hunger.” This was repentance -- the action of the new life. Then came conversion, in, “I will arise and go to my father.” Conversion means simply that the heart is turned towards

38. {I beg to differ here with the esteemed writer. Often souls in this position do wonder about the judgment and have no sense of eternal security.}

39. *The Salvation of Jehovah*, pp. 6-9, 26. See also *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2: 313; *Notes and Jottings*, p. 107; W. Kelly, *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Pentateuch*, p. 166; *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 33:406.

God, which had been turned away, from two Latin words, which signify to turn towards. Hence a man may be converted, according to its simple literal meaning, more than once; as Peter, to whom the Lord said, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," i.e., when his heart was turned back again after his fall. But while one could be thus converted more than once -- the heart turned back to God when turned away (how blessed that it is so!), one can only be once born again, or born of God, and this never can be undone or redone.

Thus, when the prodigal was on his journey to meet his father, all the exercises of his soul present those passed through by the soul before sealing takes place. The father's kiss would typify the time, probably when sealing took place.⁴⁰

From this we see that there was a time between the prodigal's coming to himself and the moment he was put into the position of sonship. While traveling to the father, he had what I shall call *the spirit of a hired servant* (answering to Rom. 7) and not the Spirit of sonship (answering to Rom. 8). We will consider the subject of deliverance in Part Three.

So when he came to himself -- that is like the new birth. On the way to the Father he had *the spirit of a hired servant* (Rom. 7). He had a speech about being a hired servant made up. He did not yet know the Father's heart toward himself. But he only said so much of his speech before the Father interrupted. **The Father kissed it all away!** -- covering him with kisses. Think of that moment when the son's place was revealed to his soul. He did not have that in the pig-pen, nor while on the way to the Father. He had not the Spirit of sonship; he had *the spirit of a hired servant*, as shown by the speech he was going to give, which was expressive of his state. He had the *liberty* of sonship subsequently. The moment came when *the spirit of a hired servant* was gone and he received the Spirit of sonship, so to speak. This is "adoption," or sonship, son placement, and illustrates coming out of the condition of Rom. 7 into the *liberty* described in Rom. 8. The Spirit of adoption (i.e., sonship) empowers the cry, "Abba, Father" and the returned one and the Father eat the fatted calf together and *begin* to make merry. The Scripture declares that "where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is, there is] *liberty*" (2 Cor. 3:17).

Yes, they *began* to make merry. That will never end! The Son when here in holy manhood, in the garden of Gethsemane, in all intimacy with the Father, addressed Him as "Abba, Father" (Mark 14:35). And we have been brought so close that by "the Spirit of His Son" we also cry Abba, Father (Gal. 4:6). How unspeakably precious this is. No doubt our Lord Jesus did all in the power of the Spirit; and now we have "the Spirit of His Son" to empower us to address the Father as He did.

This answers to the distinction between quickening and sealing. Thus, we have this truth illustrated by this parable, as we had it typified in the Passover and deliverance through the

Red Sea. There are also historical examples in the book of Acts, to which we now turn.

Historical Examples

Cornelius' Case

SHOWS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING SAFE AND SAVED

There is no doubt that Cornelius was born again (Acts 10:4) and so *safe* for the glory. "Saved" and "salvation" in the NT are great words that include being 'safe,' but also include the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins (knowledge of the **forgiven position**), with "no more conscience of sins" (Heb. 10:2) as standing between oneself and a holy God, and includes deliverance as seen in Rom. 7 -- and the seal of the Spirit. Now, though Cornelius was born again, and therefore *safe* from judgment, Acts 11:14 says that Peter had to go and tell Cornelius words "whereby thou shalt be *saved* . . ." Have you observed that? Do you pay attention to the precision of Scripture, precise in its own way as is altogether worthy of God? Thus, the distinction between new birth and "saved," or salvation, is clearly shown. We began this chapter with two quotations from J. N. Darby:

I should say a quickened soul was safe, but not saved.⁴¹

We cannot say a person is saved until God has put His seal upon Him.⁴²

. . . a desire after holiness would be one evidence of a quickened soul. I do not say he is saved; Scripture does not say so.⁴³

Yes, there *is* Scripture for saying the above. Let us look at quotation from F. G. Patterson:

I believe that Cornelius was born of God before Peter preached salvation, peace, and forgiveness of sins to him and his house. Acts 10:2 is a description of him; in it the Holy Ghost calls him a "devout man," who prayed to God always. His knowledge extended only so far as that which could be known of Christ amongst the Jews, but with no thought of its application to a Gentile. Like the centurion in Luke 7 he owned, as faith ever does, those who were in external relationship with the Lord, and through whom the blessing to a Gentile must then flow; consequently he "gave much alms to the people," i.e. Israel. Peter appeals to him in v. 37, "That word, ye know"; "the word which was sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ." But he needed the comprehensive "whosoever" of v. 43, for his faith to claim the blessing. This God presented to him through Peter, and having received it by faith, the Holy Ghost at once sealed his reception of forgiveness of sins. The new nature was there before; now the Holy Ghost, in power and liberty. Forgiveness of sins thus followed believing in Christ and His finished work, and was the application to the sinner of

40. *Words of Truth, New Series* 1: 212, 213. See also *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3: 117; 2:452; 3: 167; *Collected writings of J. N. Darby* 10:217; 19:323; 31:260, 261; A.C. Ord, *The Glory of the Person of the Son of God* ..., pp. 16-18; *Things New and Old* 27:225; A P. Cecil, *Remarks on a Paper Called "Life and the Spirit"* & Etc., pp. 18-22.

41. *Collected Writings* 28:369. See also pp. 368-370; *Letters* 3: 118; *Notes and Jotting*, p. 186.

42. *Collected Writings* 26:275.

43. *Collected Writings* 28:369.

that which was previously a fact before God.⁴⁴

Those who will not have it that souls may be born again at the present time, but not sealed, simply dismiss Cornelius' case as a transitional matter in the Acts. This was done by F. W. Grant, who taught that OT saints had eternal life *in* the Son -- which, in effect, implies having it *in* deity, for the Son had not then taken manhood into His Person. We -- Christians -- sealed by the Spirit, have eternal life in the Son in connection with His risen manhood (John 12:24), a thing impossible for OT saints.

CORNELIUS' CASE AND EPH. 1:13

Let us not yet leave the case of Cornelius, seeking to profit by it, rather than dismissing it as an anomalous, transitional case, having no bearing on cases now. We see how Cornelius' experience comports with Eph. 1:13, as F. G. Patterson showed:

Sealing takes place at once on believing. Eph. 1:13 is plain on the subject: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed (or 'having believed') ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." The Apostle connects sealing with "the gospel of your salvation." God's salvation is announced by the gospel; I have believed in the gospel of my salvation, and forthwith I am sealed by the Spirit. a saved man is one who has no doubt. Scripture never speaks of a man being "saved" who has any. We must not confound the state of many quickened souls with those who have believed. The action of God in quickening and in sealing are as distinct as possible. He quickens a sinner who wants {needs} life; He does not seal a sinner as such, surely; that were to seal him in his sins; nor does He seal a quickened soul in his misery. . . .

Cornelius was a devout man, one that feared God, and prayed to God always -- a quickened soul. He is told to send for Peter to hear words of him, whereby he and all his house would be saved (Acts 11:14). God does not call him a saved man, as merely quickened. When Peter comes he does not tell him he must be born again, which as a sinner he needed and had been, but he points him to Christ, and they accept the message, and the Holy Ghost fell on them. You get the same thing in Acts 19; those at Ephesus who were quickened souls had not as yet received the Holy Ghost.

It is not possible for a person to be a believer in the present dispensation without bring sealed. There are many quickened souls who are not sealed, but no Christian ever dies and passes away from this scene, where as to personal place the Holy Ghost is since Pentecost, without being sealed.⁴⁵ This is why you see cases in which there was no liberty, or peace with God, enjoyed during the lifetime, with occasional gleams of joy; and yet when on a death-bed they have got perfect peace with God, and are

sealed.

I think we use the word "believer" too indiscriminately, for every state of soul in which God is working. a believer in Scripture language is one who is sealed. Scripture allows but one basis or normal condition, for Christians. When we come to look at the condition of souls we find that in many cases they are not there; while there is no reason on God's part why they should not be.⁴⁶

A *believer* is a person who has believed the gospel of his salvation. A person who is quickened but not sealed is looking to Christ but is not resting in the finished work on the cross for the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, i.e. knowledge of being in a forgiven position. This is what is the proper state since Pentecost, but not all souls are in that proper state.

A. P. Cecil's Survey of Cases

. . . We have seen that before the new birth takes place the man is morally dead. The voice of the Son of God speaks, as to dead Lazarus; the soul hears and lives; faith is now produced in the form of trust and hope, without certainty. The mind is turned to God; there is a repentance, issuing in judging self, realizing its criminal state and lost condition; there is also prayer for salvation and the Spirit, which is not yet received. The Gospel is preached to such a soul, it believes unto salvation; the finished work of Christ is now rested on, and Christ risen again for our justification, and in glory. The blood of Christ is applied to the conscience, and the immediate sealing of the Spirit follows!

I now give instances from Scripture. First, in the type of the consecration of the priests, Aaron and his sons are first washed with water, Lev. 8:6, answering to the water of the word of regeneration. Then Aaron is robed and anointed alone, before he is sprinkled with blood, as the Lord was anointed with the Holy Ghost before he died. His sons are anointed not till after the sacrifice has been killed and the blood has been sprinkled upon them. But the sprinkling of blood and the anointing with oil go together with the sons of Aaron. Thus the application of the blood and consequent sealing of the Spirit come consequent on the Gospel being preached and the finished work of Christ rested on. John 1 agrees with this. New birth, v. 13, is connected with the Person of the Son, specially His divinity, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, v. 33, with his work, v. 9.

In John 3, new birth was a thing a Jew ought to have known about. Ezek. 36:24-26, prophesied of Jehovah causing Israel in the latter day to be born of water and of the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God. The Lord said to Nicodemus, Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things? . . .

But what follows, John 3:12, is the introduction of the heavenly revelation of Christianity in contrast to this, and the Gospel is introduced. The Son of man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life! This is salvation! and connected with it is the knowledge of it brought to the soul, in v. 18, He that believeth on Him is not condemned.

In John 4, the gift of the Holy Ghost follows in beautiful order. He is the living water, the power of

44. *Words of Truth* 6:80.

45. {J. N. Darby noted:

If a soul were only quickened and not saved, he would not belong to the church {because of not having the Spirit} at the coming of the Lord. I know this is impossible, because, as the apostle says, "He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." You are not united by faith, or by life, but by the Holy Ghost (*Collected Writings* 28:368).}

46. *Words of Truth* 3:137-139.

communion and worship, who comes consequent on the soul knowing God in the character of Giver, and Jesus in the character of the Son of God His gift. Verse 10, He gives the Holy Ghost, consequent on redemption and His glorification. But I must hasten on.

Acts 2 gives us the wonderful work that took place consequent on the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Peter preached that God had made Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, Lord and Christ. He was God's Anointed owned by heaven raised up to sit on David's throne, but in the meantime as Lord sitting at the right hand of God till His enemies are made His footstool. Convicted that Jesus was the Anointed, they were born of God. Compare 1 John 5:1. Immediately they said, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Peter said, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, unto the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Thus, here again, comes the new birth first through hearing, then repentance and remission of sins, and the immediate consequent sealing of the Holy Ghost. It was a short interval between their new birth and sealing, but still an interval, in the middle of which they repented and were baptized.

In Acts 8, we have in the account of the conversion of the Samaritans, a decided interval between their new-birth and sealing. Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached the Anointed unto them. They believed, and were baptized, yet v. 16 tells us that the Holy Ghost had as yet fallen on none of them. No doubt there was a longer interval, on account of there being a need that manifested unity should be maintained through the apostles Peter and John coming down from Jerusalem to lay their hands on them, so that Jerusalem should own the work of God at Samaria. Still the fact remains that first they were born again through believing that Jesus was the Anointed, and after an interval were sealed.

Acts 10 gives the account of the conversion of the first Gentile; vv. 2, 3 give clearly the godly character of the man; there was every mark of his being born of God, yet Peter had to tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved, Acts 11:14. Accordingly he went down, preached the gospel to him, which he received, and was immediately sealed with the Holy Ghost.

In Paul's own case there seems to have been three days interval between his being born again through meeting the Lord on his way to Damascus, and his sealing by the Spirit. Could it be said that he was saved and sealed, when he was three days without sight and neither ate nor drank? Born again he was, and Ananias was given a sign whereby he should know it. "Behold he prayeth" (Acts 9:11, 17, 18).

In Lydia's case (Acts 16), she was evidently a godly proselyte before Paul met her. Her heart the Lord opened that she attended to the things spoken by Paul, and she consequently embraced Christianity.

The Philippian jailor's case was more sudden. But even here the earthquake first sent the terrors of God through his soul, before the peace-giving message came: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

In the Epistle to the Romans, conviction as to the guilt of sin is argued out in Rom. 1 - 3:20, and there repentance and circumcision of heart are alluded to.

In Rom. 7, conviction as to the flesh being all bad is

argued out, and there the new mind and will is clearly formed. Rom. 3:20 to ch.4, end, shows God as Justifier meeting the state of guilt, and Rom. 8, God the Deliverer meeting the state of man as a slave of sin and born in it. They are two parts of the same salvation the first part of which is generally apprehended in the soul first, in the present ruined condition of things, but where the truth is fully preached the latter would be learned at the same time, with deeper conviction preceding it. The explanation of so many souls who have been apparently sealed by the Spirit, and yet remain in or get back to the experience of the 7th of Romans, is in the many law teachers of the day bringing the people of God into bondage like the case of the Galatians, the type of which we have in the children of Israel in the wilderness, accepting the law to walk by, instead of abiding in the faith of the God of Abraham.

The teaching of no interval between new birth and sealing, would seem to me to lead to very fatal doctrine. Repentance and prayer, etc., must either then come in before a man is born again and sealed by the Spirit, which would be the denial that man is dead in trespasses and sins or else they must come in after the sealing of the Spirit, which would be a denial of sinner-repentance, which no one who knows Scripture could hold for one moment in the case of a sinner coming to Christ. Besides it is contrary to the experience of all true hearted Christians. I would appeal to every one of my readers, whether the truth of the reality of God and of the Person of His Son did not come to their souls, first; then repentance and prayer for salvation as a consequence, then the reception of the gospel and immediate sealing of the Spirit; yet it was not repentance or prayer that saved them, but faith in the gospel.⁴⁷

47. A. P. C., *Helps by the Way*, New Series 3:178-182 (1880).

Romans speaks of It Doctrinally

Then in Rom. 6, 7 and 8 we have the doctrinal teaching concerning these things. Rom. 7 will be considered in detail in Part Three. Notice, then, that these distinctions can be seen *typically* in Ex. 12-15, *parabolically* in Luke 15, *historically* in Acts, and *doctrinally* in Romans. As to the application of these truths to individual cases, someone wrote:

When a man is quickened, he does not always receive liberty. I have known a soul (who, I cannot doubt, being quickened, has gone for thirty or forty years without being sealed at all) to remain still in bondage of spirit, a lady who passes too much of her time in capricious judgments, too harsh here, too light there; the end of all which is that she finds the word a two-edged sword, which, while it has an edge against other people, has one against herself. Constantly doubting whether such or such a person is saved, she goes from one thing or person to another, but always comes back to herself, and never yet has seen for her own soul that God rolled everything upon Christ, never yet for her own need been able to rest on Him as the Lamb. The consequence is that she is not what Scripture calls "saved." It is not that she doubts He is the Son of God, but she constantly hesitates about her own interest in Him when it comes to the point. She is like a person who would say, "I am not content with the High Priest confessing the sins of the people. If I could only hear Him mentioning my name and my sins, it would give me true comfort; but I only hear about sins in general, which I cannot believe to be a confession for me." This is not the faith of the gospel really.⁴⁸

W. Kelly remarked:

Indeed I think a great vice at the present moment is making "salvation" too cheap and too common a word. You will find many evangelicals constantly saying when a man is converted that he is saved; whereas it is probably quite premature to say so. If truly converted he will be saved; but it is unwarrantable to say that every converted person is saved, because he may still be under doubts and fears -- that is, under law more or less in conscience. "Saved" brings one out from all sense of condemnation -- brings one to God consciously free in Christ, not merely before God with earnestness of desire after godliness. A soul is not converted unless brought to God in conscience; but then one might be the more miserable and all but despairing in this state. Does scripture allow us to call such an one "saved"? Certainly not. He who is saved . . . is one who being justified by faith has peace with God. It seems therefore that the distinction between what some call being *safe* and being *saved* is quite true and even helpful. Not that those safe could be lost, but that they are not yet brought out of all difficulties into rest of soul by faith. Then they are not safe only but saved. But it is clearly not possible that a converted person can be lost, for the life is eternal.⁴⁹

48. *The Bible Treasury* 15:132.

49. *Lectures Introductory . . . to the Study of the Minor Prophets*, pp. 375, 376. See also pp. 380, 381.

Chapter 1.4

Earthly Things and Heavenly Things

But there was a man from among the Pharisees, his name Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; he came to him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God, for none can do these signs that thou doest unless God be with him. Jesus answered and said to him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except any one be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus says to him, How can a man be born being old? can he enter a second time into the womb of his mother and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except any one be born of water⁵⁰ and of Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not wonder that I said to thee, It is needful that ye should be born anew. The wind blows where it will, and thou hearest its voice, but knowest not whence it comes and where it goes: thus is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said to him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said to him, Thou art the teacher of Israel and knowest not these things! Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and we bear witness of that which we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. **If I have said the earthly things to you, and ye believe not, how, if I say the heavenly things to you, will ye believe?** And no one has gone up into heaven, save he who came down out of heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, thus must the Son of man be lifted up, that every one who believes on him may [not perish, but] have life eternal. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him may not perish, but have life eternal (John 3:1-16).

Salvation coupled with the sealing with the Spirit, involving eternal life in the Son and also union with the Head in heaven as one body, and having a new position *in Christ*, are some of the characteristic truths of Christianity as given in the Word of God: "heavenly things." These are some of the heavenly truths. New birth is not one of the distinctive heavenly truths, for every saint that ever lived, or will live, had, or will have, the new nature. It is something common to all saints.

A distinction between the earthly and the heavenly was made by the Lord Jesus when speaking to Nicodemus (see John 3:12). It is quite clear in John 3 that the new birth was not classed by the Lord Jesus as among "heavenly things."

We shall now look at a lengthy extract from J. N. Darby which addresses the matter of this important distinction:

It is a great thing to have a real need, feeble though it be morally; for here, in Nicodemus's case, there was little need

in the conscience, and no knowledge of himself. He was cleaving to religious hopes, to doctrines, and a revelation given from God; he was seeking instruction from Jesus, but he had his part in the general conviction that the miracles of Jesus produced -- a conviction strengthened by uprightness, and by personal need; Jesus was a teacher sent from God. But Jesus stops Nicodemus short; the resurrection and kingdom were not come, but in order to receive the revelation which had been given of it, there must be a divine operation, a new nature; it was necessary to partake of an entirely new life. The kingdom was not coming in a way to attract attention, but the King, with all the perfection that belonged to Him, was there present, and consequently the kingdom itself, presented in His Person; only this kingdom, not being revealed in power, the rejection of the King caused by the very perfection of His Person, as well as the work accomplished in His rejection, introduced a heavenly inheritance. Further this work, and this rejection, brought those who should be identified with a rejected Christ into those courts above where God displayed His glory, and this is far higher than the glory of the Messiah, if it had been then accomplished. It was already the dawn of the accomplishment of the counsels of God not yet revealed.

Two things are presented to us in the first half of the chapter before us: first of all, the kingdom, and what is needed to have part in it, and, in measure, the earthly things, and what is necessary to enjoy them with God, but also the kingdom, as it was then presented in its moral character. Then, secondly, heaven, eternal life, that which is essential to our most real and intimate relationship with God, namely, the possession of eternal life before Him, in contrast with the thought of perishing. Here it is no question of the kingdom, it is eternal life, such as Jesus, come from heaven, could reveal it to us. But this supposes the cross: it is no question of Messiah, but of the Son of man, and of the love which God has had for the world, not of His intentions with regard to the kingdom, and the promises connected with this kingdom, but of plans far more vast and exalted, heavenly in their character, in which God reveals what He is; and Jesus, rejected as Messiah, dies, and enters into glory as the Son of man who has suffered. No doubt this new birth is in any case necessary, subjectively, even that we may see the kingdom, and enjoy it, much more, that we may enjoy heavenly things in the presence of God. But as the passage speaks of the new birth, it does not treat of the heavenly glory; for this the cross must be brought in also. However it is well to remark that this whole passage, in its two parts, supposes the new order of things, where grace was acting, and that not limited to the Jews. It was an entirely new thing that was being brought in; the kingdom was not established in glory, but founded and received in the Person of the King, demanding a new nature to see it, and extending itself to every one whom grace could reach. It was morally and subjectively, the new thing; only in the first part, we have neither heavenly things, nor eternal life; in the second, we have not the kingdom.

The first thing the Lord does in stopping Nicodemus short -- who only spoke of being instructed in the state in which he was, he, a child of the kingdom according to the

50. See *Collected Writings* 15:324, 327-329 for a discussion that water is used as a figure, and does not refer to baptism. See also 14:208, 246; 20:274, 284; 29:342; 31:51; 34:45.

flesh -- is to tell him that it was not a question of that, but that he must be born entirely anew. We will look into the details in a moment; it is, however, important, first of all, to seize, that the Lord speaks of the two characters of blessing, that is, of the heavenly glory, and of the kingdom according to promise, but that He speaks of them according to the aspects they presented at that very time. We may say that He presents them, with regard to His Person in their spiritual character; on the one hand, the King despised, and that which was heavenly meeting with the cross in His Person; but, on the other hand, the new birth and life-giving power, the Son of man, the love of God, and consequently what concerned the world and man, not only dispensations and the Jews. For, faithful though God be to His promises, He cannot, when He reveals Himself, confine Himself to the Jews.

First of all then, the kingdom was being revealed in a way which did not attract attention, not by a power that should rule over the world, nor by its outward glory; a new nature was needed to perceive it. The King was there, and He gave proofs of a divine mission and of the presence of Him who was to come, but in humiliation; to the natural eye He was the carpenter's son. Nicodemus reasoned well in saying, in v. 2, "We know . . . for no one can do the miracles which thou doest, *unless God be with him*"; but God had His, "Except a man be born again" -- born entirely anew. This life is a beginning again of life, of a new source, and of a new nature -- a life that came from God. But Nicodemus still remained within the bounds and limits of the flesh, of the natural man. They are the limits of what man is, of his intelligence. Man cannot be more than he is; he cannot get beyond his nature. But the class of infidels who boast of having made this immense discovery, show, on the one hand, the limit of the human understanding, so that they can discern nothing beyond what man is; and, on the other hand, the absence of solid reasoning in themselves; for, from what they have discovered, there is no proof that a more powerful Being cannot introduce something new. Their wisdom is a self-evident fact; man by himself cannot see beyond that which is in himself; their conclusion is absolutely without force. By their principle they can conclude nothing beyond the limits of humanity; but the limits of active power are not necessarily those of receptivity. Let us return to our chapter, and seek to listen to and understand the Savior's words better than Nicodemus.

Nicodemus, as we have said, confines himself to the experience of what happens in man; Christ revealed that which was being accomplished on God's part -- the key of all the Lord's history. He had spoken of that which was necessary to see, to discern the kingdom: one must be born of water and of the Spirit. It is the kingdom of God, in whatever state it may be, and one must be made meet for this kingdom, must have a nature fit to take part in it. Two things are found here, water and the Spirit -- a nature thus characterized, morally and in its source. Water as a figure, is always the word applied by the Spirit; it brings the thoughts of God heavenly, divine, but adapted to man; it judges what is found in him, but it brings in these divine thoughts, and so purifies the heart. For water purifies what exists; but also it is the new man who drinks it, and this is not separated from that which is entirely new. "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," partakes of the nature of that of which it is born; this is, in truth, the new nature. The practical purification of our thoughts and hearts, of which we have spoken, is indeed the effect of that which this nature receives, of things for which the flesh has no desire. We could not say, "That which is born of water, is water." Water purifies that which exists; but we receive a new life, which is really Christ Himself in power of life in us, that which Adam innocent had not. We partake of the divine nature, as Peter expresses it; and where this expression is found, in the Second Epistle of Peter, it is

connected with birth by water; we escape the corruption that is in the world by lust.

It is thus only that we enter the kingdom. The kingdom of God is more than a paradise for man, it is what is fitting for God, and it is necessary that we should have a nature that answers to it. Adam, in his state of innocence, had not this, his level was man, as God had created him. For the kingdom of God, he who finds himself there, must have that which -- in man however -- is suitable to God Himself. Notice, that the Lord goes outside all questions of dispensations, He has in view the moral nature, that which is born of the flesh, is flesh, has that nature; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, that is to say, corresponds to the divine nature, which is its source. But then it could not be a question only of the Jews; if any one had this nature, he was fit for the kingdom. It was not a question of a people already chosen of God, but of a nature suitable to God.

Two things are brought to light when these principles have been laid down; first of all, the necessity of this new birth, in order to enjoy the promises made to the Jews for the earth; and secondly, that this work was of God, who communicated this new nature. God could communicate it by His Spirit to whom He would, and this opened the door to the Gentiles. Nicodemus, Jesus told him, ought not to have been astonished at the Savior saying that the Jews must be born again; the prophets had announced this (see Ezek. 36:24-28), and Nicodemus, as a master or teacher in Israel, ought to have known it. The wind, too, blew where it listed (v. 8); so was the operation of the Spirit. It was a work of God, and thus could be accomplished in any one.

There were still the heavenly things. Now if Nicodemus did not understand these earthly things of Israel's blessing, how would he understand if the Lord spoke to him of heavenly things? Now no one had ascended to heaven, so as to be able to bring word of what was there, and of what was necessary to be able to enjoy it, save He who had descended thence, who spoke of what He knew, and bore witness to what He had seen; not the Messiah -- that had to do with the earth -- but the Son of man, who, as to His divine nature, was in heaven.

Thus we have a revelation of heavenly things brought directly from heaven by Christ, and in His Person. He revealed them in all their freshness, a freshness which was found in Him, and which He, who was ever in heaven, enjoyed; He revealed them in the perfection of the Person of Him, who made the glory of heaven, whose nature is the atmosphere which all those who are found there breathe, and by which they live; He, the object of the affections which animate this holy place from the Father Himself down to the last of the angels who fill heaven's courts with their praises, He the center of all the glory. Such is the Son of man, He who came down to reveal the Father -- truth and grace -- but who divinely remained in heaven in the essence of His divine nature, in His Person inseparable from the humanity with which He was clothed! The deity which filled this humanity was inseparable in His Person from all the divine perfection, but He never ceased to be man, really and truly man before God.⁵¹

51. *Collected Writings* 33:144-148. See also 2:360; 9:217; 10:188; 20:276; 21:122, 125, 127ff; 25:233, 234; 29:124, 343, 344; *Synopsis* 3:307.

Chapter 1.5

Sealing with the Spirit and Forgiveness of Sins

Forgiveness of Sins: When?

There are at least two ways in which a child of God might view the subject of forgiveness of sins; and only one of these is according to the NT Scripture.

(1) Knowing the forgiveness of sins that is connected with the knowledge of salvation (Luke 1:77) results from resting on the Person and on the finished work of Christ. This means all is eternally settled and includes the knowledge of the eternal security of the believer. This is the truth presented in the NT Scripture.

(2) The other view regards only the forgiveness of past sins and raises a question as to the future -- allowing the possibility of being lost again. It is a faith somewhat like a Jewish perception. Such is not the meaning of "the forgiveness of sins" as used in the Acts and Epistles, or in Luke 1:77. Nor is this the gospel of our salvation (Eph. 1:13, 14) which upon believing we are sealed.

A person having this second perception of forgiveness does not know what it means to be in *the forgiven position* before God and it cannot be said of him that he has "**no more conscience of sins**" (Heb. 10:2). In his conscience he is something like an OT Israelite whose conscience could not be perfected as to the standing before God (Heb. 10:1). They had to have fresh recourse to something with respect to sins committed. Such a position "could not make him that did the service perfect, **as pertaining to the conscience**" (Heb. 9:9). And those quickened souls who do not know *the forgiven position* have recourse to something, whatever form it may take, to deal with fresh sins in an unscriptural way. They do not know what Heb. 10:14 means: "For by one offering he has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified."

The difference in these two positions was pointed out by J. N. Darby, first noting view (2) above:

Forgiveness is looked at as forgiveness of so much past sins, of sins up to our conversion, what was really Jewish forgiveness, which is contrasted in Scripture with Christian; Heb. 9, 10.⁵² What Scripture calls eternal redemption is not believed in. As to Christians in general, what it is to have no more conscience of sins, they cannot tell you, or even of the

blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputes no sin. No, all their past sins were forgiven when they believed, but sins since? well, they must be sprinkled again, or the present priesthood of Christ on high applies to it, neither of which is in Scripture.

Ask them what it means, when it says that by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; they cannot tell you: each sin, after its commission, has to find its forgiveness {judicially} as and when it may; and people are taught that it is a very dangerous doctrine to think otherwise. Now there is an interruption of communion; there is a gracious washing of the feet with water; but when I have believed in Christ's work there is no more imputation of sin, I am perfected as to conscience. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. He who bore our sins, and put them away long ago, is there. We must not confound the work of the Spirit, which makes me own my faults, and the work of Christ, finished and effectual once and forever. He bore my sins when I had not committed one of them, and if forgiveness, in the sense of non-imputation, has to be gained now, it would be impossible; for Christ would have to suffer for them as the apostle says, "For then he must often have suffered from the foundation of the world." Hence he who has not the sense of redemption in his soul by faith, and he who really has, are by current teaching put on the same footing, though one has the Spirit of adoption, and the other has not -- one looks for mercy, not yet obtained by faith, and the other, with God, cries Abba, Father; but both are taught to suppose sin imputable alike, and to search if they are children, and the delivered man is thrown back by false teaching under law in Rom. 7. If you can really cry, Abba, Father, you are surely sealed; but then no sin can be imputed to you, or Christ is dead in vain. Judaism was, as to that, better than this half Christianity. There, if a man sinned, was a sacrifice, and his sin was forgiven. Here, once, perhaps, pardoned for what was gone before, he has nothing but uncertainty for all that follows. But Christ has obtained eternal redemption, and blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no sin. And the work being complete, and he who is sanctified perfected for ever, the worshiper *once purged* has no more conscience of sins, and Christ is *sitting down* on the Father's throne because all is finished. Of this the Holy Ghost is witness: being born of God is not.⁵³

In his letters he sometimes (confusingly) used the phrase "forgiveness of sins" in connection with one quickened but not

52. Past sins in Rom. 3 are the sins of Old Testament saints. It is clear that the moment I am forgiven, I can only apply it to sins already committed; I have no other. But this does not touch the question and extent of the bearing of Christ's death, which was before I had committed any. It is confounding the Spirit's work and Christ's.

53. *Collected Writings* 31:276.

yet delivered (Rom. 7:24).⁵⁴ Do you not see from that Scripture that there is a situation where a person who has “the inward man” (v. 22) yet says that he is in “captivity,” is undelivered (whatever that may mean) and then cries out for deliverance (v. 24), and is delivered? We will consider Rom. 7 in detail in Part 3. Suffice it here to say the undelivered person is quickened, but has not the indwelling Spirit, has no perfected conscience as to sins and knows not what it is to be before God in a *position of being forgiven*, an unalterable position and relationship. The one in Rom. 7 is in a soul struggle about the question of fresh sins, and about the judicial attitude of God as a Judge with respect to them, and about how to have power and victory in the life over the indwelling sin-root. He is “sold under sin” (v. 14) and “in captivity to the law of sin in his members” (v. 23). Now, Rom. 8:2 expressly states that one who has the Spirit is not under that law, but under a new one which has set the person free from the law of sin and death. And so 2 Cor. 3:17 expressly tells us that where the Spirit is there is “liberty” (not “captivity”). It is clear that the quickened soul of Rom. 7 has not the indwelling Spirit.

Returning now to the comments of J. N. Darby, if we see that what he really meant in such cases was the quickened one’s thought, namely, forgiveness of past sins and a question of his standing, his position before God, raised about a fresh sin, then all his letters on this subject will be found to be consistent. One of these letters takes up the difference between knowing only the forgiveness of past sins and knowingly being in a forgiven position before God in the following words:

We are sealed when we believe in Christ for the forgiveness of sins; but when it is only a clearing of conscience as to past sins, we have to learn afterwards what we are, the state being vague and uncertain as to the present: the forgiveness of what is actually on the conscience is real, but goes no further. If I have learned my weakness by a legal process before, I find myself in Christ, through grace in Christ, and my whole case is clear. The church having in its ordinary gospel neither this, nor even Heb. 9, 10, is at a loss to know what to do when sin recurs. It is absolution, looking back to baptism (Calvin), re-sprinkling with the blood of Christ -- all the ignoring that “by one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” {Heb. 10:14}. But it is by the Holy Ghost given we know that we are in Christ; and this is in contrast with law (see 2 Cor. 3), and connected with the knowledge of God’s righteousness. ***The forgiveness of past sins is not being in a forgiven condition;*** were it not complete as to the work, Christ must often suffer: and if sealed thereon, we have to learn -- in a modified form perhaps -- complete forgiveness, “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord *imputeth not iniquity*,” learnt after forgiveness when that is only of the past -- relieving, but not purging fully, the conscience. Being sealed, we get into a wholly new standing, and conflicts where we did not succeed looked back on; for that is the true character of Rom. 7 -- the estimate of it, “we know” (ver. 14) when we are out of it, and at liberty through the presence of the Holy Ghost, who, being present, makes us know our place in Christ, and Christ in us. But forgiveness as to the past is different from “imputes no sin.”

As a general truth then, sealing takes place when we believe -- but believe the gospel as preached by Paul, “the gospel of your salvation.” Present forgiveness is a true and blessed thing; but as at present preached, it is only administrative forgiveness, thus Jewish forgiveness, with which Christian is contrasted in Hebrews, in Rom. 4, as in Acts 13, “By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Being in Christ is yet another thing, known, with other blessings, through the Holy Ghost given to us. But even forgiveness is, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” Where a soul is, is a matter of spiritual discernment.⁵⁵

The boldfaced emphasis in this letter is mine. In the last paragraph he speaks of what was preached by those who did not know what “the forgiveness of sins” really meant and hence as the high priest went into the holy of holies every year, and remembrance of sins was thus made, the work not being complete, so this preaching amounted to having recourse to the blood afresh each time -- “thus Jewish forgiveness.” It means that the true Christian standing is not known. Hence in the next to the last paragraph, he wrote, “The forgiveness of past sins is not being in a forgiven condition.”

So when a quickened soul has before it the notion that merely past sins are dealt with, i.e., forgiven, but that each subsequent sin raises a question of standing before God, there is no knowledge of the true meaning of “the forgiveness of sins” or of “the gospel of your salvation” or of “no more conscience of sins” as these truths are taught in Scripture. Such a soul is *safe* for heaven but not “saved” in the sense in which the NT uses this word of one who is in his conscience perfected (Heb. 9:9; 10:2); and so has not the knowledge of the scriptural force of the words “forgiveness of sins.” He is not resting on the Person and finished work for the knowledge of the forgiveness of his sins. He is not in the forgiven position, the position of forgiveness. He knows not acceptance as the prodigal learned it when the best robe was put on, with the ring and the shoes. Such a soul does not know the true meaning of sonship or acceptance in the Beloved. He is like the prodigal on the way to the Father, with the spirit of a hired servant (as the quickened soul in Rom. 7).

As you have already, no doubt, noticed, the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, i.e., being in the forgiven position before God as to the basis of God’s dealing with the soul, is connected with being sealed with the Spirit. Since these truths are connected, there will necessarily be some repetition as we consider the next question.

54. Read the following: *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:452, 453; 3:434, 435, 436, 117, 118; 1:500. A. C. Ord. *The Teaching of Scripture . . . on Spiritual Life and The Sealing of the Holy Ghost . . .* pp. 21, 22; Ed. Dennett, *Exodus*, pp. 114, 115; W. Story, *A Brief Review of a Book Entitled “Life in Christ and Sealing with the Spirit,”* p. 12; J. A. Trench, *An Answer to “Life and the Spirit,”* p. 16; *Words of Truth*, New Series 1:212.

55. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:419, 420.

Chapter 1.6

Sealing with the Spirit and the Gospel of Our Salvation

Persons not Clear Concerning the Gospel of Their Salvation

J. N. Darby wrote:

It does not follow that a person is clear as to the efficacy of Christ's work, because he believes in, and loves, Christ. The sealing of the Spirit goes, as to the detail of the work, I believe, with faith in the work, as well as the Person. See Acts 2:37, 38, and 10:43; Eph. 1:13. But in a plain gospel they go together.⁵⁶

Where a plain (clear) gospel is preached and believed, the interval between quickening and sealing would not be noticed. Still, one follows the other, for God seals saints, not sinners. But there are persons who look to Christ, yet are not resting on the finished work. The erroneous idea that a person receives all the moment he is quickened supposes that a person who is looking to Christ but is not resting on the finished work is sealed anyway. It supposes that the man of Rom. 7 is sealed. It supposes that one who shows signs of the new birth but is anxious, troubled, and lacks security is sealed; he does not have liberty but it is supposed he has the Spirit of the Lord there anyway (contradicting 2 Cor. 3:17); one who is safe but as Israel in Ex. 14, is nonetheless across the Red Sea; one who has the spirit of a hired servant, as the prodigal on the road to the Father, but is in sonship anyway as if in the house with the Father; etc., etc. Indeed, it amounts to this: the prodigal had all -- the robe, shoes and ring and was actually in the house and eating the fatted calf, making merry with his father -- while he was in the far country but was ignorant of it and only needed ministry to convince him that these things were all true of him. If this were true, then a person has peace with God and does not know it. He has not really believed the gospel of his salvation, yet is sealed as if he believed it (Eph. 1:13). He has a Jewish notion of forgiveness of sins, yet is sealed. Although the Scripture says, "But because ye are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6), yet he cannot really express such intimacy.

So, allegedly having the Spirit, and "where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is there is] liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17), he is not in liberty before God. He is in Rom. 7, in bondage to the law of

sin and death, in "captivity," under the dominion of sin (contra Rom. 6:14), and yet, as (allegedly) having the Spirit, Rom. 8:2 is true of him: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death." He trusts in flesh in Rom. 7; but Phil. 3:3 says the Christian does not. The answer to these confusing contradictions is found in the distinction made between the time at which quickening and sealing occur; i.e. they do not occur at the same instant, though the interval may be ever so short or long.

We do not doubt that one who is sealed has much to learn about blessings into which he is brought when sealed, and profits by ministry concerning these blessings -- that he may know what they are and also grow in apprehension of them. The point is that there are blessings that do not come at the same time as quickening. Nor is it true that a merely quickened soul needs to understand "advanced truth" to be sealed. He does need to rest on the finished work of Christ for the knowledge of his sins being forgiven (i.e., the knowledge of the forgiven position) and not every quickened soul does this at once.

Sealing Is Upon Believing the Gospel of Your Salvation

While this verse is cited throughout this book, we must give it some special attention here:

... in whom ye also [have trusted], having heard the word of the truth, the glad tidings of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13).

Interestingly, W. Kelly cited from Thomas Goodwin concerning his view that sealing was a distinct and subsequent matter:

"We, apostles and Jews, that had this privilege first to trust in Christ." (T. Goodwin, *in loc.*) "In whom you also, ye Ephesians, you Gentiles -- 'you also.'" "Here is a WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST DISTINCT FROM FAITH: after you believed, you were sealed." The capitals are Dr. G.'s, who repeatedly insists on their distinctness, and controverts Piscator and Calvin, who held the common confusion. He draws truly from πιστεύσαντες, "after that ye believed," that the faith was not contemporaneous with but antecedent to the sealing of the Spirit. So Ellicott.

56. Letters 3:119.

Alford is not clear.⁵⁷

If Eph. 1:13 meant that every quickened soul was simultaneously sealed, that would not account for those we read about in Acts 19, at Ephesus. Paul is here writing to the Ephesians and what he wrote fits the case of the Ephesians, whether they were among those disciples noted in Acts 19 or were later brought to know the Lord. Those in Acts 19 experienced a considerable time between quickening and sealing. If subsequently some at Ephesus came to the Lord under a clear gospel and the interval was not noticeable, there was an interval nonetheless. And thus what Paul wrote was true of all at Ephesus -- in all cases the sealing was after quickening, be the interval shorter or longer.

We will now consider a number of helpful comments⁵⁸ and then reserve other points until we take up the subject of deliverance in Part 3.

The following appeared in a magazine edited by F. G. Patterson -- but I am not aware that the answer supplied was by him. Note the careful use of the word "believer." It often is used as carelessly as the word "saved" -- not that we should make a man an offender for a word, but we should exercise care. A "believer" is a person who has the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, having *believed the gospel of his salvation* (Eph. 1:12-13). The "gospel of your salvation" is not the gospel that your past sins are forgiven, but in future fresh sin may raise the question of your no longer being a child of God. Souls may be quickened by such a defective gospel, but not sealed.

A.N.L. Does sealing take place immediately on believing; or, is it possible for a person to be a believer and not be sealed **in this dispensation**?

A. Sealing takes place at once on believing. Eph. 1:13 is plain on the subject:

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed (or, having believed') ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

The Apostle connects sealing with "the gospel of **your salvation**." God's salvation is announced by the gospel; I have believed in the gospel of my salvation, and forthwith I am sealed by the Spirit. A saved man is one who has no doubts. Scripture never speaks of a man being "saved" who has any. We must not confound the state of many **quickened** souls with those who have **believed**. The action of God in quickening and in sealing are as distinct as possible. He quickens a sinner who wants {needs} life; He does not seal a sinner as such, surely; that were to seal him in his sins; nor does He seal a quickened soul in his misery. He does not seal Peter when he cried out "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5); or when the soul is crying out "O wretched man that I am"

{Rom. 7:24}. He seals a believer; and "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" {2 Cor. 3:17}; not doubts, and bondage, and fears.

These two actions of the Holy Ghost are never, as far as I know, synchronous -- they do not happen at the same moment; while on God's part there is of course no reason why it should not be so. Many cases testify as to this in Scripture.

The disciples were quickened before the day of Pentecost, yet they were not sealed till then. The Samaritans received the gospel and were quickened before Peter and John came down, and they were not sealed till then; ("as yet he was fallen upon none of them" See Acts 8:5-17.) "There was great **joy**" we read, and there is often this without **peace** with God. Peace is a full and perfect word; it is far more than joy. A soul that has peace with God has been sealed by the Spirit. Paul was quickened by a voice from heaven (Acts 10:4), and yet he did not receive the Holy Ghost till the third day after, when he had gone through all the deep work in his soul for the three days. (See Acts 5:17.) Cornelius was a devout man, one that feared God, and prayed to God always -- a **quickened** soul. He is told to send for Peter to hear words of him, whereby he and all his house would be saved (Acts 11:14). God does not call him a **saved** man, as merely quickened. When Peter comes he does not tell him he must be born again, which as a sinner he needed and had been, but he points him to Christ, ["by this man is preached unto you the **forgiveness of sins**"] and they accept the message, and the Holy Ghost fell on them. You get the same thing in Acts 19; those at Ephesus who were quickened souls had not as yet received the Holy Ghost.

It is not possible for a person to be a **believer** in the present dispensation without being sealed. There are many quickened souls who are not sealed, but no Christian ever dies and passes away from this scene, where as to personal place the Holy Ghost is since Pentecost, without being sealed. This is why you see cases in which there was no liberty, or peace with God, enjoyed during the lifetime, with occasional gleams of joy; and yet when on a death-bed they have got perfect peace with God, and are sealed.

I think we use the word "believer" too indiscriminately, for every state of soul in which God is working. A believer in Scripture language is one who is sealed. Scripture allows but one basis, or normal condition, for Christians. When we come to look at the condition of souls we find that in many cases they are not there; while there is no reason on God's part why they should not be.⁵⁹

Here is another extract from F. G. Patterson's magazine, not by him.

As to when a person is sealed -- on conversion, or afterwards? Does a soul believe before he is quickened? Does believing, quickening, and conversion all take place at the same moment of time, and then at some future period sealing takes place? A few words will suffice, I think. The sealing of the Spirit takes place, generally speaking, when the person has believed in Christ for remission of sins. Quickening takes place in the action of the Holy Ghost, through the Word of God, or the truths

57. *Lectures on The New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, London: Broom, p. 293, 1877.

58. Besides these citations, the following references are helpful. See in the index of the *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, the word "sealing," and see 31:258, 260, 264. Also, *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:351; 3:90; *The Bible Treasury* 15:132, 139, 166; *The Bible Treasury, New Series* 5:379; W. Story, *op. cit.*, pp.4-6, 29, 30; J. A. Trench, *op. cit.*, p. 12; *Words of Truth* 5:69; W. Kelly, *Ephesians*, pp. 38, 39 (F. E. Race ed.).

59. *Words of Truth* 3:137ff. See also 2:95ff; and, W. Kelly, *Galatians*, pp. 66, 67 (Morrish ed.).

revealed therein, on the dead soul. This action produces and imparts faith, which is simultaneous with the quickening. A soul believes in what has been directly revealed, though forgiveness and salvation may not be known for long after. The new life thus imparted, being in action, finds the incongruity of the evil within. It begins to find its sins, as measured before God, a burden it cannot bear; even when forgiveness of these sins is known, it finds an evil nature over which it has no power, and this leads to the exercises of Rom. 7 till deliverance is known. In fact the sinner requires two things for peace: forgiveness for what it has done and deliverance from what it is. When it learns to look out of self at Christ for forgiveness, the sealing of the Spirit takes place. And at times there may be the experiences of Rom. 7, pure and simple, it does not suppose that the Holy Ghost has been received; it is an abstract case that is assumed. Generally speaking, however, the Holy Ghost is given as a seal, when Christ is rested upon for remission of sins; this is never the case at the moment, when the soul is born again.⁶⁰

A. C. Ord wrote an excellent paper on this subject to refute the teaching that a person possesses every Christian blessing from the instant of quickening. In it he said:

Throughout the Acts it is the name of Jesus Christ in which repentance and remission of sins was to be preached, being owned to which this blessing attaches. The disciples at Ephesus, who, previously, did not know that the Holy Ghost was come, were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, only that in this case, as at Samaria, the gift came through the apostles' hands; but in each case, as in that of Cornelius and his house, we have additional evidence that a man may be converted, and not have received the Holy Ghost.⁶¹ In the address of the apostle to the house of Cornelius, it is, as has been remarked, when the apostle comes to the full value of the name of Christ, and remission of sins flowing from it, that "the Holy Ghost fell upon all them that heard the word." This corresponds with the doctrinal statement of the apostle in the Epistle to the Ephesians {1:13}: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, **the gospel of your salvation.**" It was that full gospel of salvation, not **merely** the first operations of grace in the conviction of sin, but, as at Caesarea, the words of salvation, that were received, and with the same result -- "in whom also, having believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13).

In Rom. 5, it is the great display of the love of God in the death of His Son, which He commends to us, and which the Holy Ghost, given to us, sheds abroad in our hearts. . . .

What a wondrous testimony on God's part is this seal, the witness of His favor and of the soul's acceptance by the presence of a divine Person resting on the believer and dwelling in him; it is a testimony so real, so emphatic, so powerful in its effects, and so entirely from God in its assuring nature, in the soul, that it is suitably called the

seal, as expressive of its nature, meaning, and object. Were His presence and witness contingent on our faithfulness, He could not stay with us an hour, but if it is for the sake of what Christ has done, He can "abide with us for ever." But as the evidence of the reception of the Spirit is rendered indistinct and hazy by the teaching we are opposing, for you may have the Spirit and not know it, "for there is practically no middle class that have not received it" (pp. 25, 27), so also as a consequence of the separation of this gift from the soul's apprehension of the work of Christ, we find it taught, that you may "slip, not surely out of the possession, but out of the knowledge of the possession, of the Spirit" ("Life and the Spirit," p. 5 {by F. W. Grant}). Thus the seal, or witness, of God is virtually rendered null and void, "for error in doctrine, or unholiness may, almost to any extent, hinder His witness, and our realization" (p. 53).

The word of God teaches, on the contrary, that the Holy Ghost never can thus deny what Christ has done; He is the Witness of the eternal efficacy of the value of the blood of Christ in the sight of God, and that sin is no more imputed. He could not have come, nor have sealed us, otherwise, and that is the reason He was never given to dwell in man before redemption. Hence the apostle says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto {for} the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). He does not cease to make His presence felt, nor do we lose the consciousness of it, if we fail; though it is felt in a painful way, and as a reprover, rather than a comforter. He lets us know that He has been grieved by practical inconsistency with what Christ has done, and with that nearness to God in the light, into which that work has introduced us, and of which the presence of the Spirit is the witness, and it is by this place of privilege that the sin is measured.

What is felt in failure is, therefore, a sensible effect of the Holy Spirit's presence, so true and faithful both to God and to us, that He cannot pass over what is evil in us; and we are to listen the more to the grief He expresses, because He is a Friend who will never leave us. How could He act otherwise without denying Himself or falsifying the very ground on which He has come to dwell with us as the Seal of God, "till the day of redemption"? "The Spirit lusts against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit, and these are contrary the one to the other," says the apostle (Gal. 5:17); but no such thought as the silence of the Spirit and ceasing to be conscious of His presence, an idea destructive of the very nature of a seal altogether. To support this view, however, Mr. Grant quotes, "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst" (John 4:14). One would suppose that this passage taught plainly the contrary, that is, that the effects of the presence of the Spirit were abiding and not transient; "but who would argue from this, that if a man ever thirsted he had never received the Holy Ghost?" (page 63). Could Scripture be used in a sense more opposite to that for which the Lord spoke it? It is really reasoning away Scripture, and destroying its effect to support a theory.⁶²

60. *Words of Truth*, New Series 1: 212.

61. Here, again, we have the opposition between Mr. Grant's statements and those of scripture.

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 Rom. 8:9. '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.

62. A. C. Ord, *Life and Sealing* . . . , pp. 31-34.

Adoption

When we believe on the Person and work of Christ for the knowledge of our sins forgiven, this is “the faith” of which the NT speaks. Certainly the OT saints believed God, had faith in what He had revealed. But Gal. 5:25, “But, faith having come, we {Jews} are no longer under a tutor {the law}; for ye are all God’s sons by faith in Christ Jesus,” indicates a fullness, concerning faith, has come. This is the faith in Christ Jesus, One Who has finished the work on which we rest for the knowledge of sins forgiven and has risen from the dead and is seated above. This is not a Jewish kind of faith, which we considered before, as if a fresh application of blood was required consequent upon sinning. No. This is faith that brings into a forgiven position and gives the child of God the status and position of son. Child denotes relationship; son denotes position, status. And as soon as one receives this status, he immediately receives the Spirit: “But because ye are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6).

However feeble that apprehension of the finished work is, the child of God is sealed, in virtue of the infinite value of that work on which he is resting.

But we, when we believe the atonement, are anointed and sealed, because of, and as a testimony to, the value of His work⁶³

. . . the presence of the Holy Spirit in us is the seal of the value of the blood.⁶⁴

We cannot become a child of God by any other way than new birth. For example, we are not made a child of God by an act of adoption. That would be reading a modern usage of the word “adoption” into it. Adoption in scripture means “sonship” and refers to status. For example, “adoption” is used to describe Israel’s national status during the millennium (Rom. 9:4). For the Christian, adoption, or sonship, denotes status. With reference to the line of things we have been considering, the OT children are viewed as in their minority, whereas we are looked at as in our majority (Gal. 3:25 to 4:7).

“Adoption of children” in Eph. 1:5 is a mistake. J. N. Darby’s translation reads, we are “marked out beforehand for the adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself.”

We are sons and have received the Spirit of adoption (Spirit of sonship) and are empowered to cry “Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6) as did our blessed Savior in the garden (Mark 14:36). Praise God! What nearness we have to our Father! And finally this blessing is going to be completely manifested, for we are “awaiting adoption, [that is] the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23). Then it will be complete as to our very bodies.

Summing Up

Speaking of the two operations of the Spirit, quickening and

sealing, W. Kelly said:

The first is, when a man is brought to a sense of sin. What makes a man abhor himself? He is born of God. He has no happiness at all perhaps, but a real sense of ruin; yet his heart cleaves to God. That man is born of God -- truly converted: no comfort as yet perhaps in his soul, but his heart is open to listen further to the word of the truth, the gospel of salvation. He believes it. What then? He is sealed of the Holy Ghost, as a believer, not only in Christ, but in the gospel of our salvation {Eph. 1:13} -- the work that Christ has done. For I do not think that you can have a soul sealed with the Holy Ghost, unless he enters into the work as well as the person of Christ. This accounts for the fact that there were persons born of the Holy Ghost who never were sealed. For instance, the Old Testament saints were believers in Christ; they all looked for Christ. All were born of God, but not one was sealed with the Holy Ghost. To be born of the Spirit and sealed with the Spirit are very different things, which may or may not be united in the same person. All must be born of the Spirit, but it is never said that all must be sealed with the Spirit in order to enter into the kingdom of God. Wherever the Holy Ghost speaks of the sealing of the Spirit, it proves the clean contrary. Who was the first person said to be sealed with the Spirit? Our blessed Lord Himself. He had it in a way peculiar to Himself. When was He sealed? When redemption was accomplished and He went up to heaven? No; but when He walked upon earth. “Him hath God the Father sealed.” It was as Son of man He was sealed, and as Son of man on earth before redemption -- without bloodshedding, because He knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. He was absolutely sinless. He could have the Holy Ghost abiding in Him entirely apart from blood, because He was the Holy One -- the Savior. He needed no work -- no blood -- no redemption; but yet He died, and there was blood shed and redemption effected. Why so? That we might be sealed -- that we, who had no natural title to be brought nigh, that we, in whom the Holy Ghost could never take up His abode, might have that same Holy Ghost who dwelt in Him abiding in us.

This is what our Lord gradually brings out to view. Thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” Therefore it was that the Lord taught the disciples to ask for the Holy Spirit; and this, after they were already regenerate. Yet He tells them to ask the Father for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11). Is it the same thing now, seeing that He has given the Spirit? Am I to ask for the Holy Ghost when I have Him dwelling in me? It would have been the most flagrant unbelief, after Christ was in the midst of the disciples, had they asked God to send Christ. And now, when the Holy Ghost is sent from heaven, and given to be in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life, was it for such to entreat the Holy Ghost to be given them? for Christians to be praying for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit? It is a practical denial that the Holy Ghost is sent down from heaven, and is dwelling in us. It is quite right to pray that we may not grieve Him, and that we may not quench Him. To pray that we may be strengthened with all might according to His Spirit in the inner man, is according to the word of God; but we ought not to say one word that implies the Holy Ghost is not here where He is. A most grievous cloud of darkness rests on the minds of many children of God as to this subject. They do not believe their privileges; they do not know that the Holy Ghost dwells in them. Does not the Holy Ghost feel this? If you had one

63. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 26:91; also 31:250, 260.

64. *Ibid.* 19:484. More on the subject of adoption will be found in expositions of Rom. 8 and Gal. 4. See also *The Bible Treasury, New Series* 6:107; *The Bible Treasury* 12:363, 364; E. Dennett, *The Children of God*, ch.3.

caring for you day by day, and you were habitually to question your relationship to him, or doubt his care of you, it would show that you were morbid. There is a mist over your eyes, and you are asking for the very mercies that are already given.

This is neither wisdom nor faith. It is quite true that we may ask God to bless the gospel to the unconverted and to regenerate {quicken} them. But people pray for a pouring out of the Spirit -- a different thing from conversion, and only mentioned in connection with the Holy Ghost's being given, first to the Jews, next to the Samaritans, and, thirdly, to the Gentiles. From that day to this, there is not the smallest ground to ask God for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is an unintelligent prayer, founded on unbelief of the truth that the Holy Ghost is sent down. Even God Himself could not add to the blessedness of the gift He has already given. There was a great difference between a Jew, a Gentile, and a Samaritan; and therefore it is mentioned expressly in relation to the three. The Holy Ghost never will be poured out again upon the Church. It is ignorance of the ways of God to look for it. He has been poured out for the Church as truly as it is possible for God to give. But when the heavenly saints have been taken to be with Christ at His coming, there will in due time follow an outpouring of His Spirit on a new people, when the Jews and Gentiles will be brought as such distinctly to the knowledge of Jesus. But as long as the Church is on the earth, there never will nor can be such a thing. Can it be repeated, any more than there can be another mission of the Lord Jesus to work again for us? Nor is this a mere matter of speculation. It is connected in the deepest possible way with our worship and even our peace.

You will find that faith in the presence of God's Spirit, or unbelief of it, is that which puts to the test saints in the present day. It behoves us to consider well whether we really do enter into the mind of God about it. Let us understand that what constitutes us Christians is not only that we believe in Christ, but that we are now sealed with the Holy Ghost. He regenerates {quickens} an unbeliever by faith in Christ; He seals none but believers. This was the decisive proof of a man's being a Christian. Peter thus alleges the fact: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" It was not merely that they had believed; but God had given them the Holy Ghost, and could they dare to refuse persons in whom that divine Person dwelt, on whom God had conferred such signal grace? Such, too, is the ground of all Christian unity -- the presence of the Holy Ghost. 'The question is not merely, Is there life? but, have we believed that the Holy Ghost dwells in you? It was the possession of the Spirit, and not life merely, that was made the turning point. It was not until they had received the Holy Ghost that the Gentiles were acknowledged as part and parcel of the Church of God (Acts 11). The Church is not only bound to look for life, and to believe that there is life in the soul, but is also authorized from the word of God to wait till there is such a manifestation of it, as to plainly manifest that the man has the Holy Ghost dwelling in him. There never was such a thing as owning as an assembly till there was a recognition of their being on common ground with the Church by the reception of the Holy Ghost.

All this makes the true way of dealing with saints now very evident. The Church would be justified in expecting this manifestation of the power of the Spirit. It is not true

charity which does not look for it. "In whom also, after that ye believed ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of your inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." Without dwelling on this last verse, I would make the remark again, that as the seal of the Spirit could not be till the work of Christ was done (the Son only being sealed upon earth who needed no redemption, but who came, on the contrary, to redeem us to God), as we now, on the footing of redemption, receive the Holy Ghost to dwell in us, so we receive the earnest of the inheritance.

This last, I believe, to be just as peculiar to the Church of God since Pentecost, as the sealing of the Spirit. As the disciples were not sealed with the Spirit, so neither had they the earnest of the inheritance till the Holy Ghost was sent down from heaven. This earnest is the power of the Holy Ghost giving a believer now present joy, present anticipation of the glory to which he is going. This may be hindered in many a believer's heart by a want of knowledge of the truth, or by the workings of the flesh, worldliness, &c. But still it remains true, that, now that the Holy Ghost is given, a believer ought to look up and pray to God if there be anything that hinders his entering into the joy of his blessed inheritance, that it may be detected and put away. I am quite sure that the caring only for being born of God has acted greatly to the injury of the children of God; it has stopped them short, as if the only object were to learn that they were children and no more. But our business is, having believed, to go on and learn other truths, and above all, Christ Himself. So it is precisely that the Holy Ghost's regenerating a saint is not to arrest the soul with the fact that it is regenerate; but being born of God, we have to go forward, to enter into the blessed truths of God, which cluster round both our redemption and our future glory, and find their center in Christ's person and work.

As the seal, the Holy Ghost is the witness of the perfectness of our being cleansed from our sins -- the effect of the work of Christ. That operation of the Spirit is meant which supposes the work done, and that we are set apart to God on the ground of redemption. We are sealed because redemption is finished. If I look at glory, it is not arrived. Therefore the figure is changed when he speaks of our inheritance. "Sealing" would not do in connection with that, because we have it not as a fact; we wait to be put in possession of what we are to have along with Christ. Hence the Holy Ghost is spoken of as "the earnest of our inheritance." The same Spirit who seals us is the earnest of our bright future "till the redemption of the purchased possession." First of all, we have the privileges of divine grace that chose us in Christ; predestined us to the place of sons; took us into full favor, without a single question, "in the Beloved"; gave us redemption already in Christ through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. But no sooner has the Holy Ghost thus established us in the full knowledge of God's love to us, and the present effect of it in putting away our sins, than He brings before us the inheritance. Hence comes in the relation of the Holy Ghost to these two things. And as there are two great parts in God's choice of us personally, so the Holy Ghost takes a double relationship. He is the seal of the grace and blessing that we have in Christ, and He is the earnest of the glory we are going to have with Christ. These are the relations of the Holy Ghost to the individual believer. All the corporate dealings of the Spirit have a secondary place compared with His ways with the soul individually, which,

though susceptible of a far fuller development, have received a measure of notice sufficient for my present purpose.⁶⁵

It might be well to note here that those not sealed are not members of the body⁶⁶ until sealed; because union in that body is by the indwelling of the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:17; 12:13; etc.), not by the possession of life, as so many erroneously think.

65. *Ephesians*, in chapter 1.

66. Cp. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 103.

Chapter 1.7

Sealing of the Spirit -- and Assurance, Peace, and Justification

Obtaining Assurance and Peace with God

The assurance of salvation and of being a child of God is connected with the sealing with the Spirit. These things are joined together, along with justification, at the point when one is sealed with the Spirit. The connections of these things were brought out with clarity through the ministry of J. N. Darby.

Assurance of salvation has taken hold on many now. When I began it was, so to say, unknown.⁶⁷

What set me free in 1827 is still the theme on which my soul dwells, with, I trust, much deeper sense of its importance -- something much nearer to me, but the same truths.⁶⁸

He had spent a considerable time in the position described in Rom. 7 but in Dec. 1826/Jan. 1827 a change took place.

I am daily more struck with the connection of the great principles on which my mind was exercised by and with God, when I found salvation and peace, and the questions agitated and agitating the world at the present day: the absolute, divine authority and certainty of the Word, as a divine link between us and God, if everything (church and world) went; personal assurance of salvation in a new condition by being in Christ; the church as His body; Christ coming to receive us to Himself; and collaterally with that, the setting up of a new earthly dispensation, from Isaiah 32 (more particularly the end); all this was when laid aside at E.P.'s in 1827 . . .⁶⁹ ◆

I should say that at this time the word of God became for me an *absolute authority* as to faith and practice; not that I had doubted it previously, but it had now become such from conviction, implanted by God Himself in my heart. In this way the assurance of salvation through the work of Christ, the presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, by whom "having believed, ye have been sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph. 1:13, 14), salvation known and possessed, and this indwelling of the Holy Ghost giving us the assurance of it, constitute the normal state of the Christian. He is no longer of this world, save to pass through it peacefully, doing the will of God. Bought with a great price, he is to glorify God in his conduct.⁷⁰ ◆

Even the doctrine of the Reformation, "assurance of salvation," held then by all, and condemned by the Council of Trent as the vain confidence of the heretics, is

condemned by a vast body of protestants nowadays as presumptuous, and is possessed by few in simplicity of well-grounded faith, though the number of these be, thank God, increasing.⁷¹ ◆

Already, in Ireland, the Presbyterian clergy are trying to put a stop to lay-preaching, that is to say, to that liberty which was the effect of the powerful action of the Spirit of God. We see these young souls placed under the direction of unconverted ministers, so-called, or else under the direction of those who oppose assurance of salvation.⁷² ◆

The question now is the presence and power of the Holy Ghost as forming and embodying the Church in unity. This evidently is important. It has been accompanied among the brethren with the revival, as I judge, of the clear doctrine of justification by faith, which was much buried under collateral doctrines, as regeneration and its proofs, which had really taken the place of justification by faith; so that, in general, assurance of salvation was rare, and considered to be a matter of spiritual attainment. Besides, there are truths to which God recalls the saints as being important at such or such a time, as leading to peculiar and needed blessings, or as bearing on peculiar evils or dangers, and against which therefore the malice of the enemy will be particularly directed, to oppose or undermine them. Such I believe the doctrine of the Holy Ghost's presence in the Church to be at this time. The unity of the body as Christ's spouse, *separate from evil*, is closely connected, yea, identified with, this great doctrine, which is founded on the exaltation of Christ as Son of man to the right hand of God, in testimony of the full completeness of His work, and His infinite favour with God. And hence its connection with the full, free assurance of salvation in the soul, and the joy of adoption by the Holy Ghost. No one taught of God could knowingly undervalue such a doctrine; and I do especially believe that no one specially taught of God now, "men having understanding of the times," but will on the contrary feel its peculiar vital importance, as ministered of God in the Church for saving souls, and the Church itself from the current delusions of the day. This is the question before us.⁷³ ◆

67. Letters 3:309, 1874.

68. Letters 2:499.

69. Letters 1:344.

70. Letters 2:433.

71. Collected Writings 14:101.

72. Letters 1:291, 292.

73. Collected Writings 3:342.

How to Obtain Peace With God

The following from the pen of JND illustrates the experience of many souls. Such are quickened, but they are not sealed, they are not in Christian liberty. Of course they are not in Christian liberty! But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Cor. 3:17; cp. Rom. 6:14).

How can I get peace with God?

He has "made peace by the blood of the cross."

I do not deny that; I believe it; but I have not peace; and how can I have that peace myself?

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God."

Well, I know it is so written, but I have not peace; *that* I know: I wish I had, and I sometimes think I do not believe at all. I see you happy; and how is that happiness of soul to be had?

You do not then think it presumptuous to be at peace with God in the assurance of His favour, and thus of our own salvation?

I think it would be in *me*; but I see it in scripture, and therefore it must be right; and I see a few who enjoy the divine favour, in whom one sees it is real. But I do not know how to get this. It leaves me distressed if I think of it, though I get on from day to day as other Christians do; but when this question is raised, I know I am not at peace, nor assured of divine favour resting upon me, as I see you and others enjoying it. And it is a serious thing, because 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?

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; nor is his peace solidly established till he knows he is in Christ, as well as that Christ died for him; and the Christian's getting on, as you say, day by day, is a false and hollow thing, which must some time or other be broken up. It is that which often causes distress on death-beds. And the character of Christian activity is sadly deteriorated and made a business of, a kind of means of getting happy, not work in the power of the Spirit, by a soul at peace.

If a person is really serious, and walks before God, he cannot rest in spirit till he be at peace with Him, and the deeper all these exercises are the better. But He has made peace by the blood of the cross. All these exercises are merely bringing up the weeds to the surface, as ploughing and harrowing a field. They are useful in this way, and necessary; but they are not the crop which faith in the finished work of Christ produces. His work is finished. He "appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and He "finished the work which his Father gave him to do." That work, which puts away our sin, is complete and accepted of God. If you come to God by Him, if your sins are not all put away by it, completely and for ever, they never can be, for He cannot

die again; and all by the "one sacrifice," or else, as the apostle reasons in Heb. 9, "he must often have suffered."

I see this more clearly, and that it is a perfect, finished work, done once for all.

What do you want, then, still, in order to have peace?

Well, that is what I want to see clearly.

I am anxious, before we speak of your state and hindrances, to have the work itself clearly brought before our minds. Who did this work?

Why, Christ, of course.

What part had you in completing it?

None.

None, surely, unless we say your sins. And to what state of your soul does it apply -- a godly or an ungodly state?

Well, must not I be holy?

Surely, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But do you see how quickly, and with the instinct of self-righteousness, you turn from Christ's work to your own holiness -- to what you are? It is curious-the quicksightedness of man to what makes nothing of him and his self- approbation. Your desire of holiness, however, is the desire of the new man. Were you indifferent to it, one's work would be to seek to awaken your conscience, not to talk of peace: rather, perhaps, to break up *false* peace. But we are now inquiring how an anxious soul can find peace.

Quite so. I am sadly indifferent sometimes, and that is one thing that troubles me; but I have not peace, and I would give anything for it.

I do not doubt such indifference retards, in a certain sense, your finding it, but we have humbly to learn what we are; the gain of a few dollars would give more earnestness to many a soul. But I repeat my question -- Does this work of Christ apply simply to your ungodliness or godliness, or to an improved state at least?

Why, simply, of course, to my ungodliness.

Undoubtedly. Consequently not to your holiness, if there were any, nor to an improved state. Yet, what are you looking for to get peace? Is it not an improved state of soul?

Why, yes.

Then you are on the wrong road, for that by which Christ "has made peace" applies to your ungodliness. Your desire is right, but you are putting the cart before the horse, as men speak -- you are looking for holiness to get Christ, instead of looking to have Christ to get holiness.

But I do hope for His help in order to get it.

That I can believe, but you are looking for His *help*, not to His *work* or blood-shedding for peace. You want {need} *righteousness* not *help*. We need His help every moment when we *are* justified. He is the Author of every good thought in us before. But that is not peace, nor His blood-shedding, nor righteousness. Yet this search is not without its fruit for all that, because it leads you to see that you cannot thus find what you seek for. You will neither find holiness thus, nor peace by it. But, finding that you cannot and that when "to *will* is present" you do not find "how to *perform* that which is good" {Rom. 7} will lead you, through grace, knowing that there is no good in you, to that which does give peace -- *Christ's work* -- and not your state and the work of grace in you. That work God

works; but it is not to lead us to look at it as the way of peace, but through it and out of ourselves, simply and wholly, to Christ's work and His acceptance before God. But come now, where are you before God?

I do not know. That is just what troubles me.

Are you lost?

I hope not. Of course we are lost by nature; but I hope there is a work of grace in me, though I sometimes doubt it.

Suppose you stood before God now, and your case had to be decided, where would you be, had it, as it must in judgment, to be decided by your *works*? Have you confidence?

I hope it would be right: I cannot help thinking there is a work of grace in me; but I cannot think of judgment without fear.

I trust there is a work of grace in you -- do not doubt it; but here is the turning-point of our inquiry: What you want is, to be in God's presence, and know there, if God enters into judgment with you (as it must then be in righteousness and in respect of your state and works), that you are simply lost! Now you are a sinner, and a sinner cannot subsist before God in judgment at all. It is not help you want here; that is, if actually in God's presence, but righteousness, and that you have not got; I mean as to your own faith and conscience, through and in which we possess it. Righteousness can alone suffice before God; and now the righteousness of God, for we have none, and only this is to be found. Nor does the work of grace in us produce this. It is by faith, through the work of Christ, and in Him we possess it; through Him God justifies the ungodly.⁷⁴

How shall we regard this unhappy soul? Is he born anew? Is he a lost soul? If he is born anew, why does he not have peace, not have assurance, not have liberty? If he is a lost soul, why does he care about peace with God, have so many anxious thoughts, and hope for God's help? Is that what the flesh does?

It is not necessary to view this person under the constraint of a rigid sealed/lost dichotomy. This person is a quickened but unsealed soul. He has faith in the Person of Christ, but is not resting on the efficacy of the work of Christ. I remember discussing this teaching with an evangelist and he said that this teaching helped him much in dealing with souls in various states. No doubt this was the case also with Charles Stanley, of Rotherham, England, who recounted a case of a certain woman in an article, *Redemption*:

I knew a person who had, for years, been deeply anxious about her soul. She longed to know for certain, that she had redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of her sins. She felt that if she died without redemption, she was lost forever. She went from place to place, to hear the preaching of the Word. Her anxiety became very great; yet nothing that she heard gave her peace. She was constantly thinking that she had something to do before she could have redemption. She tried to lay hold of the promises but they gave her no relief. She tried to serve God and keep His commandments; she found she failed at every step. She tried forms and ceremonies, but all in vain. She then thought she must have stronger faith, and

tried to understand more clearly the value of the blood of Jesus; still all was darkness. God would not even have her faith as the price of her redemption. Her heart sank in despair; she could do no more. It was when she was in that state of self-despair, she heard those words, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." The Holy Ghost spoke in her soul in that moment, and said to her, "It was God who spoke these words." In a moment she felt the vast difference between herself seeing the blood of Jesus, and God seeing it. She thought, Yes, God sees so much value in the blood of Jesus, that He will pass over me, and the destroyer shall not touch me. From that moment she believed what God had said about the blood of Jesus. From that moment she had peace through the blood of Jesus. Now she knows, with certainty, that she has redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of her sins.

Surely, this one case, out of many thousands that might be told, shows the importance of the subject before us.⁷⁵

Such cases illustrate the distinction between quickening (the new birth) and sealing as a subsequent occurrence.⁷⁶ If you deny that the Word teaches these things, are you not forced to choose between:

(1) regarding those souls that show signs of quickening as having the Spirit indwelling in spite of the fact that they have not peace and assurance and liberty;

(2) or, regarding such as really lost?

And having made a choice between these two, the true explanation becomes an object of hostility. Listen to a writer that I need not name, from Open Brethren,:

5. UNKNOWNING REGENERATION

This is a doctrine which Exclusives seek to hide . . .⁷⁷

No Such Thing as Unconscious Regeneration. If you believe this "doctrine" then you must preach "another gospel"! What is being said when such claims are being made is that it is possible to be "born again" without ever believing the Gospel of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ!⁷⁸

Well! Then according to Gal. 1, we must fall under the apostolic curse! Perhaps his hostility to those he opposes has led to his rash and intemperate comments. Persons with such contracted views might tell us what the state of the woman was in the case cited by Charles Stanley above. Do you think such a person has no divine life? -- that it was all the flesh? Oh, you say, she was saved but did not know it. She believed the gospel of her salvation and was sealed with the Spirit (Eph. 1:13) but did not know it. But this is incredible -- she believed

75. *Selected Ministry of Charles Stanley* 1:162, St. Louis: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.

76. Where a full, clear gospel is presented and believed, no noticeable time interval may be noticed. Still, sealing always follows new birth, for God does not seal a sinner. He seals those who have been quickened and are thus saints.

77. {This is so grossly and patently absurd a statement that the question is: is not such a one the least qualified to speak of what he represents is "a doctrine which Exclusives, " etc.?)

78. Speaking of someone with whom he spoke about persons not knowing they were "regenerate," he wrote: "When asked for Scripture proof he said, 'John 3:8!' He claimed that both J. N. Darby and William Kelly believed and taught this doctrine!" Well, of course they did. The implication is that this writer does not know that fact? Can he have looked into the matter?

the gospel of her salvation but possessed an unconscious salvation! And an unconscious sealing with the Spirit! And an unconscious peace! And an unconscious liberty!

The truth is she had none of these things, but she was quickened. How was she to obtain these things? J. N. Darby wrote:

And if I am justified by faith, faith in what? Not faith in my state of righteousness; but faith in the Person and blood-shedding and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.⁷⁹ ♦

I know no one who does not think that all who believe in Christ are washed in His blood: but washed in His blood is not the same as redemption, though they may be identified as necessarily going together. Peace is not simply a matter of experience, though peace is experienced. "Having made peace by the blood of his cross": that is not experience. And when I began to preach peace by Jesus Christ, fifty or sixty years ago, it was very rare indeed for any believer to have it. I object entirely to its being called mere experience: there is faith in the efficacy of Christ's work as well as in His Person, though all who believe in His Person have part in His work . . . No doubt if I believe in Christ, God sees me clear, but that is not justification. Peace is the *consequence* of justification by faith. I insist that all that believe in Christ are justified (washed in Christ's blood). But your correspondent leaves out justification by faith in consequence of Christ's being risen, and confounds peace and justification, or rather drops the latter, leaving all as what is in God's mind, or the experience of peace. It is for souls very dangerous teaching, leaving out all exercise of soul, and the reality of faith connected with the sense of sins. Conscience and responsibility are left out of the question and hence so much hollowness of profession. The best gospel preached when I began was, You must be born again, and now examine whether you are in the faith; and three quarters of evangelists are there yet, and object to assurance, though there is an immense change; but very few have the faith of Heb. 10. Your correspondent shuts out faith as to this. I do not believe he means any harm, but I fear there is too little experience, and too much learned.⁸⁰ ♦

Dear Miss --, Your question depends on many points in the state of the soul. The first question would be -- have you ever got settled assurance of conscience before God so that that should be true of you which is said, "The worshipers once purged should have no more conscience of sins"? {Heb. 10:2}. When we have not this, every fault mixes itself up with the question of the light in which God views us, and the question is not restoration, but recovering some sense of standing before God, which is a very different one. God is not really known in love, though we may believe generally that He is so since He has visited us in mercy. If I am not out of Egypt, that is, if I have not a clear knowledge of God as a redeeming God {cp. Ex. 15}, and I am looking to God who defends me against His judgment by blood, my thought of Him is yet wholly imperfect, my failures give fears, not pain properly, to my spirit. The great point is then to know and believe that He has redeemed us in love, and taken us in the resurrection of Christ out of the whole state and condition I was in before; that He justifies me, not that I am justified before Him -- and both are right, but the former only is liberty. When this is fully known love is never doubted, but we are brought to feel it is

grieved; but it is therefore still known to be there; and hence, when the heart really looks to Him it is soon restored, though the Lord may keep it so long in suspense, as to communion, as may be necessary to probe the heart as much as needed. If you have the full assurance that God is love to you at all times, the witness of His Spirit in communion will soon be restored to you.⁸¹

Returning to the complaint regarding "unconscious regeneration," I suggest that persons who hold such views really must regard the woman cited by Charles Stanley as having no divine life at all, or else such who object to "unconscious regeneration" believe in *unconscious salvation*. Concerning the case of one who has the Spirit, we read:

For as many as are led by [the] Spirit of God, *these* are the sons of God (Rom. 8:14).

Was she one of the sons while in that state? Moreover:

For ye have not received a spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received a spirit of adoption {sonship} whereby we cry Abba, Father (Rom. 8:15).

And if these things be so in a person, the Spirit is present, and then:

The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16).

Clearly, the woman was not in the confidence that she was a child of God; rather, she was in fear. Yes, one can explain this away, for what in God's Word has not been explained away? One could claim that she had the Spirit but did not listen to the Spirit's witness! Or, that the Spirit witnesses through the Word, not directly to our spirits. And the cases in Acts may be dismissed as "transitional cases" (the objection admits the time interval) in order to get rid of their testimony to the time between new birth and sealing.⁸² See how easily the teaching of Scripture is dismissed?

The woman was in fear (cp. Rom. 8:15). Clearly, the woman did not have *liberty*. But:

. . . where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is, there is] liberty

81. *Letters* 3:309.

82. This refusal of truth results in contracted views and understanding. Referring to the Samaritans in a reading meeting, it was said:

In Acts 8: 16, it says, "for as yet he was fallen upon none of them"?

That is the Samaritans. And now you have Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles, all made partakers of the Holy Ghost.

Just a word again about the water, and blood, and oil: do you put the washing with water as the new birth?

Yes; then the sprinkling with blood, the remission of sins.

And an interval between that and the oil?

There often is.

And an interval between water and blood?

Well, there may be, but not in a general way so much, at least, where Christ is preached. And here the oil is at once: "they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." Cornelius was a converted man, and now he is more than that, he is "saved" by Peter's word, and the Holy Ghost fell on him.

Was he not a Christian until then?

A person is not entitled to be called a Christian until he has the third thing; 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of him' (*Collected Writings* 35 (Misc. 4):112, 113.

79. *Collected Writings* 29:255.

80. *Letters* 3:84, 85.

(2 Cor. 3:17).

Recalling, then, the objection about “unconscious regeneration,” was the woman unconscious of being sealed? unconscious of being among the sons of God? unconscious of being a child of God? Did she have unconscious salvation? Let us hear a little more from this objector:

When Does a Believer Receive the Spirit? According to Paul’s letter to the Ephesians we are ‘sealed’ with the Holy Spirit of promise upon believing in Christ . . . (Eph. 1:13) . . . The literal rendering of verse 13 makes clear this reception of the Spirit is not a post-conversion experience but coincides simultaneously with the moment of saving faith . . .

Any soul that is sealed has, of course, believed the gospel of their salvation (Eph. 1:13). If the woman in question was sealed with the Spirit, then she had believed the gospel of her salvation, was unconsciously saved -- but she did not know that she was saved! She was unconscious that she was saved!

The truth is that she was *safe* for heaven, as quickened, but not saved as the NT uses that word. **There is no such thing as unconsciously being “saved” as the NT uses this word and the word “salvation.”** *There is no such thing as unconscious “salvation” (Eph. 1:13) and as being unconsciously in liberty.* And what leads to the notion that there are such unconscious things in one who is alleged to be actually in the Christian position *in Christ*, is the refusal of the distinctions that Scripture makes. The Scripture does, as a matter of fact, teach that there is a state of being quickened without being sealed. The woman was in the state described in Rom. 7, which is not the state of one set free; for one set free is in liberty (Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:17), whereas the man of Rom. 7 states expressly that he is in “*captivity*” (Rom. 7:23),⁸³ (contra Rom.:6:14) not free, not in liberty. It is clear that he is quickened -- he has the “inward man” (Rom. 7:22); but he is not in Rom. 8. If we bow to God’s Word we will obtain light about these things. Thus, it is not necessary to regard all who are in the state of the woman described above as either (1) none of them having divine life, or (2) believing in what directly involves unconsciously being saved, unconsciously having peace with God, unconsciously having liberty, etc.

- ❖ So, an *unconscious of being saved and sealed person* is not sealed.
- ❖ But, a quickened but *unconscious of being quickened person* does have life from God but is not sealed.

Romans 8:9, 10: Not of Him

But ye are not in flesh but in Spirit, if indeed God’s Spirit dwell in you; but if anyone has not [the] Spirit of Christ *he* is not of him: but if Christ be in you, the body is dead on account of sin, but the Spirit life on account of righteousness (Rom. 8:9, 10).

There is one point to notice here and that is Rom. 8:9, because objectors often take it in the most absolute way as if it means a person who is not sealed cannot be Christ’s in any sense at all:

. . . but if anyone has not the Spirit of Christ *he* is not of him.

If you take it in the most absolute sense, then OT saints, who were none of them sealed with the Spirit, do not belong to Christ in any sense. Rom. 8:9 must be understood in its place in the book -- and it means that one who is not indwelt of the Spirit is not of Christ in the sense of not being in the proper Christian position before God. He is not in the Christian standing; i.e., he is not *in Christ*. To be in Christ, Christ must be in you. The man in Rom. 7 was not in Christ, not sealed with the Spirit, though quickened.

It is instructive to observe that the Spirit is here called “the Spirit of Christ,” which designates Him as the one who forms Christ, so to speak, in the Christian; i.e., in one who is indwelt (Rom. 8) and not merely quickened (Rom. 7).

There had been a time when this verse was a difficulty for JND:

In chapter 8 of Romans we read of Him {the Spirit} both as working in life in us, and also a distinct Person. First as a nature and character; and then (for we cannot separate a spring from its stream) after verse 14, we have Him as a Person in us and with us: “the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit,” and there He is distinct. The Spirit is life, and then He bears witness, which separates the two. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” is the indwelling of the Spirit, but it is characteristic there. An unsealed soul is not Christ’s in the sense of being a Christian, as God owns a Christian to be. It is not that he does not belong to Him, for He belonged to Him before, but I cannot call a person a Christian who is not sealed. He may really be Christ’s in the sense that God is bringing him into it all; but he has not got into Christian place and standing. “We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba Father.” And “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,” refers to that. It is a person who is not an unbeliever. There was no verse in Scripture so difficult as that to me for years, until I saw that the whole chapter refers to the Christian position as such. It is not merely life: we receive the Spirit as life, and as a Person. The two are true.⁸⁴

Persons do not understand the subject of deliverance.

It is well to remark, that while the first three verses of chapter 8 give us the principles of deliverance, so the following eight verses describe the practical character and the result of deliverance. The Holy Spirit acts in the new life, instead of a law given outside it to which the flesh opposes an insuperable resistance. The Spirit furnishes the new life with heavenly objects, in which it finds its joy and sustenance. “The mind of the Spirit is life and peace.” All this depends on the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in us. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” We have already said that the condition of such an one is similar to that of the prodigal son before he had found his father. If, on the other hand, the Spirit of Christ dwells in one who is converted, the body for him is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the body lives by virtue of its own life, it brings forth nothing but sin; the spiritual man, according to Rom. 6, reckons it dead.⁸⁵

83. Rom. 7 will be examined in detail in Part 3.

84. *Collected Writings* 26:270.

85. *Collected Writings* 33:356.

In a previous footnote, A. C. Ord had quoted part of F. W. Grant's system of affirming that OT saints had life *in* the Son (which is really a distinctive position of the Christian) in which F. W. Grant said of Rom. 8:9:

... our interpretation of Rom. 8:9. '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.

In keeping with this false statement, he translated "none of His" in the *Numerical Bible*. J. N. Darby and W. Kelly translate "not of Him," and A. Marshall uses "of Him." J. N. Darby wrote:

There is one text as to which it may be well to add a supplementary word: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. 8: 9. "None of his" alarms people; it is simply that he is not yet His, any more than the prodigal was in a son's place till he reached his father.⁸⁶

Justification

"I must be justified by faith: this is my knowing it, not God's knowing it" (JND).

When a person rests on the Person *and* the finished work of Christ for the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins (the position of forgiveness) he is justified by that faith in the Person *and* the blood and the resurrection (Rom. 10:9, 10; 1 Cor. 15:1-4) -- and then he is sealed with the Spirit.

Men are justified by faith, then sealed by receiving the Holy Ghost, through which they are of the one body.⁸⁷ ♦

If a man is justified by faith, by His blood, I suppose the blood of Christ must be efficacious to justify him -- as, indeed, is expressly said -- and his faith in it is right. But faith "in" is used. The words "faith in his blood" are not found elsewhere; but "justified by his blood," "redemption through his blood," so as to present its efficacy as the subject-matter of faith, is often found.⁸⁸ ♦

Do I feel the need of propitiation? Christ is set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood. The need of justification? I am justified by His blood.⁸⁹ ♦

In Rom. 5:1-11, we have the results of this resurrection of Christ. The justification of the sinner by faith, in putting away sins by the blood, and a full justification through the resurrection of Christ, peace, present favour, hope of glory, rejoicing in tribulations, rejoicing in God Himself.⁹⁰ ♦

And if I am justified by faith, faith in what? Not faith in my state of righteousness; but faith in the Person and blood-shedding and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. I do know I am forgiven and cleansed through it, but my faith is not in that; for faith in my being righteous cannot be what justifies me, but faith in Christ and His work does justify me. I believe that God has accepted that work. Anger and wrath rested on me; Christ stepped in between

and drank the dreadful cup, and there is no more anger for me. There was wrath outstanding against me, and now there is not: call it "appeasing" or not, that is the truth. It is not that God does not impute my sins, because I am now righteous and there is nothing to impute, but because Christ has borne them. I believe on Him who raised up Christ from the dead, delivered for our offences, raised again for our justification; and having been justified by faith I have peace with God; Rom. 4:24, 25; 5:1.⁹¹ ♦

It is not sound doctrine so to say [that believers were justified, quickened, raised, etc., in and with Christ, when He died and rose again; that is, that they were justified before they were born, and that faith merely gives the knowledge of it]. Abstractedly everything is eternally present with God, and there is no time with Him; but, then, I cannot say 'when' or 'before' in this point of view, because there is no when or before when there is no time. And in the scriptural view, such language is wholly unwarranted; because in *due time* Christ died for the ungodly, "*when* we were yet without strength"; and "having been justified by faith," etc. We are not justified without believing, but by faith, through faith in His blood -- not without it or before it . . . To say we were eternally believers, is nonsense. In the same sense, we were eternally unbelievers, too, and eternally glorified, for all these things were before God's mind together, without time.⁹² ♦

Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross, and left peace to His disciples. Peace was what was preached, and remission of sins: "being justified by faith," says the apostle, "we have peace with God," Christ having borne our sins in His own body on the tree.⁹³ ♦

The saints, then, are regarded by God as risen with Christ, and consequently as perfectly justified from all their sins. They are clean, according to the cleanness with which Christ appears before God, being presented to God in Him and with Him. But how does the saint actually now participate in blessings so great? It is by partaking of that life, in the power of which Christ is risen. Thus it is, then, that by the doctrine of the resurrection, as it is set forth in the Scriptures, justification and sanctification become necessarily united; thus it is that I share in the righteousness of God, by being quickened with the life in which Christ was raised from the dead, coming up out of the grave, all our trespasses being forgiven. But this life is the life of holiness here below. It is the source of holiness in us; it is holiness itself, the life of God in us. It is in this that we have the will to belong to God, acknowledging the grace which has redeemed us, and convinced that our life is not of us but of God. It is in the power of this life that we seek the things which are above, which are in Christ and which are His, that our affections are carried out towards God; and in this consists true sanctification, the old man being judged as dead, because Christ has died on account of it. "The body is dead on account of sin"--that is its only fruit -- "the spirit is life because of righteousness." Christ then, in giving us the life, which is a new and holy nature in us, makes us partakers of all that He has done for us as

86. *Collected Writings* 31:276. This is from his *On Sealing with the Holy Ghost*, a paper written when F. W. Grant began to resist recovered truth.

87. *Collected Writings* 29:340.

88. *Collected Writings* 9:279.

89. *Collected Writings* 7:186.

90. *Collected Writings* 26:64.

91. *Collected Writings* 29:255, 256.

92. *Letters* 3:327, 328.

93. *Collected Writings* 18:245.

risen from the dead, and of all His acceptance before the Father of glory.

Moreover, we cannot rightly estimate sin but by the resurrection, and for this reason, it is the doctrine of the resurrection, and of our being raised with Christ, which teaches us that we were dead in sin. Otherwise it would perhaps be a healing, an amelioration of man such as he is, a preservation from death by the help of Christ, a troubling of the waters, that we might plunge into them ourselves and be healed. In this way it is that the natural man looked at the extent of sin, as the Jews and Martha and Mary expressed it, when they said, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

But if we have been raised with Christ, it is because we were dead in our sins. The doctrine of our entire misery, our complete fall, flows from, and (so to speak) springs out of, this truth. And the blessing is proportionate; for death is passed, and everything that belongs to the old man is dead, through faith, with Him. We have another life quite new, in which we live, saying, "We are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh."⁹⁴ ♦

Justification in the Risen Christ

(An extract from Charles Stanley, of Rotherham)

On what other principle can God justify the guilty? To the awakened {i.e., quickened} sinner this is a tremendous question, How can I be justified and have peace with God? It must be evident that if man cannot justify that which is not positively righteous, surely then God cannot justify anything short of righteousness. But in man there is no righteousness. All are guilty. "So that death is passed upon all men, for all have sinned."

How does Scripture, then, deal with this amazing question -- the justification of the sinner, and God's righteousness in thus justifying him? I answer, Through Jesus, the resurrection from among the dead -- Jesus and the resurrection -- Jesus "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree" -- the Just dying for the unjust. Yes, Jesus crucified and Jesus risen was what the Holy Ghost did set before lost sinners: His death for atonement -- His resurrection for righteousness or justification. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). Thus, while His precious blood clears from all sin, His resurrection brings me into a state of absolute righteousness in Him risen, and therefore complete justification. And it is on this positive righteousness for justification that ancient and modern teaching so widely differ -- modern teachers . . . having left the Christian ground of a new life in resurrection, and gone back to the land of legalism and bondage, finding themselves, as they suppose, under law; say they, The law must be kept perfectly, and without this there is no justification. They thus go back to law for righteousness. But, then, finding that practically the believer thus put under it only breaks it, what must be done? Oh, say

they, you are under it, and break it; but Christ kept the law for you in His life, and this is imputed to you for righteousness. I would say, in answer to many enquiries on this solemn subject, I cannot find this doctrine in Scripture: it cannot be the ancient doctrine of God's Church. The basis is wrong . . . Justification is not on the principle of law at all. "The righteousness of God⁹⁵ without law is manifested." "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Read Rom. 3:19-26.) Now every doctrine of God's word is clearly stated, not in one verse merely, but in many. Take the atonement: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" -- "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" -- "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust:" and hundreds of other passages. But does Scripture ever say that Christ kept the law for us for justifying righteousness? I am not aware of a single text. And yet, if it were so, there are many places where it should say so. Take Rom. 8:33. "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" Does it say that it was Christ that kept the law? No; but, "Christ that died, *yea, rather, that is risen again*, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Now is not this the full statement of Scripture as to God's justification of the elect? And yet, plainly, not one thought in it of Christ's keeping the law for the justified. And the most careful examination of every passage will be found in perfect harmony with this statement. Look through the Acts. Not once does the apostle preach, Christ kept the law for us, but "Christ died for our sins," &c. 2 Cor. 5 is a notable proof of this. The apostle does not say, We thus judge that all men are under the law, and that Christ kept it for them; no; but, "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." There is not a thought of keeping the law for them, but "died for them and *rose again*. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." Does not this prove that the apostle did not go back to Christ under law for righteousness, but onwards to resurrection. "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature {it is new creation}: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new, and all things of God" . . . Thus the old things of the law, its righteousness and its condemnation, passed away. I am not taken back to Christ under it for righteousness, but taken forward to Christ in resurrection; and there I am made the positive righteousness of God in Him, as surely as He was made sin for me. "For he hath made him sin for us who knew no sin," (surely that was on the cross,) "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." What deep, solid peace this gives! It is thus risen in Him, one with Him, we are made "the righteousness of God *in him*." "Thus, as our fall in the first Adam not only brought condemnation, but the actual *death-state* of sin, much more resurrection in Christ not only brings acquittal from condemnation, but an everlasting *state* of life and actual righteousness -- absolutely

95. {The "righteousness of God" means exactly that -- God's righteousness. That is not Christ's righteous law-keeping, nor Christ's righteousness. If God meant to speak of *God's righteousness* how should he express it so that we will believe He means exactly that, if "the righteousness of God" does not mean *God's righteousness*?}

94. *Collected Writings* 3:154, 155.

perfect and sinless, the righteousness of God IN CHRIST. Thus, for the believer, Christ, by His obedience *unto death*, has become the end of the law for righteousness. The end of the law was the curse, and our adorable Jesus became a curse. In Him, our dying Substitute, the life once forfeited by us has been given up, the condemnation due to us fully executed. And when God raised him from the dead, He raised Him as our justified Surety. So the Holy Ghost applies Isa. 50: 6-9 in Rom. 8:34 . . .

With the apostle, if there were no resurrection gospel, then there were no gospel at all; “for if Christ be not risen, ye are yet in your sins” {1 Cor. 15:17} But Christ is risen, and the believer is risen with Him, and therefore not in his sins, but righteous in the risen Christ, the beginning of the new creation. I have no doubt, that ignorance of the new creation in Christ risen, is the cause why men defend legal righteousness. No wonder that to one ignorant of {the full meaning} of resurrection, the gospel of the righteousness of God, in justifying the believer through the death and resurrection of Christ, is a new gospel. Jesus and the resurrection is as new a doctrine as it was at Athens 1800 years ago. Indeed it is one of the sad wonders of these last days, that the ancient doctrine of “through Jesus the resurrection” should have been so lost. The modern doctrine is, through Jesus the justification of the old man under law. The ancient doctrine was, death and burial to the old man, (see Rom. 6) and perfect justification, not of the old man, but of the new man, in the risen Christ Jesus. Oh! my reader, if you are dead with Christ, are you not justified from all sin? If you are risen with Him, are you not righteous in Him? He is your righteousness: not was, but is (1 Cor. 1:36). You are God’s righteousness in Him (1 Cor. 5:21). Thus clothed in the risen Christ, is not this the righteousness which is of God by faith? (See Phil. 3:9, 10.) Thus is your need met, fellow believer -- so met, that there is now no condemnation. Dead with Christ, risen with Christ, “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ” (Rom. 8).⁹⁶

“Justification of Life”

. . . so by one righteousness toward all men for justification of life (Rom. 5:18).

The life spoken of is the life of Christ risen. He is our life (Col. 3:4). There can be no charge against that life. This goes further than forgiveness of sins. When we think of forgiveness, we think of sins that were forgiven. When we think of justification we think of no possible charge at all. We have the life of the risen Christ as having Him as our life. Can there be any charge against Christ? There can be no possible charge against such life.⁹⁷

96. *Justification In the Risen Christ*, pp. 3-8 (Morrish ed.). For another treatment of the subject, it is recommended to the reader that he procure a copy of *Justification and Acceptance With God* from the publisher.

97. See *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:167.

Chapter 1.8

No More Conscience of Sins

Having No More Conscience of Sins

... Having made by himself the purification of sins, set himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high (Heb. 1:3).

For the law, having a shadow of the coming good things, not the image itself of the things, can never by the same sacrifices which they offer continually yearly, perfect those who approach. Since, would they not indeed have ceased being offered, on account of the worshipers once purged having no longer any conscience of sins? But in these [there is] a calling to mind of sins yearly.

... by which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

... But he, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down in perpetuity at [the] right hand of God, waiting from henceforth until his enemies be set [for the] footstool of his feet. For by one offering he has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears us witness [of it] for after what was said: This [is] the covenant which I will establish towards them after those days, saith [the] Lord: Giving my laws into their hearts, I will write them also in their understandings, and their sins and their lawlessnesses I will never remember any more. But where there [is] remission of these, [there is] no longer a sacrifice for sin.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness for entering into the [holy of] holies by the blood of Jesus, the new, and living way which he has dedicated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh, and [having] a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, sprinkled as to our hearts from a wicked conscience, and washed as to our body with pure water (Heb. 10:1, 2, 10, 12-22).

The sealed saint as having “no more conscience of sins” was noted in previous quotations. It means that he is conscious of the fact that sins cannot be imputed to him as guilt before a holy God -- because Christ has born those sins on the cross. Those sealed with the Spirit have no more conscience of sins as standing out against them regarding guilt. They know that God does not impute to them the sins so as that they bear guilt.

The books of the Bible have each their respective character, though of course they may overlap respecting certain matters. But even in that overlap, those things are treated in a particular book according to its particular character. Hebrews is, of course, no exception to this fact. For example, we note that in Eph. 2:6 our position is as seated together *in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus*. This is positional truth. Hebrews does not view us as so seated. Rather, in Hebrews we *go into* the holiest (Heb. 10:19, 20). In Eph. 2 we get new creation; one dead in trespasses and sins is quickened together with Christ and it goes on to being seated

in the heavenlies in Him. In Hebrews the believer is not viewed as sitting in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus; but rather as fitted to go into the holiest. The truths bearing on being able to go into the holiest are brought out in this book. And our High Priest is also there.

Because souls are not in the good of certain truths in Hebrews, they have the idea that one must go to Christ *as priest* to deal with sins committed. They read of Christ's High Priesthood in Hebrews and quite contrary to the book itself, think that priesthood is for dealing with sins. The fact is the book lends not a shadow of support for the idea. Where, then, if the idea is false, does it come from? It comes from the fact that the teaching of the book with regard to the perfected conscience is not understood or believed. The book is not about priesthood for sins committed or about sinful tendencies. The priesthood of Christ has in view our weaknesses, not our sins, nor even our sinful tendencies. It is for infirmities, weaknesses -- and Paul said that he gloried in his infirmities (2 Cor. 12:9). How dare anyone assert that infirmities are sinful tendencies so as to have Christ's sympathy for those infirmities, defined as sinful tendencies; and that Paul gloried in such infirmities?

The consciences of the OT saints were not perfected, but the *believer's* conscience *is now* perfected. Our sins cannot come before God as judge such that God will deal with us judicially. He has dealt with our sins judicially at the cross. In 1 John 2:1 we see that there is an Advocate for sins committed. It is not found in Hebrews. In 1 John 2 we see that we have an Advocate with whom? with the judge before whom our sins come that they might be dealt with judicially? No; we have to do with *the Father* with whom we stand in the relationship of children. It is a *family matter, and one of communion*.

The false idea results from thoughts about relationship to God that is Judaistic in character -- namely, that, in view of sins committed, there must be a fresh application of blood, or a fresh application of the work of Christ or the work of a priest regarding sins committed. It is not realized what “the worshipers *once* purged” means. Once means once, not repeated purgings. If a person was saved, and thus purged, and then lost again, and then saved again and purged again, that is two purgings. Nor is it grasped what it means that “we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*.” How many times can a person be thus sanctified once for all? And what of “*he*, having offered *one sacrifice* for sins, sat down in perpetuity”? Think of it! “For by one offering he has *perfected in perpetuity* the sanctified.” And, consequently, “where there [is] remission of these {sins},

[there is] no longer a sacrifice for sin.” Thus the believer knows that sins committed do not involve a judicial question concerning his acceptance by God, for he is accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6). No wonder, then, that we read: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness for entering into the [holy of] holies by the blood of Jesus, the new and living way . . .” That way is entrance to where the great Purger of our sins is, where our sins can never come so as to raise a judicial issue. And having had our consciences perfected -- with respect to this judicial issue -- we come boldly. It is not so that the knowledge of the blessedness of having no more conscience of sins leads to the abuse of grace so as to give license to go and sin all the more, as some claim; rather, we learn in Hebrews that it encourages boldness for entry into the holiest! Where the teaching of Scripture concerning our liberty in Christ is abused by someone using it as a cloak to sin, we may well question that such an one is a child of God at all.

I trust that these introductory remarks may help the reader understand more clearly the following quotations from J. N. Darby concerning the bearing of having “no more conscience of sins.”

Priesthood in Hebrews Not for Sins

Thus, although the epistle {Hebrews} does not present them as in the holiest, as sitting there -- like in the epistle to the Ephesians {2:6} -- they have full liberty, entire boldness, to enter into it {Heb. 10:19}. The question of imputation no longer exists. Their sins have been imputed to Christ. But He is now in heaven -- a proof that the sins are blotted out for ever. Believers therefore enter with entire liberty into the presence of God Himself, and that always -- having no more for ever any conscience of sins.

For what purpose then is {Christ's} priesthood? What is to be done with respect to the sins we commit? They interrupt our communion; but they make no change in our position before God, nor in the testimony rendered by the presence of Christ at the right hand of God. Nor do they raise any question as to imputation. They are sins against that position, or against God, measured by the relationship we are in to God, as in it. For sin is measured by the conscience according to our position. The perpetual presence of Christ at God's right hand has this twofold effect for us: first, perfected for ever we have no more conscience of sins before God, we are accepted; second, as priest He obtains grace to help in time of need, that we may not sin. But the present exercise of priesthood by Christ does not refer to sins: we have through His work no more conscience of sins, are perfected for ever. There is another truth connected with this, found in 1 John 2:1, we have an Advocate ⁹⁸ with the Father, Jesus Christ *the*

righteous. On this our communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ is founded and secured. Our sins are not imputed, for the propitiation is in all its value before God. But by sin communion is interrupted; our righteousness is not altered -- for that is Christ Himself at God's right hand in virtue of His work; nor is grace changed, and “he is the propitiation for our sins” {1 John 2:2}; but the heart has got away from God, communion is interrupted. But grace acts in virtue of perfect righteousness, and by the advocacy of Christ, on behalf of him who has failed; and his soul is restored to communion. Nor is it that we go to Jesus for this; He goes, even if we sin, to God for us. His presence there is the witness of an unchangeable righteousness which is ours, His intercession maintains us in the path we have to walk in, or as our Advocate He restores the communion which is founded on that righteousness. Our access to God is always open. Sin interrupts our enjoyment of it, the heart is not in communion; the advocacy of Jesus is the means of rousing the conscience by the action of the Spirit and the word, and we return (humbling ourselves) into the presence of God Himself. The priesthood and advocacy of Christ refer to the condition of an imperfect and feeble, or failing, creature upon earth, reconciling it with the perfectness of the place and glory in which divine righteousness sets us. The soul is maintained steadfast or restored. ⁹⁹ ◆

Dear ---, Intercession ¹⁰⁰ is a general term, used even of the Holy Ghost in us (Rom. 8); but priesthood (in Hebrews) is with God, for mercy and grace to help in time of need: advocacy with the Father, to restore communion when we have sinned. You could not have it for sins in Hebrews, because the worshipers once purged have no more conscience of sins. This answers your three first questions save the end of the third; Why do we fall? Because it is part of the government of God to have us responsibly exercised, though not without grace sufficient for us and strength made perfect in weakness. But if we forget our weakness and dependence, we forget the grace too, and are in the way of a fall: see Peter's case, and the Lord did not ask he might not be sifted; he wanted it. The evil is not in the fall, really grievous as that is, but in the state it manifests. God may allow it that we may learn this.

Washing the feet is in connection with the advocacy -- we have dirtied them. “Save,” in Heb. 7:25, is securing across the difficulties and dangers on to the end, as “if the righteous scarcely [μὲλις, with difficulty, across what brings ruin if [we are] not kept, as Noah, Lot] be saved.”

“Able to succor,” as in ch. 2:18, refers not to strength, though of course it must be there, but experimental knowledge of the opposition, difficulties, trials, which are on the road, so that He could understand, be touched with

98. There is a difference in detail here; but it does not affect my present subject. The High Priest has to do with our access to God; the Advocate with our communion with the Father and His government of us as children. The epistle to the Hebrews treats of the ground of access and shows us to be perfected for ever; and the priestly intercession does not apply to sins in that respect. It brings mercy and grace to help in time of need here, but we are perfected for ever before God. But communion is necessarily interrupted by
(continued...)

98. (...continued)

the least sin or idle thought -- yea, really had been, practically if not judicially, before the idle thought was there. Here the advocacy of John comes in: “If any man sin” {1 John 2:1}, and the soul is restored. But there is never *imputation* to the believer.

99. *Synopsis* 5:236, 237.

100. “What is the difference between advocacy and intercession? What is intercession or priesthood for? has it anything to do with our sin? Is priesthood to keep us from falling into sin? if so, why do we fall? Is washing our feet as in John 13, an act of priesthood or advocacy? When it says in Heb. 7:25 “he is able to save them to the uttermost,” what is the sense in which the word *save* is used there? Does it mean he is able to save us from falls during our wilderness path? Also in chapter 2:18, How does the Lord succor us?”

them. The priest does represent us, “appear in the presence of God for us,” but that is before God, but He also obtains for us all needed grace and help, as regards the way down here. And learning our dependence, and to trust in God’s faithfulness is a great thing; man would be independent, and has to learn his relationship to God, or rather know himself and God in it. This has its importance as well as being perfectly accepted.¹⁰¹

The Purger of Our Sins

Then you see, beloved friends, supposing through grace I say, “Well, I am a poor sinner, I hate those sins, the root and principle in me; how can I be in the presence of God?” I find Christ there, who has put away those sins; I find this blessed truth of a risen Savior in the glory. I follow Him up to the cross, I see Him there under my sins, I see Him now at God’s right hand in the glory! O! I say, He has not got my sins there! If I see Him in the glory, I say, “Well, my sins are gone.” That is the practical word. “When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high” {Heb. 1:3}. I see Him in the glory who bore my sins, and I know they are all gone. Well, my conscience is purged, when, in the simplicity of faith I see that God Himself has put away my sins, that the Lord Jesus Christ has drunk the cup for me, that He Himself bore my sins in His own body on the tree. I know they are gone. The worshipers once purged have no more conscience of sins {Heb. 10:2}. When I look up to God and see Christ in glory, is there a question of imputation of my sins to trouble me?

Mark, beloved friends, I do not speak of “past, present, and future” sins, I cannot say “future.” I never ought to think of committing a sin again. I do not put my state at this moment before God into question. I see souls saying, “Oh, I know my sins up to conversion are gone!” Did Christ bear your sins up to conversion? What is the meaning of that? It is confounding the sense of it brought home to my soul, with the efficacy of the work by which He appears in the presence of God for me.

How comes it all about? It is by God’s blessed will, He willed my salvation. He has given me the Savior. There are three things connected with the work of which I speak. There must be some one having the kindness to do it. It must be done. And I must know that it is done. Of these three things in Hebrews, the first is that it is by the will of God: we see the blessed Son “was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.” “Then, said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God.” “By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” He was crucified. It is *done*. It is not only that there was the goodwill of love, to be willing to do it, but it is done. I get the divine good will of God in it. It is a divine work, done and finished, so that Christ, who bore our sins, “has sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.” Now, I want to know it. The Holy Ghost tells me of the eternal efficacy of the work. I have got the blessed will of God that gave Christ. I have now the work finished, and I have also the divine testimony to it by the Holy Ghost. I have got the three things, the love that was willing to

have it done, I have got the work finished in that which was done once for all upon the cross, and I have got the testimony of God Himself that He no more will bear my sins in mind. My sins are purged by the work of Christ, and my conscience is purged by the testimony of the Holy Ghost.¹⁰²

Perfected Forever

“By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” {Heb. 10:14}. The word “for ever” is not the common word that is used for eternity, though that thought is there; but the word means “uninterruptedly”; so that there is no one moment that I am not in Christ, perfected before God.

It is speaking of our standing and condition before God by His one offering, i.e., it is continued for ever without interruption. And so there is no more conscience of sins {Heb. 10:2}.

There is no more testing verse than that, as to whether we realize what redemption is; I mean, as to our having “no more conscience of sins.”

If I go into God’s presence through the rent veil, I cannot do so without finding a living Christ there sitting on God’s right hand, a perpetual living witness; He who bore our sins is now living there, after He has put them all away.

I have the consciousness of sin within me, but not of *sins*. So often people see at the cross the way of forgiveness; but if you put them in God’s presence before the judgment-seat of Christ, they are not at ease and rest of heart. Then how are they made the righteousness of God?

What is wanted is, the true personal knowledge and consciousness of faith that we are accepted in the Beloved {Eph. 1:6}. It belongs to all believers, though they may not yet have got hold of it clearly.

After the day of Pentecost you never find a person owned as a Christian that is not certain of his salvation. Such an one may be deeply exercised, but he is not owned as in the Christian state according to God. There is no such thing in the New Testament. Yet people are content to go dragging on in a low condition on the earth without the certainty of their salvation.

At the time of the Reformation they went a little too far in saying that justifying faith was the certainty of a person’s own salvation, and that if anybody was not sure, he was not justified at all. It went too far, because it was faith about a known state; and it was condemned in the Council of Trent as the vain confidence of heretics. It was something about self, and not about Christ. What is wanted, is not knowledge only; a person may have everything in his head, but unless his heart and conscience are clear, he cannot be solidly looking for Christ

The apostle puts it all together, clearly enough, in Titus 2. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” It is the grace that has appeared, “teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus

101. *Letters* 2:273, 274.

102. *Collected Writings* 28:74, 75.

Christ.”

This gives us, in three words, the whole Christian character; soberly, i.e., self-restraint in everything; righteously, i.e., as towards other people; godly, i.e., as towards God. Then follows, “looking for that blessed hope.” You must have salvation first, before you can really get the second, the blessed hope.

Well, I wanted to give the groundwork in that way Christ is sitting down because He has finished His work; and the Holy Ghost is come down that we may know it.

There are two things which we may well learn to distinguish; the having a settled consciousness of the affections of those with whom we have to do; and the brightness of hope which brings activity into the soul.

I get both in Christianity. ¹⁰³ ◆

No Imputation of Sins

The knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ gives perfect and entire peace.

There is often great difficulty in the minds of men in seeing how a person can have “*no more conscience of sins*” {Heb. 10:2}, when at the same time he is conscious of failure and of sin. But it is when the soul is fully purged, then it is there will be most consciousness of sin, and past and present failure; but no sense of imputation before God, or sense of Christ’s work.

We see in this chapter (Acts 22) how *perfectly conscious* the apostle was of his sins, and yet how *completely purged* was his conscience; and that it was which enabled him to be most *conscious* of his former sins. We see the same purged conscience in Peter (Acts 2:14). He charges the Jews with what he had done in a worse way himself. The soul cannot bear to rest distinctly on that which it knows will condemn itself, and therefore there must be always more or less guile in the heart where there is not certainty as to forgiveness. When our transgressions are seen by us to be completely “*blotted out*,” we have no interest in extenuating our sinfulness. If I am bankrupt I shall be ashamed to look at my books, because they will show me that I am a ruined man; unwilling to own all my indebtedness, if one came to see my affairs or claim payment; but if one in exceeding kindness had paid my debts for me, I could go and look through all my books, and if I found that I had owed a thousand instead of one hundred pounds, it would only enhance my sense of the greatness and value of the love that had paid all for me, and thus increase my gratitude and joy. This would produce guilelessness of heart. If he came to pay them I should tell him all. ¹⁰⁴ ◆

As to the other point, it is impossible that our sins should be imputed to us; “once purged” we “have no more conscience of sins.” God, as judge, sees the blood which has taken them away, and His unchangeable righteousness has now been manifested. It is here that we find the force of εἰς τὸ διηκεῖς. Besides, when once sprinkled with the blood of Christ this sprinkling is not repeated, its efficacy lasts for ever; but with the Father I seek forgiveness as from a Father whom I have offended. I am

humbled before Jesus because I have dishonored Him, but I have no thought that anything can be imputed to me which demands the sprinkling of blood. The ashes of the red heifer, and the washing of the feet are the figures to apply here; the sprinkling of blood has been made, and it is not repeated. In the sense of imputation and sprinkling, forgiveness is not now sought; in the sense of having offended one’s Father, it is. The confession of one’s faults with humiliation is all right, if grace is fully maintained before the heart. ¹⁰⁵ ◆

My Dear Brother, There are many points to be made clear in your letter: first, as to Heb. 12:24, it has nothing to say to continual cleansing; “the blood of sprinkling” is a general expression drawn from Judaism, blood being so used for cleansing. But it is used in contrast to Abel’s blood which cried for vengeance, Christ’s for mercy, and indeed speaks of prospective millennial blessing, and the gathering together in one of all in heaven and earth. That the blood of Christ remains in perpetual value before God, I do not doubt a moment; but, spiritually speaking, it has been sprinkled, and that is presenting it to God, *not sprinkling* it on anything of ours.

But the great point which wants clearing up is confounding imputation and communion and its interruption. First John speaks of fellowship or communion, not of imputation. The priesthood in Hebrews is not for sins, save in the one great act of reconciliation -- it is for mercy and grace “to help in time of need” (chap. 4) -- for the simple reason that “by one offering he hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified” through it; and “for ever” signifies without break or intermission: as He is sitting constantly (Heb. 10:12) at the right hand of God, we are constantly perfect (v. 14). Hence “the worshipers once purged should have no more conscience of sins” {Heb. 10:2}

As to sins after conversion, the whole thing is a mistake, leaving out Christ’s work, and thinking of the state of our conscience and the Spirit’s work in us. The sins we have committed can alone be on our conscience, but as to the effectual work that puts them away, all our sins were future when Christ bore them. Did He bear our sins up to the day of our conversion and not after? If so they never can be forgiven at all, and we must be lost; He cannot die any more; “for then must he often have suffered.” Read Heb. 9, 10, which treat these questions elaborately.

Washing with water is quite another thing; it is the application of the word by the Holy Ghost. Once thus born, that work cannot be repeated, but the least word or evil act interrupts communion, and the soul must be restored to communion. So Christ is Advocate to this effect; but there (1 John) fellowship is treated of; and the ground of this advocacy, instead of imputation, is, that the righteous One (our righteousness) is always there, and the blood of propitiation always valid {1 John 2:1, 2}. We are in Christ, and there is no condemnation for those who are in Him {Rom. 8:1}; and in another aspect He always appears in the presence of God for us. The sprinkling of the leper does not affect the question: there was no repetition of fault for renewed cleansing; it was, when cured, the ground of all restoration to communion. Sins are worse after believing, for it is sinning against known

103. *Notes and Jottings*, pp. 191, 192.

104. *Bible Herald*, 1877, p. 332.

105. *Letters* 3:260.

love; and the measure of responsibility is greater; we are “to walk as he walked,” and manifest the life of Jesus in all things. Nor is anything passed over. Advocacy may restore, and we judge ourselves -- else we are judged, chastened that we may not be condemned. I think it is a mistake to apply “the blood of Jesus cleanseth us” {1 John 1:7} to past or present faults. It is an abstract statement, as I may say, Medicine cures the ague. “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light,” is the same; it is the Christian’s place as such. “Hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,” etc. (Heb. 10:22), refers, I have no doubt, to the priest’s consecration which was done once for all. The value of Christ’s blood was the ground for everything, we cannot account of it too highly, but it was the golden plate with “holiness to the Lord” which met the iniquities of their holy things. ¹⁰⁶ ◆

John the baptist baptized to repentance for the remission of sins. This has led me to dwell more on the Christian character of forgiveness -- non-imputation of sin, and the revelation of God’s righteousness. It is of moment to keep both clear; a positive, actual present forgiveness, so that my soul knows God has *de facto* forgiven me, but it is equally important to know what it is to have no more conscience of sins {Heb. 10:2}, as perfected in perpetuity (*eis to dienekes*) {Heb. 10:14}, Christ having obtained eternal redemption {Heb. 9:12} -- put, out of the whole condition of alienation and guilt, into a new place of perfect, divine favor. I must come for actual forgiveness as guilty; but in Christianity, where the work is accomplished, and Christ, when He had made the purification (*katharismos*) of our sins, sitting down at the right hand of God {Heb. 1:3}, it is a new creation and no imputation. Now this is known only in Christianity. I do not believe the other, administrative forgiveness, could have been had without atonement, but then it was the dealing of God in His present dealings with men, and so it may be now, as in 1 John 5, James, and 2 Corinthians; in the governmental ways of God. If Christ had been received, no doubt the past had been forgiven. Nor was more as yet revealed; the righteousness of God, for the remission of sins that were past, was not. Men sinned, and divine displeasure was there, and they were forgiven. But now the work that puts away sin has been accomplished, and we know it, and stand in its efficacy as a new creation, our sins being borne and put away, having access into the holiest, and, more, brought to know, and have fellowship with the Father, cry, “Abba, Father.” We are brought to God according to this favor and love, and the worth of Christ’s sacrifice -- a wholly new place. The “baptism of repentance for remission of sins,” though it has led us on further, yet did not, I apprehend, go beyond the present dealings of God. No doubt when accomplished as to Israel, it will be based on the same great truth of atonement, but it was brought in as a present dealing with Israel, and so will be, at the end, but then manifestly based on the sacrifice of Christ. But “eternal redemption” is a Christian doctrine exclusively; the veil marked the previous state of things, though there was more than that. Man comes for forgiveness as responsible in his relationship with God, but he finds himself introduced into a new one, unknown till Christ had ascended on high -- “made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints

in light.” ¹⁰⁷ ◆

Ques. Would you say more about “no more conscience of sins {Heb. 10:2}?”

Once purged, I go to God, and I cannot have the idea of His imputing my sins to me, for He has imputed them all to Christ. And that is the only right Christian state.

Ques. But might I not have that, and yet have an idea that something is not forgiven?

No. The constant Christian condition is this, while I hate myself for what I do that is wrong, and God in government may judge it too, yet, in going to God, I can never have sins on my mind as something to be imputed to me.

Ques. But you could not say your sins were all forgiven at the cross?

Certainly not, not one of them; no sins are ever forgiven before they are committed. But if, when away from God, I go to God, the Christ who bore my sins is there, and I cannot have the thought of God’s imputing them to me while that Christ is sitting at His right hand, i.e., the One who, after having purged my sins, has sat down there.

Ques. But suppose I am out of communion?

That has nothing to do with imputation. You are first cleared as to imputation, and communion follows. Born of God, you have a holy nature, but you can have no proper state and feelings until you know you have everlasting forgiveness. If I still have an idea that sin can be imputed to me, I must connect it with my acceptance. There is all the difference between righteousness before God, and holiness in my ways. Righteousness takes up the question of the judicial character of God, and all was met at the cross; but if it is a question of holiness, I now hate sin for sin’s own sake. I cannot get on that ground, if the question of righteousness is not settled. But that once settled, then I say, ‘Look, I have gone and found my pleasure in the very thing that made Christ’s agony on the cross.’ And then communion is stopped. The iniquity of my sin is rather the crookedness and departure from God on my part. But I have the sense of no imputation; and now that I am saved I hate sin, as regards unholiness. If we are manifested to God now, there will be nothing to come out at the judgment seat. ¹⁰⁸ ◆

Worship in the Holiest

Worship is the free adoration, and for us in the holiest, of those who have been brought nigh by sacrifice, who know God as love, who know Him as a Father who has sought in grace worshipers in spirit and in truth, and brought them in cleansed to do so. The worshipers once purged should have no more conscience of sins. By one offering Christ had perfected them for ever, such is scripture truth (see Heb. 10); and then they worship, adore, praise in the sense of perfect divine favor and a Father’s love. They have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way He has consecrated for them through the veil. It is not that Christ is doing it in heaven actually in the triumphant church, and they on earth in the

106. *Letters* 3:425.

107. *Notes and Comments* 5:214.

108. *Notes and Jottings*, pp. 394, 395.

militant. They enter in spirit into the holiest, in heaven itself, to worship there; and hence a high priest made higher than the heavens was needed for them, because their worship is there. They do not offer the sacrifice in order to come in, they are within in virtue of the sacrifice.

And this is the place the symbols, of Christ's broken body and blood, have in worship. The worshipers are in spirit in heavenly places, Christ in spirit in their midst, as it is written, "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" {Heb. 2:12}, and they own and remember that blessed and perfect sacrifice by which they can so worship, by which they have entered in. Doubtless they feed on Christ in spirit; but that is not the point we are on now. The Christ that is represented in the Eucharist is a Christ with a broken body, and the cup is His shed blood, not a glorified Christ in heaven. It is His death, a broken body and the blood separated from it, life given up in this world, that is before us. We may in spirit eat also the old corn of the land -- be occupied with a heavenly Christ, assuredly we may, and blessedly so; but that is not the Christ that is here. We eat His flesh and drink His blood, that is, separate from His body -- not only the manna which is for the desert and ceased in Canaan, the bread that came down from heaven, but the additional and necessary truth of His death. Hence His going up is only spoken of in John 6 as an additional subsequent truth. We worship as belonging to heaven and own that by which we got there, that perfect blessed work which He, who could speak what He knew there, and testify what He had seen, could tell was needed that we might have the heavenly things, and not only tell but in infinite love, accomplished. But no such Christ as the one whose symbols lie before us in the Lord's supper exists now. It is specifically, solely, and emphatically, as a dead Christ that He is remembered there. They were to do *that*, that is, to use the emphatic symbols of His death, in remembrance of Him. Hence it is the center of worship because hereby know I love, because He laid down His life for us. Here He glorified the Father for me, so that I can enter into the holiest. Then the veil was rent and the way opened; but here was the perfect work accomplished, by which I, as risen together with Him, can say I am not in the flesh. In the heavenly Christ I say, by the Holy Ghost, I am in Him and He in me. It is being of Him, being united to Him, He in our midst in grace. A dead Christ I remember. I do not, in the joy and glory in which I have a part through and with Him, forget that lonely work in which He bore the sorrow and drank the cup of wrath. I remember with touched affections the lowly rejected Christ, now that I am in heavenly places through His solitary humiliation. The offering Him up now is a presumptuous denial of Christianity. The remembering Him, that divine Person, in His solitary suffering and perfect love to His Father, is the most touching of Christian affections, the basis and center of all true worship, as the efficacy of the work wrought there alone admits us to worship at all. The drinking of the blood apart points it out as shed. We shew forth the Lord's death, emphatically, not a glorified Christ, but we do so as associated with Him the glorified Man, who Himself purged our sins, remembering with thankful hearts how we got there, and, above all, Him who gave Himself up that we might.¹⁰⁹

109. *Collected Writings* 15:371-373.

Part Two:

*Eternal Life
in the Son*

Chapter 2.1

The Position of OT Saints

OT Saints Were Children of God

W. Kelly rightly stated:

All children of God, past, present, or future, are born again; all have this new life given to them. ¹ ♦

To be born again is the first essential work of the Spirit of God, without which there is no life towards God, no possibility of advance in the things of God. It is the universal want, the indispensable condition in order to any soul's having part in the blessing of God at any time and in all dispensations. ²

And commenting on Gal. 4:1, he wrote:

Conversion and regeneration are the same in all times and dispensations. There may be greater fulness, simplicity, and joy now; but as to the substance of the thing, even from the fall, before the flood and after it, either with law or without it, the heir was in truth the lord of all. He really is to have part in the kingdom of Christ, to reign with Christ . . . ³

J. N. Darby remarked, as have many others:

. . . the Son quickened souls from Adam onwards.

The Son had quickened whom He would, no doubt, all along . . . ⁴

To this we add but one more of numbers of possible citations, namely, from E. Dennett:

All the Old Testament saints were undoubtedly born again. This is to be insisted upon, for without a new life and a new nature they would not have been able to converse with God; but it is equally true that they never knew God as Father, and therefore that they could not be in the enjoyment of the relationship. One word from Scripture definitely and conclusively settles this point, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. 11:27). ⁵

Scripture tells us OT saints were children of God (John 11:52; Rom. 9:7, 8). Of course they were, as having the new nature --

not that they had these things revealed to them or could claim to take a place of acknowledged children. Moreover, in the OT itself they are called *saints*. And the NT refers to them as *just* (Heb. 12:23). And as being *just*, they shall have part in the "first resurrection," i.e., "the resurrection of the just." The first resurrection has to do with the "just" and even our Lord, who is the firstfruits, is called "just" in Acts 7:52; 24:15. He is already raised from the dead. The first resurrection is not a point in time but a class of persons: it is "the resurrection of the *just*." It takes place in stages. Indeed, then when the saints who have died since Pentecost are raised from the dead, so shall the OT saints be made perfect with us (Heb. 11:40). Not that they are the "dead in Christ" of 1 Thess. 4. The OT worthies are not the subject there; but they certainly are spoken about at length in Hebrews. Every Scripture is perfect in its place. When the great wave of His mighty power is put forth to raise the saints from the dead, before the tribulation period, not a *just* one shall be left behind in the grave. And that will occur at the time of the rapture; and the OT saints shall have their representation in the 24 elders in heaven.

John 1:12

As to the question: the Old Testament saints were born of God, but they could not call themselves children of God, because, redemption not being accomplished, the Spirit of adoption was not given; they could not take that position. The word is clear on this point. This is the force of John 1:12. Those who, through grace, being born of God, received Christ, received right (authority) to take the position of children. Also the Epistle to the Galatians explains the difference fully and clearly. The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all. . . . But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son that we might receive the adoption [of sons]. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:1-7). "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son"; then (Gal. 3:26) "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." The difference between saints under the old covenant and Christians is therefore clearly explained in the word. ⁶

John 11:52

. . . Jesus was going to die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he might gather together into one the

1. *Ephesians*, London: Morrish, p. 33, n.d.

2. *Ephesians*, London: Morrish, p. 44, n.d. See also pp. 77, 78.

3. *Galatians*, London: Morrish, p. 89, n.d.

4. *Collected Writings* 29:217, 218. See also his *Synopsis* 5:33. See also *The Bible Treasury* 6:206; 9:188; 15:147; 18:139; *Words of Truth* 3:178; 2:80, 95, 104, 127 etc. Regarding B. W. Newton, JND wrote:

The doctrine of the author on the communication of the divine life is fundamentally unsound now, as it was subversive of fundamental truth to deny life to the Old Testament saints (*Collected Writings* 15:115).

5. *The Children of God*, London: Broom, p. 11, 1883.

6. *Letters* 2:233.

children of God that were scattered abroad.

There are many results flowing from the work accomplished on the cross. Here two are stated. There was provision in the work of the cross for the nation of Israel, as such. This provides for the millennial blessing of the nation. But there was also provision for the basis upon which those who were children of God could be gathered into one. Observe that it speaks of children of God who were scattered abroad. Before the end of the testing of the first man, i.e., while the first man had a standing in Adam before God, those who were born again could not form a visible, manifested community of children. The law, for example, did not address itself to the children of God, as such, but to man in Adamic standing, under probation. The children of God had no basis to form a visible, manifested community of believers under the law, separating from the rest. What then was the case? The children were scattered, not gathered in one. In the Lord's death a basis was laid for the recognition of the children of God of one another and a gathering into one. My point is that John 11:52 does, in fact, refer to those on OT ground as scattered *children of God*. And this bears on the proper understanding of John 1:12:

But as many as received him, to them gave he [the] right to be children of God, to those that believe on his name.

His *name*, here, embraces who He is and what He has done on the cross and what results from it. John 1:12 is not referring to becoming born again, but rather to the right to take the position of children as is proper in the new order which would be introduced by the work of Christ and what flowed from it, as is found particularly in John's gospel and epistle. The basis was laid for the scattered children to recognized one another, forming a visible, separated oneness -- taking a place in a revealed and known relationship with God.

As to the question: the Old Testament saints were born of God, but they could not call themselves children of God, because, redemption not being accomplished, the Spirit of adoption was not given; they could not take that position. The word is clear on this point. This is the force of John 1:12. Those who, through grace, being born of God, received Christ, received right (authority) to take the position of children.⁷

Rom. 9:7, 8

. . . nor because they are seed of Abraham [are] all children: but, In Isaac shall a seed be called to thee. That is, [they that are] the children of the flesh, these [are] not the children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned as seed.

Here is a reference to OT issues and there is a plain contrast between the children of the flesh and the children of God. Obviously, Issac was a child of God and Ishmael was not.

OT Saints Did Not Stand in a Status of Forgiveness

OT Saints Were Under the Forbearance of God Concerning Sins

The status of OT saints with regard to sins, in view of the fact that Christ had not yet accomplished the work on the cross, was well described by F. G. Patterson:

The Spirit of God wrought in souls, and they were born again of the Word and Spirit of God. They had a new nature, which longed for complete deliverance before the cross made it possible that God could make known to any that all their sins were there put away. The children of God were then in bondage, hoping for a Savior, and a salvation which they needed. Still none of them had the Spirit of adoption -- the Spirit of His Son, whereby they could cry "Abba, Father," given them. Now, it is true (since the cross) that "Because ye are sons (already, by faith in Jesus Christ; Gal. 3:26), God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). We stand thus consciously in relationship to God as our Father, which no saint of God ever did; although they were born of God, this relationship as sons never was known. *Confidence* in God characterizes the Old Testament and before the cross; *relationship* characterizes the New.

The people of God before the cross were under the "*forbearance*" of God. When the cross came and discharged all God's claims, and purged their sins, they are on another footing altogether. They now stand as those who have been righteously forgiven and justified. Rom. 3:25, 26, brings this truth out very plainly; "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation (or mercy seat) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the *passing over* (*marg.*), of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare *at this time*, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Suppose a man owed a debt which he could not discharge. Well, some kind person says he will be security for that debt. Then his creditor *forbears* with him; he does not press his claim. Still the creditor's claim has not been settled, nor is the debtor relieved; the debt hangs over him still.

But suppose the rich man has kindly discharged the debt himself, unknown to the other. How very kind! you exclaim. But still the debtor's mind is not relieved; he thinks he is still under the forbearance of his creditor. Then some one comes with the news that all has been discharged, and that the creditor wishes to assure the person that he wishes him to know it, and not be afraid to meet him any more.

Now this forbearance was the state of the saints before the cross -- they confided in God -- trusted His promises. They knew that some day or other these promises would be fulfilled. They thus lived and died in confidence in God. God was looking on towards the cross, and the Son was in the heavens; the One who had presented Himself to come some day and do all God's will (Psa. 40:6-8). Thus God *waited*, and His people were under "the *forbearance* of God"; and the Son was security, so to speak, for their sins; one day or other He would take

7. *Collected Writings* 25:233.

up the claim and discharge it. At last came the Son of God; in holy love He took up the work -- "bore our sins" on the tree, discharging every claim. He died and rose, and went on high. From the heavens which He entered by His own blood (Heb. 9:12), He sent down the Holy Ghost with the message that the sins were borne and put away, and thus our consciences are purged in receiving His testimony to us (Heb 10:15-17); then having believed this testimony to us, He then comes to dwell in us, uniting us to Him who has purged our sins, and then making us members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones!⁸

Forgiveness Was Only for Sins Committed

The saint sealed with the Spirit is in a new position, a position of forgiveness. The remission of sins, i.e., the forgiveness of sins that a Christian has does not mean *merely* that his past sins are forgiven -- which they surely are -- but that he is in a new *status* before God. Let us bring to bear some helpful comments from J. N. Darby on this fact and the difference regarding OT saints:

All true Christians are forgiven, have received the forgiveness of their sins; and God will remember their sins and iniquities no more. God has quickened us together with Christ, having forgiven us all trespasses. "I write unto you," says John, "little children [addressing all Christians], because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." This can neither be bound nor loosed by any one, for God has settled it. Remission of sins is the portion of every one who has the true standing of a Christian. He is accepted in the Beloved. We have redemption through Christ's blood, even the remission of sins. Through Christ (we read) all that believe are justified from all things. Christ is made righteousness to us of God. In the Old Testament this was not made clear. There was occasional forgiveness, and the full acceptance of the person was not revealed, any more than the full character of sin. A sacrifice could be offered to atone for faults committed: for some there was no remedy. A prophet might be sent to proclaim the putting away of sin. It was administrative forgiveness. The righteousness of God was not revealed. In the gospel it is. There was the forbearance of God, who did know, of course, why; but the end of Rom. 3 makes this point quite clear, that the actual remission of sins according to the revealed righteousness of God came in by the gospel: "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." This is a most important sentence on this subject. God had been righteous in forbearing as to the sins of the Abrahams and Davids and others, because of the sacrifice of Christ; and that righteousness was now declared, and the ground of it seen. It was by Christianity God's righteousness (we read in Rom. 1) is now revealed; and Christ has been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Hence peace and remission of sins were to be preached in His name; all who believed were justified. The prophets witnessed that, through His name, whoever

believed in Him should receive remission of their sins, and this was now come and announced in the name of the Lamb slain, with the blessed testimony for those who received it, that their sins and iniquities would be remembered no more; that, sitting at the right hand of God, Christ was the perpetual witness there that the work was accomplished and owned of God, of which the Holy Ghost testified down here, come forth in virtue of Jesus being up there, and that Christ sits uninterruptedly there, because by one offering He has perfected in perpetuity those who are sanctified.⁹ ♦

The Spirit of God in this epistle distinguishes between the way in which God spoke, or dealt, in time past and now. So in Romans 3 the apostle speaks of Christ, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." There he applies the death of Christ to the sins committed before He came. The day of atonement in Israel was for the putting away of past sins. He had been bearing with them all the year, and then when the sacrifice came on that day, the sin was all put away and all bright in the presence of God. There is the day of atonement yet to come for Israel as a nation, when in their land. Then the other part was "to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him," etc. This is for the present time. By ascending before God on high, He establishes a present righteousness -- all sins forgiven and we made the righteousness of God in Christ. Rom. 3: 25 gives it historically, for the sins of all who were saved in the Old Testament times are put away by this sacrifice; but we may apply it immediately, and see that not only our past sins are put away, but we stand in righteousness for the present.¹⁰ ♦

Full remission of sins was not known under the Old Testament; its announcement is of the essence of Christianity, and peace with God through justification. An unjustified believer is a contradiction in terms: all that believe are justified; but justification, if it be more, is certainly imputing no sin. Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is pardoned; blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no sin; but to him that believes in Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is imputed to Him for righteousness.¹¹ ♦

Forgiveness of Sins in the NT Is More Than Non-imputation

As J. N. Darby pointed out, forgiveness of sins, according to the NT teaching of what that means, is a new status before God, that OT saints did not have.

For remission is not the fact of non-imputation by the death of Christ that Old Testament believers had; but an actual status into which a person enters. I may have forgiven my son perfectly in my mind, but he has not forgiveness till it is pronounced upon him.¹²

And this forgiveness is what is pronounced upon the believer now.

8. F. G. Patterson, *The Lord's Host*, London: Morrish, pp. 44-46, sec. ed., 1877.

9. *Collected Writings* 14:106, 107

10. *Collected Writings* 27:335.

11. *Collected Writings* 14:114.

12. *Letters* 2:150 -- also in *Bible Treasury* 9:16.

They Did not Have “No More Conscience of Sins”

The saint sealed with the Spirit has no more conscience of sins {Heb. 10:2} as standing against him, so that God would impute them to him -- because Christ bore them and he knows that. The Christian thus rests upon the once-for-all accomplished sacrifice. And because of that work he is a once-for-all purged worshipper. The contrast of the Christian position with that of one under the law is so blessed, and so often ill understood, that it is worth while to examine this in a little detail. First, then, observe the difference

The Hebrews views the Christian as walking down here in weakness and trial, but as perfected for ever by the work of Christ, no more conscience of sins, and the priesthood is exercised not to restore communion, but to find mercy and grace to help. 1 John speaks of communion with the Father and Son. This is interrupted by any sin, and Christ is our Advocate with the Father to restore it. The Hebrews is occupied with access to God within the veil, the conscience being perfect, and we enter with boldness, hence failure and restoration are not in question. The Father is not spoken of. In John, as I have said, it is communion and the actual state of the soul is in question. And it is so true that it is the standing in Hebrews, that if one falls away, restoration is impossible. In the tabernacle there was no going within the veil. No such standing was revealed, and priesthood and communion as far as enjoyed were mingled together, the Father unknown.¹³

But persons go to Christ *as priest about having sinned*, and have fresh recourse to the blood, as if they were Jews in the OT.

If I am looking for anything to put away my sins, I do not believe in the finished work of Christ, and therefore the apostle says, in Heb. 9, “then must Christ **often** have suffered.” There is not a thing to be done; but it is done -- “no more conscience of sins.” It is not that I do not fail, but when I look up to God, faith cannot have a thought that God imputes anything to me. And why so? Because Christ is sitting at the right hand of God when He **had** purged our sins.

If I go in faith, I go through the rent veil -- His flesh -- into the holiest of all, in boldness, because He who has accomplished the work is there. I find Him there when I go. I press that, beloved friends; because you are not on the full, true ground of liberty before God, until the thought of imputation, when you put yourselves in the presence of God, has completely disappeared. It is well to put yourselves there to test your souls. Supposing I stand before the judgment seat. Why, the One who is there is the One who bore my sins! I see it more every day, that the whole question of the church’s ruin hangs upon this; whether or not the worshipers once purged have no more conscience of sins. People speak of Christ bearing their past sins, but there is no sense in saying Christ bore my sins up to the 16th of July! He was there before God meeting the whole question of sin, and He sits down because it is all settled. God has made death and judgment, like the Red Sea, to be a wall on my right hand

and my left.¹⁴ ♦

The ground they go upon is the common ground of unbelief in the offering of Christ -- the doctrine of continually cleansing and recleansing in Christ’s blood. This is wholly unscriptural, and subversive of true Christian standing according to the word -- that the worshippers *once* purged should have *no more* conscience of sins. Nothing can be clearer or more positive than the teaching of Heb. 9 and 10 on this subject, where it is elaborately argued, in contrast with the repetition of Jewish sacrifices, and as giving us boldness to enter into the holiest. The question raised is of a perfect conscience; and a perpetually unchangeably perfect conscience is elaborately taught, with a declaration that otherwise Christ must often have suffered, but that His work has done this once for all. He was once offered to bear the sins of many, and appears a second time without sin to salvation; a repeated cleansing of the conscience by blood is herein formally negated. Christianity is contrasted with Judaism on this particular point. It is the offering, the *blood-shedding*, which clears the conscience, and that could be only once, and so that the worshippers *once* purged should have no more conscience of sins {Heb. 10:2}; and hence, while the Jewish priests were always standing, because their work was never done, Christ, having offered one sacrifice for sins, is sitting constantly at the right hand of God, having no more to do as to the worshippers’ conscience, because by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified -- by one offering, note, and thus we have *no more* conscience of sins. And this word “for ever” is here *eis to dienekes*, not *eis ton aiona*, that which is continuous and uninterrupted {Heb. 10:14}, as Christ now sits at the right hand of God, constantly, till His enemies be made His footstool. And remark that it is not merely the putting away of sins efficaciously, true as of course that is (see Heb. 1:3), but the perfecting of the conscience; Heb. 9:9; chap. 10:1, 2, 12, 14; and see 12, 19. The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches clearly, unequivocally, insisting on it as characteristic of Christianity, a conscience *constantly* perfect, as sure as Christ is ever sitting on the right hand of God; perfect, not by repeated application of His blood, which is being imperfect, and cleansed again and again, but *no more* conscience of sins, *perfected for ever*, and that by one single thing in contrast with repeated cleansings. This blessed truth and state is ignored and denied by the system I am commenting on. The whole place is lost for the soul -- the very truth God is pressing on His saints for their deliverance.¹⁵ ♦

Now “the worshippers once purged” have “no more conscience of sins.” Christ purged our sins by His work, and the divine testimony by the Holy Ghost purges the conscience. If the “one sacrifice” did not make perfect those coming to God by it, they could not be made perfect at all. “Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others, for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” If He did not suffer for sins, He could not put them away. He must drink the cup at the dreadful moment. It was not a mere form of suffering that Christ went

13. *Synopsis* 1:143, note.

14. *Collected Writings* 35:277 (Misc. #4, printed by BTP).

15. *Collected Writings* 23:281, 282.

through, but suffering such as we cannot fathom. If the work was not done in that one offering, it never could be done, “for then must he often have suffered,” and He is now in glory. As regards our approach to God the conscience is purged and perfected for ever; the worshippers once purged” have “no more conscience of sins.” These priests were always standing (“standeth” is the emphatic word in Heb. 10:11), “offering oftentimes the same sacrifice which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God” (He did not sit till He had finished His work), “from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.” He has finished the work for His friends -- believers, I mean; they have no more conscience of sins, “for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” It is not a question of the work done in us; He appears in the presence of God for us, He is in glory, sitting there because His work is finished, giving the testimony that we are clean and our conscience is purged, besides that He has obtained this glory. “By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

“For ever” is a very strong word in this passage, it expresses a thing that is continuous and uninterrupted. As He sits there continuously, so we are perfected continuously. We are always there before God according to the value of the work of the Lord Jesus.¹⁶ ♦

OT Saints Were Not Sons

However, though OT saints were born again, that did not make them “sons.” Where are we told they were sons? Nowhere. It is false to say that “the life He communicates makes us sons of God.” The OT saints were children of God, were born anew, but were not in the position of sons:

... but when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, come of a woman, come under law, that he might redeem those under law, that we might receive sonship (Gal. 4:4, 5).

Clearly, then, those under the law had not received sonship -- yet God had communicated life to some of those under the law. Gal. 4:7 shows that under law, they were looked at as bondman, and concludes:

So thou art no longer bondman, but son . . .

Gal. 3:23-26 also makes this matter plain:

But before faith came, we were guarded under law, shut up to faith [which was] about to be revealed. So that the law has been our tutor up to Christ, that we might be justified on the principle of faith. But, faith having come, we are no longer under a tutor; for ye are all sons by faith in Christ Jesus.

The OT saints had life **from** the Son but not life **in** the Son. This will be considered in detail later. We observe here, though, that “life in the Son” is “abundant life” (meaning the character of the life)-- being one plant with Himself (John 12:24). *Sonship*, life in the Son, forgiveness of sins as a revealed position, etc., OT saints did not have, nor could they until the work of atonement was accomplished.

J. N. Darby wrote:

I reply, Old Testament saints could not be described as not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The Spirit is the seal of our new position in Christ, promised in the prophets and by the Lord, and received by Him for us after His ascension (Acts 2:33), and given as the Spirit of adoption, and uniting us to Him ascended. The distinction of flesh and Spirit is founded on the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and the possession of the Spirit promised by Christ, and the present fruit of His redemption work. In His time on earth John could say, “The Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified” {John 7:39}. And lust was in the Old Testament saints, but now the flesh working lusts against the Spirit, and freedom by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death {Rom. 8:2} is known only to those who have the Spirit, given consequent on an accomplished redemption. It is clear they could not be in the Spirit if the Spirit was not given, and scripture is as clear on this as words can make it. The gift of the Spirit was such and so dependent on Christ’s going away, that it was expedient for them He should do so.¹⁷

It is important to understand that there is a revealed position before God that those indwelt now by the Spirit occupy. This was not the position of OT saints. Regarding the notion that OT saints had life *in* the Son, J. A. Trench said:

Whither this reasoning leads may be seen {in this quotation from F. W. Grant}:

the direct result {of denying that OT saints had life *in* the Son} to me would be this, that Old Testament saints were neither children of God, nor could they be justified from sin, or in the last Adam, &c. (p. 8).

Thus what scripture applies to a revealed position before God, that we are brought into on earth as the fruit of a gloriously accomplished redemption is here attempted to be applied to saints before Christ came, which if it were, would have taken them wholly off the revealed ground upon which God placed them. To have our place in Christ according to Rom. 8:1, our old man must have been crucified with Christ; but having died with Him we have died out from under the law, and the bond of relationship with that first husband has been absolutely broken; how then could Old Testament saints, who were “kept under the law” have been in Christ? Of course they were children of God, as surely as they were born of God, though the mere possession of the nature carried with it then no more than now the consciousness of relationship, and were justified from sin before God,¹⁸ and not under condemnation; though none of these things were the ground upon which they stood, as they are, and are characteristic of (in contrast with them) the ground upon which we stand. Read 1 Cor. 15 and think of an Old Testament saint being “in the last Adam.” Also Gal. 3:23 - 4:7 for the contrast of their place and ours, specially Gal. 3:28 as to how “in Christ” takes out of Jewish ground, as out of all other distinctions of the

17. *Letters* 3:394.

18. Before God I say, in contrast to any revealed position; for note the difference in Rom. 3:25, between “the *passing over* of sins that are passed through the forbearance of God,” and justification now, the cross laying the righteous ground for both the one and the other. The paper here {the one by F. W. Grant being refuted} as everywhere, leaves out the full place the cross has before God.

16. *Collected Writings* 21:381, 382.

flesh. For “if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17; cp. also v. 16).¹⁹

The Standing of OT Saints: In Adam -- In the Flesh

The one who is sealed with the Spirit, having believed the gospel of his salvation (Eph. 1:13) is “in Christ.” OT saints were not “in Christ.” That was not their position before God. From the fall of man, down through the ages, and up to the cross, the first man was under testing, i.e., probation. Man was viewed before God, as to standing, as “in Adam.” As God views this matter, there are two men:

. . . the first man out of [the] earth made of dust; the second man, out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:47).

In OT times, under probation, men stood before God as connected with Adam. They had a standing in flesh -- for judgment had not been pronounced on the flesh. Man was not declared to be lost in the OT. That is a teaching in the NT and is consequent on the conclusion of the testing of the first man. The flesh is *now* declared judged. *Then*, man had a standing in the flesh. If we think of the law, it did not make a distinction between one born again and one who was not. When instituted, as part of the on-going probation of man (in the persons of the favored Jews), it addressed man in the flesh, the first man. Of course, the first man completely failed under it. The final, concluding test of fallen man, the first man, man in an Adamic standing, in the flesh, was the revelation of the Father in the Son (John 15:24). And this revelation was particularly to those under the law. So the first man, under the law as standing in the flesh, rejected that revelation and crucified Christ.

The first man, then, was not declared to be lost while he had that standing before God. That was pronounced after the conclusion of his lengthy trial

While the probation of the first man was proceeding, those who were born again were part of that testing. Their standing was the standing of the first man -- though they were quickened. So we see that a quickened man can be in the flesh as to his standing. Moreover, this is not only true in OT times, it happens also now:

A regenerate man may be in the flesh, as to the condition and standing of his own soul, though he be not so in God’s sight; nay, this is the very case supposed in Rom. 7, because he looks at himself as standing before God on the ground of his own responsibility, on which ground he never can (in virtue of being regenerate) meet the requirements of God, attain to His righteousness. Perhaps, finding this out, he has recourse to the blood of Christ to quiet his uneasy conscience, and repeated recurrence to it, as a Jew would to a sacrifice, {as} a superstitious man to absolution. But he has no idea that he has been cleansed and perfected once for all, and that he is taken clean out of that standing to be placed in Christ before God. But if in Christ, the title and privilege of Christ is our title and

privilege.²⁰ ♦

So Peter speaks of being “made partakers of the divine nature.” It is not merely that a man is born again. It is the truth as it is in Jesus. Of course a man is born again. Abraham had to be born again; but he did not know anything about putting off the old man and putting on the new. You never find this in the Old Testament. You find there the knowledge of sin working, but the Old Testament saints did not make a difference between the old man and the new. The moment that death came in, the believer and man took his place with God in Christ I get the old man and the new.²¹ ♦

As to the Old Testament saints, eternal life formed no part of the Old Testament revelation, even supposing that the Old Testament saints had it. Light and incorruptibility have been brought to light by the gospel. Not that they have been brought to existence, but they have been “brought to light.” And when He in whom life is, came down and died and rose again, then a totally new thing was brought out. Eternal life is twice found in the Old Testament, but in both the passages it is prophetic of the millennium. And therefore, in the Old Testament, we never get conflict between flesh and Spirit. We find, ‘conceived in sin,’ in Psa. 51, but there is no thought of flesh lusting against the Spirit. “I am crucified with Christ”; says the apostle, “nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,” and there we find a contradiction twice over, and somebody else put in instead of “I.” So again in Rom. 7, “What I hate, that do I,” and, “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me,” though in the previous verse he had just said that he did do it! All that the Psalmist can say is, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” He takes the ground that if God wash him, he will be whiter than snow. In that passage, it is not a question of washing with the blood of Christ, and what I insist upon is, do not put into a passage what you cannot get out of it. The Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, i.e., those who are dead in sins are quickened, it is not the simple fact of receiving a new life; it is not the way Scripture speaks, to say, ‘here is a living man, and I quicken him.’²² ♦

We do not find in the Old Testament “he cannot sin because he is born of God.” It is not that there was not the desire to obey in renewed souls then; surely there was. It could not be otherwise. But the relationship in which men stood to God was a law without them to govern their ways when in flesh, not a known new nature standing in the results of redemption whose only motive of action was God’s will. The prophets, indeed, pointed out Christ as such (as in Psalm 40), and the masters in Israel should have known that, to have their future privileges, they must be born of water and the Spirit; as in Ezek. 36. But obedience under the law was a rule applied to one who had a will whose movements were to be judged by the law, not a nature whose only motive was God’s will, standing in the power of redemption so as to have the right to reckon a discovered old man to be dead, yea, whom God had pronounced dead through Christ. Hence the heirs differed

20. *Collected Writings* 7:244, 245. See *The Bible Treasury* 11:218 and *The Present Testimony* 6:45 for reference to OT quickened ones as in the flesh.

21. *Collected Writings* 27:83.

22. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 351.

19. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 17, 18.

nothing from servants, to do this and that, whatever their own will might be.

Ways, and not nature, were in question, even though renewal of heart were there. ²³ ◆

Being “in the flesh” means standing on the ground or in the position of the first Adam, a fallen man, before God, and being responsible to Him according to this position. ²⁴ ◆

The Old Testament saints, however obscurely, did gather the truth of the subsistence of the soul after death, and the resurrection too: I admit obscurely; but they gathered it. Abraham looked for the city which hath foundations. The Preacher speaks of the spirit’s returning to God who gave it. The Psalms told of the King’s soul not being left in hades {sheol}, nor His body seeing corruption; and in God’s presence fulness of joy (Psa. 16); and being satisfied when one awoke after God’s likeness (Psa. 17). Many suffered, looking for a better resurrection, to say nothing of Job’s hope shining through his wasting disease. And the Lord’s judgment is pronounced on the Sadducees, that they greatly erred, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God; and we read in Luke, not only there was a resurrection, but “all live unto God.” They are dead for man, they are not for God. ²⁵ ◆

More will be said about OT saints in Chapter 2.8.

23. *Collected Writings* 17:175.

24. *Collected Writings* 33:346.

25. *Collected Writings* 10:338.

Chapter 2.2

The Occasion of Bringing in a New Standing

The Rejection of the Father and the Son

What is the Son of God's testimony about His rejection?

If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hates me hates also my Father. If I had not done among them the works which no other one has done, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15:22-24).

There was no greater test than the revelation of the Father in the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. In fact, this sin (of rejection) is unique. Surely it must be in a class by itself! And so it is. The word *sin* in this text refers to a unique sin. Surely our Lord was not saying that if He had not come and spoken to them sin would have been nonexistent. No. Rather, he is speaking of a unique *sin*: namely, the rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son, in the power of the Spirit. This then is the pronouncement:

They have both seen and hated both me and my Father.

There is nothing beyond or surpassing that. This is the climax. This fully declares the state of the first man. What kind of a notion regarding testing do they have who continue the testing of man after the cross? It maintains, whether knowingly or not, that the first man still has a standing before God and is being tested in that standing. And thus it is a denial that the second man has displaced the first man before God. While all this is not intentionally meant as an insult to the Father and the Son, it is insulting.

The Resultant Judgment Pronounced Upon the First Man on the Occasion of His Climactic Sin

The *sin* we considered when looking at John 15:22-24 is named again, in John 16. The Spirit who is omnipresent, present everywhere, was going to come. Of course, He was here in the world before he so came, and He will be in the world after the rapture of the saints when the restrainer is removed, yet He would be sent and He would come. He would come in a *certain capacity* and for *certain functions*, among them to indwell the believer and the church. In John 16 we see that the Spirit was to be sent in testimony to Christ's place in glory consequent upon the Son's rejection here. This is what the Spirit would do:

And having come, he will bring demonstration to the world, of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of

sin, because they do not believe on me; of righteousness, because I go away to [my] Father, and ye behold me no longer; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged (John 16:8-11).

BRING DEMONSTRATION

Concerning the word "demonstration," a footnote in JND's translation says:

. . . his presence and all that he does affords this demonstration.

That men have not the faculty to perceive this does not change the fact. Nor is the "demonstration" the same thing as "testing." Indeed, the present work of the Spirit in bringing such "demonstration" indicates that the testing of the first man is completed, that man is pronounced lost in view of the conclusion of the testing.

OF SIN, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT BELIEVE ON ME

This refers to that unique sin named in John 15:22-24. This was the culmination of all sin, the consummation of the probation of the first man. The Spirit is present here to bring demonstration of this. He has come on account of the fact that this sin has taken place. There is no further testing of the first man at this time while He is here; nor hereafter, of course.

OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, BECAUSE I GO AWAY TO MY FATHER

We might have expected the word "unrighteousness" here. But what we have here is reference to the fact that though Christ was rejected and crucified, God has righteously acted in raising Him from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand. He was raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. 6:4). All that proceeds in moral excellence from God was brought into action in raising Christ from among the dead. Christ had glorified the Father and finished the work He was given to do (John 17:4). The Father answers with glory, and through glory. It was righteousness to do so. And the Spirit brings demonstration of this righteousness and Christ's consequent actings from the glory.

OF JUDGMENT, BECAUSE THE RULER OF THIS WORLD IS JUDGED

We need to consider John 12:31 in this connection:

Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

We know that judgment has not yet been executed nor has the time arrived yet when Satan is cast out. The Lord refers here to *the sentence* of judgment: judgment is pronounced, the sentence will be carried out later. These things that our Lord had been saying, as given in the presentation of Himself in John's gospel, have in view the rejection noted in John 1:11 and

they anticipated the cross. These judgments are based on the accomplishment of His work on the cross. The word “now” has in view the accomplishment of the work on the cross. John’s gospel has numerous anticipatory statements, assuming that the work is finished.

So he pronounced sentence on the world in view of the cross. There was no need for further testing of the first man. Judgment is already pronounced; the testing was concluded. Moreover, Satan now has received acknowledgment of two titles in John’s Gospel in connection with Christ’s rejection: he is the *prince* of this world and the *ruler* of this world. He had not been so designated before but was then so designated in view of the termination of the probation of the first man. Returning to John 16:11, the significance is that not only is sentence pronounced on the world (John 12:31), *the world is judged in its head*, its ruler, he being recognized by the Lord in that position in consequence of the world’s rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son, in the power of the Spirit. In another Scripture Satan is also spoken of in a new way. He is called the god of this world (age) -- in 2 Cor. 4:4.

There is another pronouncement in Scripture that resulted from the fact that the probation of the first man was concluded at the cross. And this also involves the recognition that the world is judged, and is judged in its head, its ruler:

The whole world lieth in the wicked [one] (1 John 5:19).

So the Scriptures declare man to be totally lost, the whole world guilty before God; this is the conclusion from the probation of the first man. The moral history of the first man is concluded. His state has been exhaustively and fully manifested, and finally so by God sending Him Who is full of grace and truth. God is not now testing man. The first man has been displaced and God has established the second man in resurrection and glory -- and He acts in view of that, forming a heavenly people at present:

... and such as the heavenly [one], such also the heavenly [ones] (1 Cor. 15:28).

... (we too being dead in offences,) has quickened us with the Christ, (ye are saved by grace,) and has raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:5, 6).

Meanwhile, the Mosaic age continues on until Christ comes in glory.²⁶

Adamic Standing Now Gone for the Christian

The truth is that the Christian is not merely dead to the law. He is dead to the entire Adamic standing and responsibility of *the* first man -- who, as a matter of fact, had been tested by other things besides the law. Moreover, when the Son was here in manhood, He was “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). This was displayed, and He was rejected. The first man was tested by grace and truth, and rejected Him who was its full display. And, as we have seen, they rejected the manifestation of the Father in Him, the Father Whom He had declared (John 1:18). God is finished with the entire Adamic standing and responsibility of the first man, as such.

What we have seen indicates that those who place an age of grace into the earthly ages have not apprehended the end of the first man, and his standing, before God. They have given him a present place and, moreover, have not seen that the second man has *displaced* the first. And surely this must have a corresponding defective expression in Christian practice.

What About Responsibility Now?

We have been considering that *the* responsible man, i.e., the first man, has had his standing in responsibility, as under probation, ended in the cross. Note carefully that this does not mean that natural men are no longer connected with the first man. They are; but the first man’s *history, morally speaking*, is closed. God is done with him, except that, having declared the conclusion from the probation that men are TOTALLY LOST, He saves; but that is another matter. Concerning individual persons since the cross, though not under probation, they are responsible for their works and will be judged at the great white throne for their works (Rev. 20).

Now, although the ground of man’s responsibility is over in the sense of having wholly failed under it, when proved in every possible way, yet as to moral dealing with each individual, the responsibility is there to the full; and as an individual under moral dealing, a man has to go through the history of the process of responsibility and its failure; but he goes through it to bring out this, that he is lost already. He has to prove the truth of God’s verdict that in man there is no good thing; and so the result of the principle of responsibility is for him to find out that he is lost, that the responsibility is over; not as if it was not true, but because he is lost and ruined, as the man who has lost all his money by foolish ways. It is important to keep up responsibility, but the individual is brought to the consciousness that on that ground it is all up with him. Man is lost. We have spent every farthing, and have only debts; these we have if that is any good. It is all over with the first man, and no mending of him will do: he is lost and ruined; but Christ came to save the lost.

Now the Second Man is set up. It is not a mending of the first man, but the substitution of the Second. There is no improvement or correction of the first man (although we are practically changed if we come to Christ), but the sins of the first Adam are all cleared away; and, secondly, the tree itself is cut down by the roots for faith. In the cross we see the responsibility met completely; Christ has met all the failure

...²⁷

26. For an explanation of this, see *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1, available from the publisher.

27. *Collected Writings* 32:236.

Chapter 2.3

The Grain of Wheat Bearing Much Fruit

OT Saints Could not Form a Visible Oneness

Since the coming of the Holy Spirit, the children of God as now indwelt by Him, are enabled to express family oneness as children of God. The OT saints could not form a visible, manifested community of children before the Father. The Father was not revealed yet. Furthermore, they could not do so because in the ages before the cross man was viewed in his Adam (fallen Adam) standing and responsibility and was under trial to see if good were in him (Rom. 3:9-10); not to inform God, of course, but to teach us. This trial terminated in the death of Christ.

There are only two men (1 Cor. 15:47). Oh, that by faith we would believe it, and then understand! The whole OT time was the trial of “the first man” to show under every possible condition that he was unalterably wicked, -- a sinner. When this issue was fully demonstrated, the Lord Jesus accomplished redemption; and so blessing comes through “the second man.”

The law, then, addressed itself to the first man, the man of responsibility, man in Adam, and lastly man in the person of the Jews placed under the law. The law made no distinction concerning who was a child of God and who was not. The law did not, and could not, provide a basis for the children of God to form a visible, manifested community of children, in separation from those who were not children. What then was the position of the children of God in the OT? They were not gathered in ONENESS: they were “scattered abroad.”

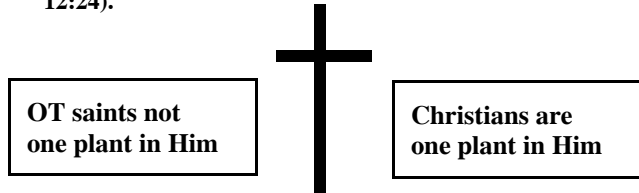
Now, John 11:52 expressly tells us that they were “scattered abroad” and that the death of Christ was required in order that the children of God might be gathered together in one. We can apprehend this because Christ’s work on the cross ended the trial of “the first man” and provided the basis for the full revelation of the Trinity, the declaration of the Father’s name to Christ’s brethren, the exaltation of man in the Person of Christ in glory, and the consequent baptism in, and seal with the Spirit. Therefore, now the children of God could be gathered together in one, giving expression to the common life and nature communicated from God, in separation from unbelievers, empowered by the Spirit to do so.

And this brings us to a little-understood scripture: John 1:12. This scripture is not speaking about just starting out to be a child of God. No. Rather, it concerns the subject we have been considering: the place and position of the children of God according to a revealed and acknowledged relationship before the Father, Whose name was declared by Christ (John 17:26), and who accomplished His will (John 17:4). John 1:12

indicates that the work of Christ has given the children of God the right (*exousia*) to take the place of acknowledged relationship to God and to one another, as we see in 1 John 1:3; i.e., the right to the true place and position of children in liberty before the Father. Let us be clear that this could not be so while the first man was under trial. The cross ended that trial. The first man was judged in that cross. Hence Paul could say, “I am crucified with Christ . . .” (Gal. 2:20). What I am in my Adam standing was judged on the cross (cp. Rom. 8:3). With the first man so judged, the children of God now have the right to take the place of acknowledged children before the Father, as empowered by the Spirit. “Beloved, now are we the children of God” (1 John 3:2). Do you appreciate this and act like a child of God, also seeking to practice oneness in the midst of the shameful mixture and the scattering of the children of God in Christendom? Of course, in view of other Scriptures this must be done without compromise of the truth and in holiness in associations, for holiness becomes God’s house forever! There *is* something more **shameful** than the divided state and that is **unity in evil**, unity at the expense of truth!

What Does John 12:24 Mean?

Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit (John 12:24).



Just as Paul used the human body as a figure for the body of Christ, here the Lord used the figure of a grain of wheat dying and then coming forth and bearing much fruit. However, he was not speaking of the body of Christ. This figure of being one plant in Him is not the truth that we form *one body* with Christ the Head in heaven; rather, we form *one plant* in Him. The life of the *risen stalk* is in the grains on the stalk!

This text tells us that before the Lord died and rose again, *He abode alone*. This shows that though the disciples were born again, before the Lord died and rose (John 13:10), they did not form one plant with Him. OT saints did not form one plant with Him. He abode alone. It is quite clear that the “fruit” spoken of in John 12:24 is on the *risen stalk* and not before that rising (resurrection of Christ). It is not

retrospective either. He did not rise and then place the OT saints on the stalk. He clearly distinguished two conditions separated by His death and resurrection.

Since He rose from the dead, He no longer abides alone. There are now grains in the plant and the life in the risen stalk is in the grains! We have this life, then, in connection with His risen manhood -- for it was as man He died ²⁸ and rose again. Hence, this life has been spoken of as "resurrection-life." J.N.D. remarked that "Christians" coined this word; but I suggest that it was himself, for it is found in 1827 notes by him.

What did John call this life? He referred to it as "life in the Son" (1 John 5:11). This life is in the grains of wheat in the one plant. Life from God in its basic character is always the same, but the grains in the one plant have life in an association never enjoyed before. The disciples did not receive a second giving of life, in that basic sense, after the resurrection, but the Lord brought that life they had as born again (as quickened) into a connection with Himself not enjoyed before the cross. And that character of life is: life in the Son.

Now, before the resurrection, since our Lord then abode alone, and the disciples were then already born again, they were after His resurrection connected with Him in the new way, forming grains on the risen stalk. When did that happen to them? We see it occurred on the day that He rose from the dead (John 20:22). They received the Spirit (not as the Pentecostal gift to unite them to the head in heaven as one body, but) as power of that life and connection with Him as forming **one plant in the risen stalk**. It is well to distinguish these different, though complementary, lines of truth in John and Paul; and not to confuse and confound them in some hodge-podge that does justice to neither.

Might we desire to understand this more fully.

We must understand that what the writers cited previously mean by **UNION** is the believer's being united to the Head of the body, as members of that body; and this took place at Pentecost (1 Cor. 12:13 tells what resulted). Union, as used in these papers, means *that* very joining to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). John's writings do not speak of that union, as such. They speak of identification of life, or oneness (John 17, for example).

Oneness has to do with identification in life. "Union" refers to our connection with the Head as members of one body. Oneness is identification in life **in** the Son and oneness in life with the others who likewise are one with him, in Him. The life of the stalk is in all the grains on the stalk. Of course, this is empowered by the Spirit and could not be until the grain of wheat (Christ) had died. The text (John 12:24) is explicit. There exists some kind of connection with the grain of wheat which could not exist before our Savior died.

It is most important to understanding these subjects that this fact be not thoughtlessly passed by. The Scripture is explicit: before His death He abode alone. While He uttered

those very words (John 12:24) He was abiding abode. His disciples who were born again at the time He uttered these words were not connected with Him as they were after His death and resurrection. HE ABODE ALONE!

Afterwards He did not abide alone. He was then connected with them in a way that He was not, and could not be, before He died. And this connection, we shall see, is identification, or oneness, of eternal life **IN** the Son, called in John 10:10 "abundant life", and elsewhere "eternal life." Eternal life as spoken of in John's writings is life in the Son, having certain characteristics and associations of life. We will treat of Old Testament saints in regard to this subject later. Here I wish to press the force of our Lord's statement in John 12:24 and provide help in understanding the following quotations. Our Lord's statement means that before death He abode alone and so those born of God were not one with Him in life -- resurrection life. It was impossible.

Based on our Lord's statement in John 12 24 illustrating the results of His death with the necessity of a grain of wheat dying in order to multiply itself, A. C. Ord made the following helpful comments.

The important subject of the life of God in the soul remains to be examined. That life, coming from God as it does, has certain invariable characteristics, which mark its divine origin. Faith, repentance, desire after God, obedience and dependence always accompany it; yet these spiritual effects of it are, in their manifestation, modified by the nature of the revelation God makes of Himself, and by His dispensational dealings. If God revealed Himself as a Moral Governor [Jehovah], in covenant relation with a people on earth, giving them also the law, they were then servants, not sons (see Gal. 4:15-17) and apprehended not eternal salvation, but His favor on earth; and as His earthly people representing His rights in government they had enemies to fight with, and could even rejoice in their overthrow, and be used in their extermination. Earthly blessings also were their portion, from the hand of Jehovah. Through fear of death, from which they were not delivered, they were all their lifetime subject to bondage; for death had not been conquered, and though sometimes they had glimpses of things beyond death, the heavenly things had not been declared (John 3:12, 13, 31, 32); though the glory of the millennial kingdom had been foretold by the prophets.

While our blessed Lord was upon earth, the disciples owned Him as the Messiah, the Heir of the promises, by virtue of the divine life which they had received; yet they had their thoughts all connected with the earthly kingdom, and the fulfilment of the promise made to the nation as God's chosen people, trusting that Christ was He who should have redeemed Israel. Indeed, when sent forth by the Lord Himself, they are directed not to go in the way of the Gentiles, nor into any city of the Samaritans; and they were to own the scribes and Pharisees, as sitting in Moses' seat. They could not even understand His death, it seemed to contradict all their hopes. John the Baptist, so far from apprehending heavenly things, though he might allude to them prophetically, says that he is of the earth, earthy, and speaketh of the earth. Indeed he was stumbled at the Lord's rejection and his own, so that he sent the well-known message to Him, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:31) and the Lord tells us that, great as John's position as His forerunner was, and faithful as he had been in it, "the least in the kingdom of heaven was

28. The infinite value and glory of His Person was imparted to the atoning sufferings, death and bloodshedding.

greater than he.”

The inconsistency of all this, with {OT} saints being in the Son and in *the Father*, is evident; and still more the whole character of life in the millennium; yet in His conversation with Nicodemus the Lord says that regeneration, or the new birth, is absolutely needful to the enjoyment of the earthly kingdom. “If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” {John 3:12}. We see again in the Psalms and in the Revelation, life in connection with Christ’s earthly kingdom and government, so that vengeance is sought on His enemies and their own by Jewish believers; for without judgment that kingdom cannot be established, and the Jewish saints are themselves employed, subsequently to Christ’s manifestation in glory, to cut off His enemies (Zech 9:13-15; 10:5). The knowledge of the Father and the Son implies grace and its divine manifestation (John 1:14), and an order of life entirely heavenly. When the Gentiles, who have the blessings of the earthly kingdom and a place in eternal life, are addressed by the Lord, He does not speak of God as their Father, but says, “Come, ye blessed of MY FATHER”; though He owns the Jews who have been rejected and persecuted as His messengers, as His brethren. For the distinction of Jew and Gentile reappears in the millennial kingdom, when there is no entrance within the veil as now (Psa. 149).

Mr. Grant objects to the idea that saints of old were as plants, having each a distinct life of its own, but this alone is consistent with a national unity, not characterized by life, but by ordinances in the flesh, which excluded the Gentile, even though converted, as profane and not to be eaten with. This divine life is always spoken of in scripture, not as an emanation of deity, but as derived FROM God through the action of the word, by the power of the Spirit on man. “Born of water [that is, the word, compare John 15:3] and of the Spirit.” “It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life”; that is, spiritual in their nature and the means of life when so used by the Spirit of God. The word is invariably the effectual instrument which the Holy Ghost employs. No doubt, coming from God, it has the moral characteristics of the divine nature, hence it is called by the apostle John “the seed of God.” “The seed of God abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God,” that is, it carries with it the stamp and character of its divine origin.

Again, the apostle Peter says, “There are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). It has been observed this is not THEOTES or essential Deity, as in Col. 2:9, but THEIOTES, that is, divine quality; exceedingly blessed, because expressive of what God is, as the word of man expresses what he is, his ways, character, and mind, and much more so with God; but this is not the communication of “the essential life” of God before incarnation or redemption, which, if true, as asserted by Mr. G., would be simply deifying saints. Even in the Old Testament, where this life as we have seen took an earthly form or mold, it is spoken of as produced by the reception of the word in the soul. “This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me”; and again, “I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me” (Psa. 119:50, 93).

The Gospels give the same testimony, that the word is the means always employed by God in quickening. “The sower soweth the word,” “The seed is the word of God”;

nor can any other construction be put upon the language used; in every case it is scripture, or the word spoken by prophets, or by Christ Himself and His apostles that is referred to: “*The words that I speak unto you,*” says the Lord in John 6; “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever . . . And *this is the word* which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Pet. 1:23-25); and so in James (ch. 1:18) it is “the *word of truth,*” by which we are begotten. (Cp. Eph. 1:13.)

Sometimes the Spirit is spoken of as the Quickener, as we have seen, sometimes the Father, sometimes the Son (John 5:21-25); but until after the death and resurrection of Christ life is stated in scripture to be only FROM the Son, never IN or WITH Him. It is hearing His word or His voice that can minister life (John 5); and this life is only spoken of as “eternal life” after the incarnation or the manifestation of the Son, or subsequent to His death with the revelation of the Father. “Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee”; and this is explained to be by His giving eternal life, which is through the knowledge of the “Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ *as sent*” by Him. No one who now knows what spiritual life is, doubts that it was abiding in its nature, but it was reserved as a distinction in which the glory of the Person and work of the Son should be seen, that it should only come out as “life,” eternal life, through Him. Like silver, which is precious in itself as everyone knows, it is only when it has gone through the process of stamping in the royal mint with the queen’s head and the royal arms, that it becomes current coin of the realm, or of recognized value as a legal tender. Indeed, it is first spoken of in John 3 in connection with, *not* the new birth or the work of the Spirit, but with the Son of man being lifted up, and the gift of God’s Son, the fruit of His love to the world, “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” So the Lord, even when speaking of Himself as the living bread which came down from heaven (that is, His incarnation), and “If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever,” adds, to give effect to this for souls, “The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” To show that it is needful there should be the apprehension of the meaning and value of His death by the believer, He continues, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (John 6). Only after His death could the streams of life and love that were in His heart flow freely forth. “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.” It is undeniable that in the Old Testament life is not thus spoken of. For life and incorruptibility have only been brought to light by the gospel, so that it was not known as life before, still less as eternal life.

But the question has also arisen, whether we do not enjoy life in an altogether new way since Christ arose, and in a way which gives a nearness to Himself and the Father never known before, and of which we find no trace either in millennial times. The Lord says, He is come that we may have life, and have it more abundantly; if it is to be possessed in special connection with Himself, and in a new position taken by Him, this is easily understood.

In John 12:24 we have the distinct statement of our Lord, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” This product of the corn of wheat does not refer to the mere bestowment of life by Him, either before or after His incarnation, which life existed in those who surrounded Him

at that very moment; but it is an express declaration that there could be no association or identification in life with Him before His death, for until then He abode absolutely alone. The spiritual instinct of any saint ought to tell him that until the flesh was judicially put an end to, any such connection with Him could not exist. In the cross also, man as such is judged and set aside before God. and the world likewise.²⁹

The old creation must be brought to its true issue in death and judgment, before the foundation of the new could be laid in Him, who is the beginning, the First-born from the dead. When once the point of death has been reached, and expiation made, we can be said to be “quicken *together* with Christ, raised *together*, and made to sit *together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” {Eph. 2:6}. But to return to the passage before us. “If it [the corn of wheat] die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” It is as rising from the ground that it is multiplied, and bears within itself all the fruit, and yet is but one plant; and the whole shares in the same air, the same sunshine, the same showers, as well as having the same life. Hence the Lord, referring to this, says (John 14:19), “Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me, *because I live*, ye shall live also.” This was after His death, when the world saw Him no more; then the disciples could not only have life, but have it in connection with Himself as risen; and hence it would be *in* and *with* Himself, as a consequence of, and in continuance with, His own, because beyond the reach of the effects of sin, death and judgment. This life would be indissoluble and eternal, and He adds, “In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (John 14:20); that is, after this life was given, which He then distinctly speaks of as in the future. This accords fully with the message the Lord sends to His disciples after His resurrection (John 20:17) “Go, tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God”; and then, standing in the midst of them, “He breathed on them,” and says, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost” {John 20:22}. He had indeed revealed the Father in all His character and ways, but never before does He call them His brethren, for He is “the first-born among many brethren”; never before does He link them with Himself in these blessed words -- mine and yours. It is His life, His position, His nearness of relationship, in which they are called to participate. He had taken this new place as the risen Man before God, Head, or beginning, of the new creation, victorious over death, the grave, and Satan’s power, and for the first time these words, marking association, are used -- mine and yours -- and His own life is given with the Holy Ghost as the power to enjoy it.³⁰

Abundant Life

I am come that they might have life, and might have [it] abundantly (John 10:10).

The “abundant life” was communicated by the risen grain of wheat, the Son in resurrection, as we shall see in the next chapter. It was communicated consequent upon shedding His blood and rising from the dead. Abundant life is not a peppy

life as some seem to think; nor is it a busy, active life -- for a bed-ridden saint who has life in the Son has it. *Life in abundance* bespeaks a fulness of source of life as well as character of life in all its blessed associations, oneness, and the place before the Father that is now our portion as in the Son. It is identification in life -- oneness -- life *in* the Son.

Do not be deceived when hearing an abundant noise as you go by an “Abunda-Life Center,” or a place having some such name. Most likely the abunda-noise is emanating from abunda-flesh.

29. Those who have sought to make out union of saints with Christ, previous to death and resurrection, have either destroyed the possibility of atonement, by making Christ part of fallen, ruined humanity, or as in the present case, deifying saints by bringing them into what is essentially divine.

30. *Collected Writings of A. C. Ord*, p. 28; available from the publisher.

Chapter 2.4

“Receive Ye the Holy Ghost”

The First Communication of Abundant Life

And having said this, he breathed into [them], and says to them, Receive [the] Holy Spirit (John 20:22).

We turn now to the first communication of “abundant life,” i.e., life in the Son. This is not a second quickening in the sense of “double quickening,” a charge of some who reason that all is ours from the first moment of quickening.³¹ And as the result of such erroneous reasoning, it is alleged that when our Lord breathed on His own (John 20:22) nothing happened (other than He breathed in that way). But a wonderful thing did indeed happen.

The grain of wheat had died {cp. John 12:24}; and now on the very day of resurrection, the day when the risen stalk stood forth in victory over judgment, hell and death, He breathed INTO them and says, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” This is not the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit’s indwelling to form one body united to the Head, for that awaited ascension and glorification (John 7:39; Acts 2:32, 33). Rather, this was the beginning of bringing forth much fruit like the grain of wheat that had died and sprung up. This was the communication of His “resurrection life,” the life of the risen stalk. His own had already been quickened with divine life, were born anew, but there was as yet no identification of life in and with Him because before death He abode alone (John 12:24). But now they were brought into association with Himself in oneness in Him -- i.e., identification of life in Him. Wm. Kelly wrote:

Here the risen Lord Jesus stands before us . . . He is man, and now He is the risen man; but He is also the Lord God, even as Thomas immediately after says, “My Lord and my God.” He is One who, in His own person, united both divine nature and proper manhood. He stands, the risen man, “the second man,” on the first day of the week, and as the quickening or life-giving Spirit He breathes into the disciples. That is, it is the Spirit of Christ Jesus risen from the dead. It is the Holy Ghost accompanying this resurrection-life, and the power of it which the Lord, as the Head of the new family, conferred on the members of that family. They had believed on Him and had life eternal. Now they had life abundantly (John 10:10).

Accordingly such is the all-important change which

came in with the action of our Lord Jesus Christ. One can conceive a person reasoning on this subject and saying, “If people get eternal life, I do not see what great difference it makes that it should be risen life -- that this life in resurrection together with Christ should so signally mark it.” Very possibly you do not; but allow me to say that full victory already achieved and made ours in Christ widely differs from life struggling with death; life with the handwriting uneffaced and contrary to us in ordinances {i.e., the law}; life not yet delivered from the power of the evil that surrounds it; life seeking after what is good though failing; life striving to avoid what is bad, yet {the person is} constantly drawn somehow or other into it. This is precisely the state of man where the delivering power is unknown. But it was closed for the believer, as far, at any rate, as showing the new place into which the believer is put by the death and resurrection of our Lord. The life that one receives now in the Lord Jesus is life *not* under the law -- life *not* haying to do with the earth or its ordinances. It is the life of One who has brought me into perfect peace with God. It is the life of One who has put me in possession of His own relationship with God. Accordingly, it is as giving this in its most intrinsic form and its fullest power that our Lord Jesus Christ thus breathed to show the new character of life, so to speak, that was given them -- that the life that they lived in the flesh was really by the faith of the Son Himself: “Not I, but Christ that liveth in me.” This, then, was given by the notable fact that He thus breathed upon {into} them. It was a partaking of Himself as He then stood -- a participation in what He was, specially in the life that was in Him, after all questions of good and evil were settled, and perfect deliverance from sin and death was won by Him and given to them.

Hence it is that the apostle Paul, referring to this says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”³² Why? “For,” says he, “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” “The law of the Spirit of life” is the phrase of the apostle Paul. This is the very life, as John tells us, that was here given. If in being born again (John 3) one was born of water and Spirit, much more was it here the Holy Ghost received; but it was the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Life. It was not the Spirit of external power working miracles, or any such energies -- things which to men might appear to be far greater. Much less was it anything so wanton as men taking the place of God, and professing to forgive sins on the earth; to this no apostle ever pretended. Nevertheless it is a real privilege, and as true now as on the day when Jesus rose from the dead. What the Holy Ghost then did was simply communicating life according to its resurrection power and character through Jesus Christ, the Second man risen from the

31. In 1875, before resistance to these truths arose, engendering a charge of holding “double quickening,” J. N. Darby wrote:

The ordinary scriptural order was, when convicted, remission of sins, and thereupon receiving the Holy Ghost. This gives not a new life, but a life in relationships into which such an one has entered; and this gave not only liberty before God in the knowledge of forgiveness, but freedom from the law of sin and death (*Letters* 3:435).

32. The latter clause in the Received Text, represented in the Authorized Version, has no sufficient authority. It hinders the immediate connection with the reasons given, first in verse 2, next in verse 3; and it undermines the assurance of verse 1 by turning into a condition what rightly follows as the consequence in verse 4.

dead and withal the Divine Person, the Son, giving life no less than the Father.³³

All saints that ever lived, or will live, had, or will have, life *from* the Son, but only **believers** now (I use the word “believers” carefully as noted before to designate those who believe the gospel of their salvation and thus know they are in **the forgiven position** before God) have life *in* the Son. Observe three things:

1. “In the Son” denotes relationship and character of the life with knowledge of the Father.
2. “In Christ” denotes place and standing.
3. “In the Spirit” denotes the characterizing power to express the life in the place and standing.

Those three things are among the characteristic truths of Christianity.

In its *basic character* divine life communicated is always the same. But the breath of the last Adam did effect a mighty change. J. A. Trench wrote:

Taken historically, when the truth is known from other parts of the word, it {John 20:22} helps to *illustrate the difference*, between the Spirit as the power of life in Christ Jesus (the last Adam breathing upon them, as God once breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life, would suggest strongly this connection with life) -- of life now theirs (the same life as before, but) in a wholly new position in a risen Christ -- and the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; though one could not be without the other now.³⁴

J. A. Trench adds at once his judgment that it is an “absurdity” to suggest that this teaching means that now “people in fact receive the Spirit as life before they receive it as the indwelling Spirit of sonship.” Since Pentecost the two go together.

The following comments by Ed. Dennett further explain the relationship between John 20:22, 23 and the coming and indwelling of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2):

There is a great difference between these two scriptures. It is clear from John 7:39, that the Holy Ghost was not bestowed upon believers, did not come to dwell in them in the sense of Acts 2, until after that Jesus was glorified. It is also seen from the words of the Lord Himself that He did not regard the action in John 20 as in any way anticipating the special blessing of Pentecost. (See Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5.) Distinctly understanding this will prepare us to consider the meaning of the Lord’s words in John -- “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” etc. It is, in fact, the fulfilment of John 10:10: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” Before the cross, during His earthly sojourn, His disciples, who really believed on Him, had life; but it was only from Him in resurrection that they could receive it “more abundantly.” But the fact that they did so receive it involves the new place taken by the Lord as risen from among the dead. He was the Second Man in incarnation; but He did not take His place as such, and indeed was not in the condition of the Second Man, until after the resurrection.

³⁵ It is this fact which imparts to the scene in John 20 all its

significance. Jesus had already revealed to the disciples, through Mary, that His Father was now their Father, and His God their God. He had thus associated them with Himself in His own relationships; and thenceforward He was the Head of a new race. When therefore He came into their midst, where they were assembled, after that He had spoken peace unto them, shown them His hands and His side, commanded them to go forth in the power of the peace He had bestowed, He communicated the life more abundantly to enable them to enter upon their new place and relationships: a life, the full issue of which would be conformity to His own condition in glory. It should also be remarked that the very form in which He communicated the Holy Ghost, as the power of life, explains its meaning. “He breathed on {into} them”; and, turning back to Genesis, we read that “the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). The first man was quickened by a divine communication of breath, was then “made a living soul”; “the last Adam,” as a quickening Spirit, breathed of His own life in resurrection upon His disciples, and they lived in its power through the Holy Spirit. This contrast, moreover, involves undoubtedly the truth of the person of the Lord; but into this we do not here enter.

Such then is, we apprehend, the truth of this scene and action. What the disciples received in this way was the Holy Spirit as the power of life, corresponding with what we find in Rom. 8:1-11; to receive the indwelling Spirit as power, as the anointing, as well as the earnest, the seal, and the Spirit of adoption, they had yet to wait until the day of Pentecost. And hence it was not until Pentecost that they were brought into the full Christian position.³⁶

To this we add some comments by J. N. Darby:

The truth of risen life in Christ and the coming of the Holy Ghost are distinct; but now that both are fulfilled the divine order is the knowledge of the remission of sins and receiving the Holy Ghost, and thus the two are inseparable. Then I know, or may know, that I am in Christ; whereas the forgiveness known before by the gospel is of past sins -- what my conscience needed. The life we receive is in Christ risen, but I am not consciously -- much more than knowledge -- in John 20:22, now that the Holy Ghost is come, till I receive the Holy Ghost. Rom. 8 puts them inseparably together.³⁷

33. *Receive Ye the Holy Ghost*, pp. 4-7.

34. *An Answer to “Life and the Spirit,”* p. 19.

35. {The Lord Jesus was *personally* the second man in incarnation. But the *place* as second man, as having displaced the first man, was taken as a consequence of the work on the cross, and as a consequence of His
(continued...)

35. (...continued)

resurrection. That put Him in the *place* of the second man according to the purpose of God.}

36. *The Christian Friend*, 1888, pp. 49, 50.

37. *Letters* 3:436.

Chapter 2.5

Resurrection Life

The Character of Resurrection Life

The expression, "resurrection life" was 'coined' to designate the character and associations of life, the oneness of life with Himself, resulting from our Lord breathing on His own as recorded in John 20. When He rose from the dead, He was by that act the Head of the new creation. Note well that the new creation (which will be considered further in Part Four) began when Christ rose as its head. His breathing on them was the giving of the Spirit (not as the Pentecostal gift for *union* with the Head of the body in Heaven, but) as the power of oneness of life in Himself in the new creation. This oneness of life with Himself, in resurrection, in connection with His risen Manhood (John:12:24) has been designated as resurrection-life.

W. J. Lowe remarked:

As the Head of the new creation, and the source of life as risen from the dead, He breathes on them the breath of resurrection-life, and states at the very moment what is the characteristic of the life, namely, "[the] Holy Ghost." (In a similar sense we read of "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," Rom. 8:2). No one, I suppose, thinks of denying that this "looks forward" to the coming of the Spirit,³⁸ in the sense that, as we have seen, the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer was what determined the blessed position of those whom the Lord was leaving, and to whom He said in view of this, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 7:7). The believer was to receive the Holy Ghost (John 7:39). But it was of *the breath* of this new resurrection-life that the Lord used the words, "Holy Ghost," as John 20:22 states; and that is a different thing from the presence of the Holy Ghost *with*, and testifying personally *in*, the believer -- "with his spirit" {Rom. 8:16}. So that to confound this passage with the coming of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost would only obscure the truth in both cases. We have here the new *life* in the full power and efficacy of the Holy Ghost, as acting *in*, and forming that life; and not the Spirit personally, *with* that life, as dwelling in the believer. (As has often been noticed, both these things are seen in Rom. 8). And this new life, as revealed, is "in the Son"; not said

to be "in us," as if it could be apart from Him; much less be possessed independently of His accomplished work, testified of by the water and the blood which flowed from Him when "already dead" (John 19:33-55).³⁹

Consider also this letter from J. N. Darby:

-- forgets that "resurrection-life"⁴⁰ is a term (as a short statement suitable enough) invented by Christians to express the state in which we are, not a scriptural one. In essence divine life is always the same: only that now Christ, who becomes our life, being not only a quickening Spirit, but also Himself raised from the dead, we have this life as ours according to the condition into which He is entered as man.

In one aspect He quickens whom He will (John 5); in another He is raised from the dead, we are quickened together with Him; and though all this is life in divine power -- Christ our life -- yet the difference is important, and involves a great deal. It is not only being born, but born as dead to all that is passed as Christ was -- death, sin, Satan's power, and judgment passed, forgiveness and justification possessed (Col. 2:13, and so Ephesians). It leads to, though it be not in itself, the unity of all saints in the body of Christ. Hence the connection of life with resurrection with Christ is of all importance, because it is consequent on the death of Christ, and seals on God's part the efficacy of this work, and leads us (the question of sin, and judgment, and the power of flesh and Satan settled) into the new place or sphere to which it belongs. But the life is always essentially the same, or it could not enjoy God. But the state of that life is modified by the consciousness of that place into which it is, in all its relationships, brought -- where Christ is, which affects it in all its thoughts and affections, according to the power of the Holy Ghost which is in and with it. "It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" {Rom.8:3}. This affects its whole state and condition, in fellowship with God and with Christ; for morally the life lives in that in which it is. "He that hath the Son hath life," and that Son is the risen Man.

Now, as to life, this is always the state of him who is

38. A similar expression could be misleading if coupled with an erroneous explanation. The words "must look forward to Pentecost" with the added words "and cannot be before" are wholly unacceptable, and only suit a methodical system of reasoning. It is said "John 20:22, must look forward," and this means that what the Lord did in breathing on the disciples was only the *sign* of what was to come in at Pentecost, that is, the gift of the Holy Ghost; and not that in the act of breathing He actually communicated at the moment anything they had not possessed before. This is the *reasoned* out force of this positive act of the Lord, which we are asked to accept as the truth! Shall "*must*" and "*cannot be*" settle the matter for us?

39. *Life and Propitiation* . . . , pp. 39, 40.

40. {He wrote elsewhere:

You must be aware that the teaching that Rom. 7 is not the Christian state, but that ch. 8 is, has been taught, as I myself earnestly insisted on it now near fifty years, only I trust with increasing clearness (*Collected Writings* 23:212).

Observe the historical fact that this was preached from the beginning of the recovery of so much blessed truth. Indeed, you will find that he used the expression "resurrection life" in his notes on John found in *Notes and Comments*, vol. 7. In these notes there is a date of Apr/27 -- 1827, note.

a Christian, that is, who has the Spirit. (See Rom. 8⁴¹). But he may not have realized what it really means, though all be his; and in Rom. 7 we get one quickened so as to delight in God's law, but not delivered so as to have the place that belongs to one who knows the power of Christ's resurrection, and having not the Spirit. This last state is developed in Rom. 8. No one in the Christian state but has this life; and all this belongs to whomsoever is quickened now; but till he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, his state and condition, as alive in Christ, is not known to him, he has not got into that state in relationship with God. It is his, no doubt, but he has not got it. Resurrection-life is life in another condition, the only one now owned by God, but not another kind of life in itself. Charcoal and diamond are exactly the same thing chemically, but they are very different actually. But the only state owned of God now is life connected with Christ risen.⁴²

Among other things, we should note his remark that "In essence divine life is always the same: only that now . . ." This means he held that OT saints had eternal life in its ESSENCE, but not with its present associations and oneness in Christ in resurrection. They had not what is meant by the description "resurrection-life," i.e., life *in* the Son.

Resurrection-life Only Since Christ's Resurrection

The way in which the believer has part in what is divine is:

. . . through the risen manhood of Christ, and what we can partake of in that manhood, a ground easily intelligible to a spiritual mind, and which preserves from what would take us out of our proper place of lowly dependence, though bringing us into infinite blessing.⁴³

Our Lord said, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him" (John 6:56), a thing impossible until redemption was accomplished in fact.

Thus they should live, not of their own life, but by Christ, through feeding on Him. Here He returns to His own Person, faith in His death being established. Moreover, they should dwell in Him (v. 56) -- should be in Him before God, according to all His acceptance before God, all the efficacy of His work in dying. And Christ should dwell in them according to the power and grace of that life in which He had gained the victory over death, and in which, having gained it, He now lives. As the living Father had sent Him, and He lived, not by an independent life which had not the Father for its object or source, but by reason of the Father, so he that thus ate Him should live because of Him.⁴⁴

Mr. Darby also remarked that "Christ introduces us into the enjoyment of that which is His own -- of His own position before the Father." He refers to this in connection with the Son in manhood:

This is blessedly true in every respect, except of course essential Godhead and oneness with the Father: in this He remains divinely alone. But all He has as man, and as Son in manhood, He introduces into, "My Father and your Father, my God and your God." His peace, His joy, the words the Father gave to Him, He has given to us; the glory given to Him He has given to us; with the love wherewith the Father has loved Him we are loved. The counsels of God were not merely to meet our responsibility as children of Adam, but before the world to put us into the same position with the second Adam, His own Son. And Christ's work has made that to be righteousness.⁴⁵

These are some of the characteristics of life in the Son:

"Because I live, ye shall live also." We see Him, because we have life, and this life is in Him, and He in this life. "This life is in the Son." It is as sure as His duration. It is derived from Him. *Because* He lives, we shall live. Our life is, in everything, the manifestation of Himself who is our life. Even as the apostle expresses it, "That the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies." Alas! the flesh resists: but this is our life in Christ.

But this is not all. The Holy Ghost dwelling in us, we know that we are in Christ.⁴⁶

Does it Mean Double Quickening?

Does the teaching about "life in the Son" as set forth in this book imply an experience of "double quickening" in the life of a believer as objected by some? Perhaps the way of stating the truth, as in the following extract, could lend support to such a charge.

In my own case of salvation, God certainly applied Psalms 71:20, not when I was born again, but when after repentance I was led to rest on the finished work of Christ, which the Holy Ghost made me see from that verse. It was after the great troubles, that Christ was quickened again, in resurrection power. It was after God made me understand these troubles, He quickened me again, and I was sealed with the Holy Ghost.⁴⁷

More careful statements, however, clearly exclude the idea of "double quickening." For example, J. N. Darby said this:

There is no life but the life of Christ, in one sense never was; only now that He is risen He gives it according to the power and in the relationship into which He is entered. But life is not what is preached but Christ -- repentance and remission of sins: the state of our relationship with God in ourselves or in Christ. "Ye must be born again" -- however true is not gospel. The display of life in us will be according to what faith holds as to these relationships. The ordinary scriptural

41. So Christ, after His resurrection, breathed on them, as God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life; but this is not the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

42. *Letters* 2:405-407 (1877).

43. A. C. Ord, *The Teaching of Scripture on the Subject of Spiritual Life . . .*, p. 53.

44. J. N. Darby, *Synopsis* 3:329, 330.

45. *Synopsis* 3:371.

46. *Synopsis* 3:371. Note, this is individual, not the union of the members of the body with Christ; nor is union indeed an exact term for it. We are *in* Him. This is more than union, but not the same thing. It is nature and life, and position in it, our place in that nature and life. When He was on earth, and they had not the Holy Ghost, they should have known that He was in the Father and the Father in Him. When He was in heaven, and they had the Holy Ghost, they would know they were in Him and He in them.

47. A. P. Cecil, *A Sequel in Answer to a Tract on "Life in Christ and Sealing with the Spirit,"* pp. 14, 15.

order was, when convicted, remission of sins, and thereon receiving the Holy Ghost. This gives not a new life, but a life in the relationships into which such an one was entered; and this gave not only liberty before God in the knowledge of forgiveness, but freedom from the law of sin and death. I then know not merely that Christ died and delivered me, put me in a new place relating to what was past (then does not go any further), but as in this new place that it is identified with power of life and death to sin, as Romans 8:2, 3.⁴⁸

When the last Adam breathed upon His disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" {John 20:22}, the life they already had was brought into identification with Him, the risen "corn of wheat." It was life in a new relationship -- even His resurrection-life -- and so they were looked upon as quickened together with Him. This is not what took place on the day of Pentecost when it was the Holy Spirit coming down here in the special capacity to form into one body (1 Cor. 12:13) those who had believed and were waiting at Jerusalem (Acts 1:4, 5).

Differentiating between "quickened" and "quickened together with Christ," J. N. Darby remarked on Col. 2:13:

I get now, not merely "quickened," but "quickened" together with him" (v. 13); because, supposing I am alive, I may be spiritually alive, or I may be in Rom. 7. Any one there says, "I think Christ is precious to me, and I love His word and His people," but he is examining himself to find out if he is in the new creation. Like the prodigal, he has not met the father; but this is not {the position of being} quickened together with Christ -- {he is} quickened, no doubt, and where I speak of being quickened in that way, it is the divine operation of a new life in my soul. But quickened together with Christ is different . . . Christ as man has been raised from the dead. He died under our sins -- for them; He went on unto death for us, and God has raised Him up, and, supposing I am a believer {as in Eph. 1:13}, I am raised up with Him. . . . It is not merely the fact that I have life; I have life in a new condition where Christ is. I have got into a new place before God -- Christ's place -- and all my sins are left on the other side of Christ's grave. I do not own the old man, it is the horrid thing that has been deceiving me.⁴⁹

For some, however, a difficulty arises because they wonder *when* they were quickened together with Christ: when they believed on Christ or at some other time? If at some later time, then is not this a second quickening? The answer appears at first to be found in Eph. 2:5. The question of time ("when") is not, however, the thrust of that verse. Eph. 2 presents the purpose of God in reaching out in sovereign grace to spiritually dead sinners, and effecting a work of grace in their souls; quickening them from a state of death to the position of being seated together in Christ in the heavenlies. Eph. 2 does not develop the details of God's working with souls and the exercises they pass through such as we see in Rom. 7. There, the exercises a soul may pass through until the soul is *delivered* (Rom. 7:24) and set free (Rom. 8:2) are detailed.⁵⁰ Eph. 2 treats of God's sovereign operations whereas Rom. 7 treats of the soul's experiences, in the ways of God, in time. Eph. 2:5 therefore does not, in fact, answer

the question posed at the beginning of this paragraph.

The answer to the question regarding the time when we were quickened together with Christ really lies in the fact that since Christ went on high, we can say, "when Christ died I died." Indeed, we were quickened together with Him and raised up together and seated together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. None of this speaks of God's ways with us in time but rather of His mighty operation respecting Christ and ourselves as associated with Him.

In commenting on Col. 2:13, J. A. Trench has made some helpful remarks, an extract from which follows:

From the moment that we are united to Christ, we are taught in His blessed grace to look back and see all as one complete act of divine power when Christ was raised; but, of course, it is another question altogether when we were individually brought into it. Of the quickening of the Spirit, or of being born of God, the passage says nothing, but of our being quickened together with Christ, which is a wholly distinct thought, as any one must see who will read the verses for himself. The mighty power of God expressed in the resurrection of Christ, has come in and taken us out of all we were in Adam, and put us into the whole of the position of Christ founded upon the finished work of the cross, and made good to us individually when we believe the glad tidings of our salvation, by the Holy Ghost who takes up His place in us.⁵¹

He further remarks upon the mistake to which bringing in the question of time leads:

So that if time is taken into account here, we were both quickened and forgiven before ever we were born! The truth is, the passage teaches nothing as to the time of either.⁵²

Lastly, let us look again at the words of the first quotation we cited above: "God . . . quickened me again." In misguided zeal against a non-existent doctrine of "double quickening," some have judged that such statements are "grotesque folly." A. C. Ord has responded to this charge as follows:

But the soul who reveres the word of God will not be affected by all this mere storm of words. The fact is, it is a question of the use of terms, and whether scripture applies the term, quickening, to a fresh accession of life. In the Psalms we have it constantly so presented, and those who have been already quickened by the word, say, "Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name" (Psa. 80:18). And again, "my soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me according to thy word" (Psa. 119:25, 40). Even naturally there is a distinction between quickening and birth, though the operations of nature are hidden and mysterious in their origin. The apostle, however, goes further than . . . , when he says to the Galatians, "My little children, of whom I *travail in birth again*, until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). Had {he who used the words "grotesque folly"} been one of the apostle's Galatian opposers, how would he have scorned this as a "burlesque extravagance," but natural things, though they may illustrate, are not meant to govern the spiritual mysteries which the word of God unfolds, still less to override what it positively teaches.⁵³

48. Letters 3:345.

49. Collected Writings 31:227.

50. See also Words of Truth, New Series 1:210-212.

51. An Answer to "Life and the Spirit," p. 15.

52. *Ibid.*

53. Collected Writings of A. C. Ord, p. 29, note 16.

Summary

When the risen “corn of wheat” {John 12:24} breathed into his disciples (John 20:22), he breathed upon those who already were born of God, having divine life. He said “Receive ye the holy Ghost.” This was not a statement merely anticipating the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. That would make of our Lord’s act nothing more than a symbolic act. But they did receive the Spirit, but not as at Pentecost when He came personally as indweller to unite to a Head in heaven. They received Him as the power of this fresh accession of life, life in resurrection, the resurrection-life of the risen One. At Pentecost the Spirit came as the personal indweller to effect union with the Head in heaven, thus forming the body of Christ. *Now*, since Pentecost, both things become true of the saint when he is sealed with the Spirit: i.e., He receives the Spirit as the power of life in the Son and as the personal indweller uniting Him to the Head in Heaven. Historically, God chose to separate these two things in time (i.e., John 20 and Acts 2), which helps us to learn and understand these things according to our measure.

John speaks of life in the Son and Paul of life in Christ. One is the character of the life and the other is the place, or position, where we have that life. Rom. 8:2 says, “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and of death.” It is blessed to rightly understand this Scripture. To that end we will turn to the subject of deliverance (cp. Rom. 7 24), in Part 3. Meanwhile, I would note two ways of reading Rom. 8.2:

The law of -- *the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus* (Correct);

The law of the Spirit -- of life in Christ Jesus (Incorrect).

Chapter 2.6

Eternal Life

{This chapter is largely comprised of quotations from W. J. Lowe's, *Life and Propitiation: An Examination of Certain "New Doctrines,"* 1885. Bold faced headings are added.}

Revelation and Relationships in Various Dispensations

When the truths of scripture are cast in systematic molds, its vital elasticity, and divine adaptation to the soul's need, is destroyed. The system must err on one side or the other. If, with the desire of grasping and unifying different dispensations and relationships with God, it be adapted to human intelligence, then "life" is reduced to one single form, and the *knowledge* of the relationship it expresses is necessarily divorced from it; for the relationship with God varies in different dispensations, and the life, according to the system, does not. This is Mr. Grant's system; and he would countenance it by condemning the other extreme, which would be to stereotype the knowledge as being contained in the life, and, as a consequence, smother or prevent the needed exercises of soul which the word of God produces. But why make a system at all? In neither way is the walk by faith: in the first case I reduce the word of God to the proportions of my own feeble apprehension; in the second, I persuade myself that I have attained to what I really know nothing of. The practical results of the Wesleyan doctrine of perfection is an instance in point: he whose conscience is tender in regard to sin spends his life in uncertainty and doubt, feeling he has not attained "perfection"; whereas, he who persuades himself he has attained it, makes light of sin, which, between his doctrine and his conscience, he is obliged to explain away or deny.

The word of God is living, and when we come to it, we find, at one and the same moment, the discovery of our state such as no mere feelings of ours could give us; and the remedy God has provided, which not only delivers us, but puts us into a new condition, where alone the state out of which He has brought us can be truly estimated. It was in the father's embrace, that the prodigal learned the love of his father's heart and his own vileness, – in his house and seated at his table, that he learned the depth of degradation and want to which he had come in the far country.

The word judges me, enables me to detect the movements of the soul, and thus to find out what my thoughts, feelings, and affections are as in God's sight; and the Holy Ghost, in occupying me with Christ, transforms me into His image, and gives me thoughts, feelings, and affections which are of a new order. I learn the end of myself, and of all that is of me, in death, and find a full satisfaction of the yearnings of a divine nature in Christ, who is thenceforth become the object for my heart. I am thus purified by the word, and grow by the

knowledge of God (Col. 1:10). Still the mortifying of my members, which this implies, may find my heart rebellious, and hindrance to spiritual growth will be the consequence. The scriptures can meet this too in living power. But what if they are practically replaced by a system which tones them down to my feeble state? I have lost the power furnished of God for growth and selfjudgment, and inevitable worldliness is before me.

* * * * *

It has been sought by some one (signing himself J. J. S. {Sims}) recently, to uphold Mr. Grant's theory, by stating that:

John 3:36 proves plainly that it is either eternal life, or the wrath of God; John 6:53, 54, that it is eternal life, or no life.

It is *so now* of course, as a consequence of the rejection of the Son revealed on earth in grace. But what saith the *scripture*? Such arguments only prove how the "form of sound words," according to the scripture, has already been given up; and this is the direct fruit of imbibing Mr. G.'s system. Does nothing depend then upon the way in which God chooses to reveal Himself in different dispensations? And is the life which is by faith in the revelation, always precisely the same in its character and manifestation, notwithstanding the difference of the revelation made? When I say that the life of a plant is not the life of an animal, do I thereby assert that the plant has no life? Or again, does saying an animal has not the life of a man, militate against scripture which calls them both "living souls"? And so, to go further, when we find divers forms of spiritual life in the various "families" in heaven and on earth which are named of the Father, can it be asserted that there is no difference between them? It is sad though not astonishing to find that in the last short paper issued by Mr. Grant himself the distinctions between "eternal life" as used in the synoptic Gospels, and as used in the Gospel of John are ignored. The thought of eternal life is really limited to its unending duration, covered by the statement that it is "divine." . . . Saints accustomed to read the scriptures, one would have expected to refuse at once such a superficial and lowering representation of the truth. Has John 6:57 lost its meaning for our souls? The blessed Lord says: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me even he shall live by me." The great point of the truth I would desire to insist on is here. He lived in His own divine nature, manifesting the Father down here, -- living because of what the Father is, and by reason of His living. *We*, in order to live, need to eat, to feed upon Him. But there is more than this. God did not need to send the Son in order to reveal Himself as the Almighty, or as Jehovah. When *He* wills to be known as *Father*, then He sends

the SON: none but the Son could make the FATHER known. And this is the life that constitutes Christianity. The life of the Old Testament saints, blessed as it was in communion with God, and unending as it will be, in the still greater enjoyment of what He is, was not this. The Son sent from the living Father lives by Him, because of what He is, and so reveals the Father to us. We *feed* on Him, and live by Him. In Him we learn who and what the Father is; and only so can we learn it. This is Christianity. “No man hath seen God at any time”; but the One who reveals Him now, is “the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father,” and He says, “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.” He says too: “I know that his commandment is eternal life: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak” (John 12:50).⁵⁴

The Expression “Eternal Life” in the Synoptic Gospels

In Matt. 7:14, the Lord speaks of “the way which leadeth *unto* life.” So in Matt. 18:8, 9 (cp. Mark 9:43, 45, with v. 47, “enter into the *kingdom of God*”), and in Matt. 19:17, we find “enter *into* life,” -- again as a future thing (however *near* it may be in point of time), and having a direct application to the realization of the blessings of the new covenant to be introduced by the Messiah, -- while leaving the door open (especially as regards the moral import of the expression) for further developments as to what the “kingdom of God” means in its fulness, and what “life” means, when God sees fit to explain it. The passage in Mark especially -- not dispensational like Matthew -- forms a sort of transition between it and John 3

But the last noted passage in Matthew, compared with the parallel passages, Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23, demands further consideration. The rich young ruler uses the expression “eternal life.” In Matthew, the dispensational gospel, he says, “that I may *have* eternal life”; for the character of the gospel renders its meaning clear, and “have” here brings into relief the contrast with “enter,” in the Lord’s answer. The two others omit this contrast, and so say “*inherit*,” which of course is future; and that adds force to the use of the word “have,” in Matthew. A Jew, instructed in the Old Testament scriptures, looked forward to the accomplishment of the national blessings; he knew of no other than what were promised in connection with Messiah’s reign, “the life for evermore,” announced in Psa. 133., as blessing commanded in the mountain of Sion,⁵⁵ and in Dan. 12:1, 2, as that which especially awaited Daniel’s people, that is, such of them as were written in the book. More than this he could not know of. And it is to be remarked that the blessed Lord, in His answer to the young man, distinctly drops the epithet “eternal,” saying, “If thou wilt *enter* into *life* [and even this is not said in Mark and Luke], keep the commandments.” He did no more than carry him back to what the law had already said, just as He did for the lawyer in Luke 10:25-27, quoting:

54. *Life and Propitiation* . . . , pp. 91-94.

55. It is interesting to notice the contrast between this and what the Lord says to the woman of Samaria, in connection with the water of life He had to give. There was to be no localizing of the place of worship, as at Gerizim or Jerusalem. But the true worshipers would worship the *Father* in spirit and in truth.

“This do, and thou shalt *live*.” It is the language of the law in its principle; the apostle insists upon it in Gal. 3:12. The law went no further than proposing the continuance of life on this earth (however blessed that may be under the new covenant, when the law will be written in the hearts of God’s people, during the coming day of blessing for Israel), on the condition of the maintenance of practical righteousness in obedience.* And it is in contrast with this, that the Lord says to the young man (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), that on condition of giving up his earthly blessings to the poor, and following Christ, he would have treasure *in heaven*.

When the Lord Himself speaks of “eternal life” in Matt. 19:29, He says “inherit,” that is, it is future; as the corresponding passages, Mark 10:30, and Luke 17:30, positively state: “*in the world to come*.” . . . The character of Matthew’s Gospel as noticed above, renders this explanation needless there. The only other passage is Matt. 25: 46, where it clearly refers to Messiah’s kingdom (or the “world to come”) *after* the judgment of the nations living upon the earth, at the time when the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, and He sits upon His throne of glory (ver. 31). Compare this with the passage, peculiar to Matthew (ch. 19: 28), referring to the scene the Lord calls “the regeneration.”⁵⁶

The Expression “Eternal Life” in John’s Gospel

In John’s Gospel, the “life” itself is ever presented as of the nature of Him from whom it comes. “That which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*.” It is not “is the Spirit,” for that would mean an incarnation of the Holy Ghost; but it is *spirit*, is of the nature of Him who originates it. And so we find the Lord presents it to the woman of Samaria in John 4. In v.4, He says, “Whosoever 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 well of water springing up into everlasting life”; and then in John 4:23, 24, “The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” Again, at the feast of tabernacles, in John 7: 37-39, “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” In both cases it is the result of coming to Him to drink of the water which He gives. The Spirit’s energy is displayed in *worship*, in John 4; in *testimony* for God in the world, in John 7, living streams flowing down from Jesus glorified, and out from the believer, carrying blessing and refreshment to those around.

The Gospel of John supposes all through the rejection of Christ, and the consequent setting aside of Judaism: “He came to his own, and his own received him not.” This is shown too in the beginning of both these chapters. In John 4, as Mr. Darby has remarked, the Lord would not by baptizing link His disciples with a living Christ, though for them faith could thus express their personal reception of the Messiah. In John 7, He

56. *Life and Propitiation* . . . , pp. 42-44.

would not go up openly. to the feast, for “his hour was not yet come”; and when He did declare His divine invitation to those whom the Jewish feast and its outward joy could not satisfy, it was in contrast with it, on “the last day” of it -- the eighth day -- the beginning of a new order of things

But we must not leave this subject without a word more as to the way in which the revelation of the life and its communication are made, in the scriptures we have been looking at in John. All through it flows from *love*, the love of God, now for the first time made known, and made known in the Person of the Son, become Man in this world. This is of the deepest moment. The more the scripture is examined from this point of view, the more its importance will be seen, and that, not only for the heart, but for the conscience too. The Word, made flesh, dwelt among us, “full of *grace*⁵⁷ and truth.” The glory seen in Him was “a glory as of an only begotten with a Father” (John 1:14); and in John 1:18, we read, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who *is in the bosom of the Father*, he hath declared him.” This is He, who when confessed by Nathanael to be the Son of God, declares Himself to be the “Son of man” (John 1:51). In John 3:16, as we have seen, the source of the eternal life, received in believing, is the *love* of God manifested in the *gift* of His Son -- the Son of man, who according to the previous verses “must be lifted up.” So again, at the end of the chapter, vv 35, 36: “The Father *loveth* the Son and hath given all things into his hand: he that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” In John 5:20, the love⁵⁸ of the Father to the Son is the groundwork of all that follows. What a point this gives to the Lord’s solemn word in John 8: “If God were your Father ye would love me; for I proceeded forth and came from God”! The place love has in John 10 is all the more blessed, from the infinitely delicate way in which it is concealed. As has often been remarked, it is the only time in which the Lord applies to Himself the epithet “good” (John 10:2); it is the love unto death of John 15:13: “Greater love hath no man than this.” But it is as if the Lord would here avoid using the word in speaking of

Himself, in order to bring out into greater prominence the love of the Father to Him, which found a cause to call it forth,⁵⁹ in His laying down His life for the sheep (v. 16, 17). The Savior, -- who even in His devoted obedience unto death would hide Himself in the expression of His Father’s love, to make this love known to us giving to us the glory⁶⁰ given to Him by the Father, -- says, “that they may be one, even as we [the Father and the Son] are one,” -- “made perfect in one, and that the world may know⁶¹ that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me” (John 17:22). But what shall we say of these wonderful chapters 13-17, the beginning and end of which alone we are able to quote here? It is all *love* from first to last, -- love into which we are brought now, carrying us on to the glory in which Jesus is, Son of man and Son of God, where alone we can know it in its fulness. The Holy Spirit is given to lead us into these things, which while filling the soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory, make us feel our own insufficiency and littleness, the smallness of our vessels to contain even a drop of this measureless ocean. And yet faith knows we are eternally the objects of it; but the yearning to learn more and more -- itself an indication of the life flowing out from it -- is satisfied and stimulated at one and the same time, in finding it all treasured up in the person of CHRIST. Oh, may the earnest cry of the apostle be ours too -- and for one another -- to the; Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being strengthened with might, according to the riches of His glory, by His Spirit” in the inner man, CHRIST may dwell in our hearts by faith.” Surely He would have us follow on with pure hearts, conscious of His presence, with our shoes off, as treading upon holy ground.

These blessed chapters are introduced thus: “Now before the feast of the passover when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having *loved* His own which were in the world, *he loved them*

57. I cannot forbear noticing here the divine antithesis between this verse (John 1:14) and John 17:24. When He was here dwelling “among us,” it was grace that flowed out; so that we received “of his fulness,” grace upon grace. But when He goes back to His Father and His desire is accomplished of having us with Him where He is, and “we behold His glory” *there*, we shall find in it the divine source of the grace that came by Him here, *love* in its essence, the love of which as Son He ever was and is the object, as so loved of the Father. And then He prays that the love of which He is the object as sent of the Father, may be in us, and He in us (v. 26).

58. “The Father *loveth* the Son, and showeth him all things that himself *doeth*.” The word for “loveth” here, is not however the same in the original as that used in John 3:35; 13:1; &c. Here, in John 5:20, the word is the same as in John 11:3, 36; the one Peter uses three times over in John 21:15-17, and which is rendered, in the New Version {JND}, “attached to” in John 20:2, “has affection for” in John 16:27. (Matt. 24:48, &c. “kiss”). It refers to external manifestation of love, rather than to its divine source, and carries with it the affection expressed in a “kiss” (1 Pet. 5:14), -- in paternal or filial love (Matt 10:37), -- and in “brotherly love,” as, for example, in Rom. 12:10; 2 Pet. 1:7. The exquisite beauty of the difference in the two passages of John is very marked. John 3:35, is the source and effect of the Father’s purpose: He has *given all things* into the Son’s hand. In John 5:20, we find the details of His ways, for “the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he *doeth*, these also *doeth* the Son likewise.” It is for our souls to appreciate and enjoy this. We can only now just notify it in passing.

59. A proof of the Lord’s divinity, as has been said. A creature could not present to God a reason of this nature, a reason why he should be loved; for God is absolute. Jesus alone can say, “*Therefore* doth my Father love me.” I refer to it not only in connection with our subject, but also to call further attention to the peculiar place the Lord’s *death* has all through this gospel. It is the food of life in John 6, without which “life” cannot exist; “whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:53, 54). Without it (in John 12), the corn of wheat abides alone. It is the proof before the world of the Lord’s love to the Father, the perfection of His obedience (John 14:30, 31); as of His love for “his friends” in John 15. It was to gather together in one the children of God scattered abroad (John 11:52), and to be the perfect example for these, as serving Him in their walk through this world even to the place where He now is (John 12:24-26). It was in death that He could bow His head and say, “It is finished,” and present to His Father, as absolutely complete, the work He had given Him to do (John 17:4; 19:30: here, as nowhere else, is the Sen of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; and the immediate answer to it is His being set as man in the glory with the Father, -- the glory He had with Him before the world was (John 13:31, 32; 17:4, 5).

Strange indeed would it be, if, in accordance with the system we are asked to accept, the testimony to the Lord’s *death* were to be practically excluded from the seal of the Spirit upon the believer; considering that the eternal life itself, as communicated, comes *after* the cross in John 3, and the characteristic work of the Spirit is thus expressed by the Lord: “He shall take of mine and show it to you.” Thank God it is not so.

60. Not what is personal to Him, of course, -- the “*my* glory” of v. 24. That is different.

61. Compare this with “that *the world may know* that I love the Father,” John 14:31. *He* took the *cross* and gives us the *glory*.

to the end. . . .” And their conclusion is in His own prayer: “. . . O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me; and I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that *the love wherewith thou hast loved me* ⁶² may be in them, and I in them.” What a portion indeed is ours! “Behold what manner of love *the Father* has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God.” God is love. “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him: herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 3:1; 4:9, 10). ⁶³ LOVE, the love of GOD, who is love, is the source of the communicated life. It is “manifested” in the Person of His “only begotten Son” sent into this world that we might live through Him, who is the propitiation for our sins.

62. It has been noticed by Mr. Darby that the love wherewith we are loved by the Father (John 14-17), is that of which the blessed Lord was the object as the Son, not in His own essential eternal Sonship, but as manifested in this world, the Word made flesh. It is no question whatever of the distinction sought to be made by some between the *nature* of the love and the *character* of its manifestation: it is the love itself we have, in its own blessedness, manifested in the person of Christ dwelling amongst us. So it is evidently, in John 15:9, where Christ is “the true vine” upon this earth. It has been a great delight to me, in going over the Gospel of John, to see this observation abundantly confirmed, and I would draw especial attention to it, noticing how the Lord’s being *sent* of the Father is regularly presented in these passages: John 1:14 with 18; 3:34 with 35; 14:21 with 15:10; 16:27, 28; 17:23. In v. 26, the Lord speaks of the love of the Father to Himself being in us. This keeps us from self-occupation, even as to being loved of the Father; and, as the Lord shows, is inseparable from His revelation to us of the Father’s name. It is the love of which *He* is the object, and He being in us, we partake of it in the way in which He enjoyed it as Man. Blessed indeed is this! May we be so kept in the communion and enjoyment of it as to manifest practically Christ “in us”!

The observation above referred to was sent to me by another, and so interesting that I have ventured to add it here textually:

It does not say, “as the Father loved them,” but “as he loved me” (as a man); for however Christ may bring us into the same place with Himself, if we elevate ourselves to an equality with Christ, immediately we shall be above Him; and it is ever the case that the more a saint enters into his elevation, as being brought into the same place with Christ, the more he adores Christ as God over all blessed for evermore (*Collected Writings*, vol. 17, p. 418).

Allow me to add one correction of a thought fundamentally just, and one correction of an error of expression or copy. The latter is in page 418. Read, “It does not say, ‘as the Father loves me,’ but, ‘as he loved me.’” That is, it is not the infinite and eternal delight, but the Father’s love to Christ, as one walking down here” (*Ibid.*, p. 430).

63. I have desired to keep to the writings of John, sketching rapidly the connection in which the truths are given, and in no way seeking to exhaust the marvelous subject; who can? -- But even so, we are restrained within narrow limits of space and time. It must be so in this poor world! Still it may be well to add in this note that the apostle Paul, in Rom. 5:5-8; Eph. 2:4, 5; 2 Tim. 1:9, 10; Titus 3:4-7, presents the same truth, in as far as our particular present point goes; that is, the *love* of God being the first cause of our salvation, and *manifested* in the Savior’s work and *death*: it is *this* love which “is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us.” Again we find it, according to God’s eternal purpose in Christ: cp. Eph. 1:4-7; 3:17-19 with 5:1, 2, 25, and such passages as Gal. 2:20; 1 Tim. 1:14, 15, where it is especially the love of Christ. Is it not thus that we are “taught of God to love one another” (1 Thess. 4:9, compared with 1:10 and 2 Thess. 2:16, 17)? The same principle is seen in 1 Pet. 1:8, though the subject is more what is external, in the position of the Christian going through the world; but the living hope which by the resurrection of Christ attaches to our being begotten again, is according to the “abundant mercy” of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (cp. vv. 8, 9, 21, 22). . . .

But now a deeply solemn truth comes out. It is in connection with the manifestation of this love in the Person of the Son who gives eternal life, that the true state of the human heart, the awful condition of the world under the power of Satan, comes into full relief: “The world cannot hate you, but me it *hateth*” (John 7; 15:18-21). “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin: he that hateth me, hateth my Father also. If I had not *done* among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both *me* and my *Father*” (John 15:22-25). This total rejection of Christ is characteristic of the Gospel of John; just as, in the Epistle, in contrast with the love manifested in the believer as the effect of the eternal life received, we find the hatred of Cain who slew his brother because his own works were evil and those of his brother righteous: “Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in ⁶⁴ him” (1 John 3:11-15). The manifestation of the love brings into evidence the hatred which characterizes the darkness; for God is light (1 John 1: 5, 6; 2:10, 11). The terrible discovery is inevitable, a consequence of the light coming into the world (John 1:9). Now, if once the eternal life for man (inseparable from faith, of course), is systematically represented as a universal truth, deduced from the fact of life existing in the Son eternally, then the consequence of its introduction into this world is necessarily divorced from it. I do not say that those who accept the system {of F. W. Grant} deny what is stated in the Gospel of John. They cannot do so. But this connection of the truth is gone practically in their souls, as to its moral power over the conscience. The delicate tenderness which the conscience ought to manifest toward God and His truth, is -- imperceptibly no doubt, but -- infallibly destroyed; and, as a consequence, the respect for truth for its own sake is diminished, and tends to be obliterated. Let those who profess to receive the system as of God beware, lest, when too late, they should find out the bitterness of being blindly led of the blind. In giving up the distinctive revelation of the “eternal life,” *light* is also lost in measure to the soul, for “the life was the light of men.” So God presents it in His word. Besides this, the door is opened to worldliness in its divers forms; for what keeps it out for us, is the love of *the FATHER*, and that is only known in Christianity, when truly apprehended. I would earnestly commend this to the consciences of my brethren, and invite them to study afresh this matter; comparing the way the world

64. I not wish to insist unduly on the force of the word “abiding,” in this verse. But it is wrong in principle to deduce a positive truth from a mere negative statement. As has often been shown us, we do not find in scripture as a doctrinal *expression*, that eternal life is *in* the believer; and if God has not so expressed it our only wisdom is to abide by what He has seen fit to give us in His word. “He has *given* us eternal life”; he that believes has it; but this life is “*in* His Son; he that hath the *Son* hath life.” When simply accepted as we find it in scripture, the blessing of it will not fail to be speedily felt. We are thus delivered at once from the self-occupation which is so natural to us, and is so fatal to spiritual life; and we find in Christ, as “the Son,” not merely what the eternal life is, but what feeds it and consequently develops its practical manifestation. He is the life-giving bread of God, answering to the manna, come down from heaven; and as Son of man, He gives Himself -- and we find life in eating His flesh and drinking His blood: “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father [that is, the Son *sent* into the world, making the Father known, and living because of what the Father is, and because He lives], so he that *eateth* me shall live by me” (John 6:57). We have not life independently of feeding upon Him, and upon His death.

is presented in the Gospel of John, with what we read of it in the Epistle, and particularly the apostle's word to the "young men."

Let us now resume a little what has passed before us, and as briefly as we may. The revelation of the "eternal life" is found almost exclusively in John's writings; given to him as one of the last eye-witnesses of the Lord's glory (Acts 10:39; 2 Pet. 1:16), before he was removed from the world, -- as one too, who more than any other, enjoyed, in the freedom of holiness, the love of which he was consciously the object; I do not say more loved than the others, but he lived in it more, in spite of what Peter thought of himself. The place on the Lord's bosom being open to His own, John was the one who ventured to take it. Comparing this with what is said of the Lord as the revealer of the Father, in John 1:18, we see how blessedly appropriate to the peculiar service committed to him, was the vessel chosen and formed by the Lord to communicate to the saints the revelation of the eternal life. Five times over in the gospel, he speaks of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."⁶⁵ He does not say "who loved Jesus," however truly he might have done so. It is the nature of true love not to think of itself. The inspired expression speaks volumes as to the suitability of the instrument raised up of God. In the Gospel, we find the life in its manifestation in the Person of the Son, that we may be partakers of it. In the Epistle, we see its communication, and its effects in those who have received it, -- the way those who "have" it, manifest it.

When the communication of it is *first* spoken of, in John 3:14-15, it is introduced by the cross -- the necessity of the Son of man being lifted up; and that after the Lord had first intimated His going up to heaven -- having come down from it -- and had stated that what He had to speak of were "heavenly things," distinctly and positively contrasted with "earthly things," -- even those of the new covenant, when Christ will reign over the earth. And yet, to have part in these, man must be "born again"; showing plainly, too, that if we use "born again" as being the *same* thing as "eternal life," the distinction between the earthly and heavenly things is blotted out. Surely man has to be born again to have part in "the heavenly things"; but in this case, the life given of God is "eternal life," as John develops it. And here notice how full is the expression of the work in the soul of him who looks to the Savior, as set forth in the figure of the brazen serpent, to which the Lord refers. It was Israel's *sin* which had given occasion to it; sin, which under God's judgment, met with immediate *death*, of which the *serpent* was the agent, and against which they had no power, no remedy, but in God's gracious provision for them. Such was what the believing Israelite was to contemplate; and this we find in the cross; so that when we are on the other side of it in the Lord's resurrection, we find the deliverance from sin and death, from Satan's power and God's judgment. (Cp. John 8:34-36; 5:24, 25 and 9:25, 26; 12:31 and 16:11; 5:22-24.) The judgment is passed. The believer is passed from death unto life, and shall not come into the judgment. He is "free indeed," made so by the Son; and the world, in which he is left for a

while, and of which Satan is the "prince, is overcome" by the Lord.

The One who quickens is the Son of God, and that as incarnate, and ever maintaining in this respect His mediatorship, as *given* "to have life in himself" (as the connection with v. 26 shows); *beginning* this special work when He was there on earth (v. 25), so that those who believed passed, in believing, from death unto life. He is the same, who as Son of man in death, is the food of the life, in John 6. He is the Good Shepherd, in John., who lays down His life for the sheep; who came that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.

We have seen too, that the effective communication of "the eternal life," the life that is characterized by the "Holy Ghost" (John 4, 7), presupposes *in principle* the Lord's death, and His actual place in glory, as Son of man in heaven, "ascended up where He was before." His first message to the disciples (conveyed by Mary Magdalene, after His resurrection, when for the first time He calls them "brethren," and brings them into the double relationship in which He stood as Son of God and Son of man), begins with the words, "I GO UP." Then follows the full statement of the relationship which is seen in Him, and revealed to faith by the Spirit: "to MY *Father* and YOUR *Father*, and to MY *God* and YOUR *God*." That is, the present realization for us of "eternal life," flows from the fact of the Son being *with the Father*. Life, as described in 1 John 1:2 ("that eternal life which was *with the Father*"), and seen in Him, when He was here on earth, is now, as the result of redemption, and by the witness of the Spirit, true in us (1 John 2:8; 5:6-11). His words to Mary, who wanted Him with her on earth, were, "Touch me not, for I am *not yet* ascended to my Father." John 17 is based upon this. And we have seen the same . . . as to chapters 13, 14, which open with the statement: "When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world *unto the Father*"; and (v. 3), "Knowing that the *Father* had given all things into his hands (cf. John 3:35), and that he was come from *God*, and went to *God*." Again, we find the two sides of His personal glory as Son of God and Son of man, as in chapter 3:14-16. The revelation of divine righteousness is based upon the same fact in chapter 16. If the Holy Spirit's presence upon earth is the demonstration of it before the world (v. 8), the special reason attached to it by the Lord, in verse 10, is, "Because I go to my Father and ye see me no more." The "must be" of chapter 3 is, so to speak, transferred for us now from the cross to the glory, where it is seen in righteousness in the Person of the Son, with a yet fuller divine meaning, as we learn what were "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." The Lord says too in Luke 24: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" In this point of view, and actually in His Person, the cross and the glory are inseparable. This fully appears in John 17. To Him, as the Son "glorified" (consequent upon His work of glorifying the Father on earth), all power is given, that *thus exalted* "he should give eternal life" to as many as the Father has *given* Him.

How unspeakably blessed! And how we find in the scriptures the eternal life, as communicated, so bound up with what is now seen by faith in the Lord's Person and place, that a soul which simply receives the truth finds itself placed upon a rock that nothing can touch, and nothing can shake. It has not merely received a *doctrine*: it finds itself in presence of a divine *fact* in all its length and breadth, and height and depth, and

65. Not always using the same word for "loved," however. The difference already remarked between John 3:35 and 5:20 is again noticeable here. He uses Peter's word in John 20:2 only; and the regular word expressive of divine love, in John 13:23 (cf. v. 1); 19:26; 21:7, 20.

eternal meaning, and a divine PERSON in whom it is all realized. And it is thus brought into the same relationship as the Son, with His *God* and Father: “*Mine*,” He says, “*and yours*.” And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth. “He that hath the Son hath life . . . God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

Notice too, how the Lord opens this up, as to be seen in principle in Himself personally when down here (John 1:49-51). Nathanael had believed in Him and confessed Him according to His millennial glory (Psa. 2), as “Son of God” and “King of Israel.” Then the Lord says to him, “Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see *greater* things than these. And he says to him, Verily, verily, I say to you, Henceforth ye shall see the *heaven opened*, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the *Son of man*.” Heaven was opened upon Him, as Son of man, when the “eternal life” could be seen, looked on, handled, in His blessed Person here on earth, by such as owned Him to be the Son of God. It is opened to us when He goes up into it Son of man and Son of God and by His presence. there prepares a place for us in the many mansions of *His* Father’s house. How precious for us *now* to know that our place is there, *already prepared*, -- seen in Himself where He is, -- while we wait for Him to come, that we may be with Him there!

Life for us, then, is based upon the *cross*. The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, from the Father, -- by Jesus who is exalted and glorified with Him, -- makes it good in our souls, giving us both the knowledge and the enjoyment of it.⁶⁶ For He fixes our thoughts upon Jesus Christ as the Revealer of the Father, the Accomplisher of His work, the One in whom God’s righteousness is manifested, as well as the fulness of His love, -- the One who, in His ways, His words, and His works, “declared” God to men, and exhibited in His own blessed Person what “a man” was to be, for and towards God, according to God’s purpose when He created him: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” His *Person* is before us, Son of God and Son of man; His *work* in its extent, and present and eternal results; and His actual *place in glory*. And hence, too, John speaks about “eternal life” in its future and complete manifestation, as well as being the present possession of the believer (John 5:39; 12:25; 14:2, &c.).

And let us add that the Lord has made a double revelation of His Father’s will in respect of “eternal life”; -- not merely that every one who beholds the Son and believes on Him should have it, but that the Son should care for them as the good Shepherd, and raise them up at the last day. In John 17 the Lord speaks of His work in these two aspects. And as to both, we find the expression of His oneness with the Father: as to giving life, John 5:19-21; as too keeping His own, John 10:28-30. Both drew out the desperate enmity of the Jews, because as they said, “Thou, being a man, makest thyself God” (John 5:18; 10:31-33). We quote here the wonderful passage (John 6:37-40): “All that the Father gives me shall come to me, and him that comes to me I will not at all cast out. For I am come down from heaven, not that I should do my will, but the will of him

that has sent me. And this is the will of him that has sent me, that of all that he has given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son, and believes on him, should have life eternal; and I will raise him up at the last day” (New Trans. {JND}).⁶⁷

66. Remember that the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer *characterizes* the life that constitutes Christianity, redemption being accomplished . . . He is actually given to the one who believes, who “*has life*” in believing (Gal. 4:4-6).

67. *Life and Propitiation* . . . , pp. 62-77.

Chapter 2.7

Life in John's and in Paul's Writings Compared

{Again we will look at an extensive quotation from W. J. Lowe's, *Life and Propitiation* . . . , (pp. 95-115). This forms part 3 of his book and begins with a quotation from F. W. Grant. We have not had before us a *detailed* examination of FWG's teaching on life in the Son, since that is not the object now. But we have had samples of the reasonings that are used to frame the system. The reader will find an examination of that system in *Collected Writings of A. C. Ord*, available from the publisher.

W. J. Lowe opened this part of his treatment with a quotation from F. W. Grant that set the way in which he (FWG) approached the subject. Note that the bold-faced headings have been added as well as bold-faced emphasis. }

We now come to consider Paul's doctrine. And here I quote the opening passage of Mr. Grant's tract

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. 6:11, 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 John 5:11, 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 2:36). 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, &c.

As to the above I would, in calling attention to the characteristic reasoning of which it is a sample, remark that the first paragraph assumes what has to be proved; the second is misleading, as the reader will see in a moment; the third insisting on the *parallelism*, is false; and the fourth is rationalistic inference.

Mr. G. states that *in the same sense* in which Paul affirms that we have life in Christ, John affirms that it is in the Son. Is the sense the same? Does not every Christian feel, in reading the passages quoted, that "Christ" and "the Son" are by no means interchangeable expressions? The apostle says in Gal. 2:20, that the life he lived in the flesh was by faith in the *Son of God* but does he say "the Son of God lives in me"? Or could it be said that the Son of God is "formed in us" (Gal. 4:19)? Every Christian would resent such an idea. In Col. 3:4, we find

that "CHRIST is our life"; but where is it said in this way that "the Son is our life? And where again is it stated of eternal life, as characterizing it; "*this* life is in Christ"? This idea of parallelism betrays the whole system, destroying the precious distinctions of the written word.

In Christ -- in the Son. This will be yet more manifest as we look further into "Paul's doctrine." The first striking difference already apparent between Paul and John, we may note at once however: John shows the character of the life in itself, whereas Paul is occupied with the position of the believer, the sphere in which the life is manifested. "In Christ," is where God has set me, and as such has its own proper value in every passage; it stands, too, in contrast with "in Adam" as the responsible man, thus introducing us into relationship with God, and into an order of blessing in which Adam never stood. "In the Son" tells me what the life is in itself, its nature and being, and only possessed as being in Him, the Son.

The very verse quoted from Rom. 6, makes the distinction felt: "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." "Jesus our Lord," added to "Christ," hinders its being a descriptive statement of what the *life* is; but it sets forth blessedly the relationship with *Christ*, into which we are brought through the grace of God, who gives us "eternal life." Moreover the special aspect of eternal life here, and all through Romans, is that of a *state of life* into which we enter at the close, hence future (cp. Rom. 2:7); and "alive unto God" and "eternal life" are not here synonymous terms. Verse 11, too, tells us what faith is to reckon, in applying to ourselves what is absolutely true as to Christ's position, and so true of us as in Him and with Him (Col. 3:3). We know Him as Christ, as Jesus, and as Lord. "In the Son," on the contrary, tells of relationship with God the Father, and describes the life of which the Son is the mediatorial source and dispenser. How can it be said that the expressions are parallel and employed in the same sense?

Epistle to the Galatians. We may consider very briefly the Epistle to the Galatians, as being the one epistle of Paul which in its line of teaching approaches most perhaps to that of John. It was Christianity itself which was in jeopardy there, through

the influence of judaizing teachers, and the very foundation had to be relaid by the apostle. The first chapter, in which Paul refers to his conversion, affords a fit opportunity for recalling how God prepared specially His chosen vessel for communicating the truth. John had known the Lord personally on earth, had rested on His bosom and enjoyed His love. Paul, "as one born out of due time," was arrested in his course of religious madness against Christ by seeing Him in heaven, finding himself enveloped in light "above the brightness of the sun," and hearing His voice in tender grace -- words which proclaimed the oneness of the members on earth with the Head in heaven. John was to unfold what the Lord was personally, as the Son of the Father, the Incarnate Word, the "eternal life." To Paul was committed the gospel of God to be preached among the nations, and the revelation of the mystery of the body and bride of Christ, and of the Lord's coming as the Church's hope, and, in general, the truths contained in the heavenly calling of the saints, whether as a present portion (Ephesians), or as a future hope (Hebrews). Christ's present place in glory, as having accomplished redemption, Son of man and Son of God, and the consequent coming of the Holy Ghost, is the basis of all our participation in the blessing, in both John and Paul; but the former is specially occupied with the person~ truth, the latter with the place, and Christian position. Of the doctrinal Epistles of Paul, that to the Galatians is the one which says least about the place: nothing about it as a present portion, and only alluding to it once as the believer's hope (Gal. 5:5). The *person* of Christ and His cross are before us; for upon this everything depended as to the foundations of Christianity.

In the opening verses, an unwonted emphasis is laid upon the relationship with God which characterizes the present dispensation. Three times the "Father" is mentioned in the first four verses: in no other epistle of Paul do we find the same. In v. 16, the apostle describes his conversion, as having been God's good pleasure "to reveal his SON" in him; and in Gal. 2:20, the life he lives is by faith, "faith of⁶⁸ the Son of God," he says, "who loved me and gave himself for me." This characterized his ministry, as we find in Acts 9 20: "Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." The apostle insists upon it in the whole of these two first chapters, *against* the judaizing influences which were at work in Jerusalem, and under which even Peter fell at Antioch "when certain came from James." That is, it is Christianity displacing what went before it.

When he comes to speak of the Spirit's presence in the believer in the four following chapters, he insists in the most distinct and positive way on the entire change wrought out at the CROSS. Up to that time was a state of bondage under the elements of the world, and the law was then the schoolmaster: sonship was not revealed, not known. Only when redemption is accomplished does adoption, in this sense,⁶⁹ become possible

68. A very strong expression. The Christian faith is thus characterized: the object of it is THE SON OF GOD (cp. v. 18).

69. We are not speaking now of the national "adoption" of Israel (Rom. 9:4), which is a different thing, and contrasts with this, as Gal. 3:28 proves: "There is neither Jew nor Greek." The accomplishment of prophecy is not the subject in Galatians at all, but the character of the gospel. *Israel* is "in bondage" (Gal. 4:25), and not only so, but the scripture says, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the

(continued...)

; and then, too, "because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.' Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son, and if a son, then an heir" (Gal. 4:4-7).

Here, again then, we find full confirmation of the truth presented in the Gospel of John as to eternal life. The cross the basis, and the *beginning* of it as far as we, whether Jews or Gentiles, are concerned: the "corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die," or it "abides alone." "Adoption" -- that is, sonship -- the relationship of Son with *the Father* -- is the explanation the blessed Lord gives of eternal life, "life in THE SON." And that this began at the cross is the doctrine of Galatians. To give it a retrospective effect is to deny the whole teaching of the Epistle; and do over again the work of the judaizing teachers, against whom the apostle so earnestly strove. "If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor: for I through law am dead to law, *that I might live unto God*. I am *crucified* with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith, the [faith] of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:18-20). And God gives the Spirit -- "the Spirit of His SON" -- to those that are sons, that they may cry in conscious enjoyed sonship, "Abba, Father."

The cross was death to the religious Saul of Tarsus, the zealous persecutor of the saints; it was a stumbling-block to the Jews, an offence to the judaizing teachers; but though suffering persecution for it, it was Paul's glory -- for there he found the end of himself; there he had "crucified the flesh"; there he had been separated from the world (ch. 2:20; 3:1; 5:11, 24; 6:12, 14).⁷⁰

It is not so much the death of Christ, as presented in the Epistle to the Romans, and followed by the resurrection (for, except in the opening verses, this is not even mentioned in the Epistle); but the *cross* as the central point in God's ways with man, bringing to an end all that was before it, and introducing the faith of Christ,⁷¹ by which righteousness comes (Gal. 2:16, 21); and to this the "hope" is attached (v. 5), -- the hope for which we wait through the Spirit, -- for "faith worketh by love."

69. (...continued)
freewoman."

70. It is by no means confined to "substitutionary sacrifice," as Mr. Grant seems to imply on page 19.

71. The difference between the third chapter of this Epistle and the fourth of Romans, may well be noted here . . . It is of the deepest interest. The emphasis in Galatians is ON FAITH; and the example of Abraham is again deduced from Gen. 15: 6. Secondly, we find as in Rom. 4, though more largely developed, the absolute certainty of blessing as depending only on the One who promised, on the occasion of Abraham's accomplished obedience; and hence not liable to be lost through the failure of the weaker party to the covenant, which was the case under the law. Thirdly, it is not a question of the *kind* of power which God puts forth, and which is the basis of faith, introducing the principle of resurrection, as in Rom. 4, but the fact of all that was promised being centered in the Person of CHRIST, and now brought to us in Him, so that we may receive the Spirit as well. The passages quoted from Abraham's history, are Gen. 12:3, showing the extent of the blessing (for it takes in all the nations), and Gen. 22:18, which shows that it is made good in Christ. The two passages are the first and last recorded communications of God to Abraham.

In Gal. 4, the son born according to the promise, illustrates the Christian position and relationship, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

The law is absolutely incompatible with this new state of things. Its curse was met in the cross; for it fell on Christ, and this opens the door of blessing to Gentile as well as Jew, (Gal. 3:10-14); as indicated indeed by the very promise the apostle quotes from Gen. 12:3: the blessing cannot *now* have a Jewish character. "Abraham's sons" are those that are on the principle of *faith*. When the fulness of time was come, Christ came as "under the law," to redeem them that were under it, that sonship might be introduced in righteousness (Gal. 4:1-5); for we were all concluded under sin (Gal. 3: 22). In the cross too, the power of the law as a schoolmaster comes to an end, its bondage ceases; we are "*no longer under it*,"⁷² for ye are all the *sons of God* by faith in Christ Jesus"; and now Christianity is expressed by "having *put on Christ*," the entrance into it is through the waters of death, figured in baptism (Gal. 3:23-27), which is the personal application to us individually of the cross of Christ: so faith accepts it. The life which begins with the cross is characterized by "faith of the *Son of God*," and by the crucifixion of the flesh and of the world, which is implied in it. Faith works *by love*, and the love of which we are the objects, as expressed in the cross, is the moral power for the walk. This characterizes the "new creation" (cp. Gal. 5:5, 6, with 6:15). The Holy Ghost sheds it abroad in the heart, and makes good in the soul the liberty of sonship in those who are born according to the Spirit. "We *live* in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 4:25-31; 5:25).

"In Christ Jesus"⁷³ defines **the new standing** before God, where all distinction between Jew and Gentile disappears (Gal. 3:28).

We notice then, that Paul, though unfolding in this epistle, truth which in many respects is similar to that of John, does not develop the life in itself, as manifested upon earth, nor its effects in the one who has it; but sets before us Christ as the One in whom God has given us an entirely new position before Himself. Christ, who was the Object of all promise, is the One in whom we find the blessing now, which becomes ours at the cross; for there redemption was accomplished, and we became "Christ's" (Gal. 3:29).

The Epistle to the Romans. It must not, however, be inferred that "in Christ" always means exactly the same thing; though it always carries with it its proper value in as far as the

Person of Christ, and our standing in Him before God, are concerned. But the extent of its meaning depends upon the way in which Christ is presented in each place. Thus in Romans, we find His death and resurrection; His place in glory being only mentioned parenthetically in Rom. 8, and, as to us, a *hope*; whereas in Ephesians, His place in the heavenlies is the basis of the truth set forth in connection with the counsels of God.

In Romans, man is looked at as being in sin, a ruined, guilty creature, subject to the wrath of God. The blood of Christ meets his condition judicially, so that God who has declared the extent of his evil and ruin, can forgive his *sins*, and manifest His righteousness in justifying him who believes in Jesus (Rom. 1-5:12). The death of Christ meets his utter incapacity for good; so that the believer has to accept it as the end of himself, finding in it the justification from sin (not *sins* merely), and a new life opened up to him in the resurrection of Christ, the power of which is the Holy Ghost (Rom. 5:12 - ch. 8). Sin and death have entered into the world; and the law entered that the offence might abound (Rom. 5:12, 20). But death has no more dominion over Christ risen; and as alive in Him unto God, sin has lost its dominion over us; the law has lost dominion too, for we have died to it (Rom. 6:9-14; 7:1-6). "In Christ Jesus" expresses this new standing, where there is no condemnation for us, and no separation from God's love; and by the Spirit acting in this new sphere and according to it -- the power of the life "in Christ Jesus" and perfectly expressed in Him--we are set free from the law of sin and death.

In Ephesians, the point of view is quite different: man is looked at as *dead* in *sins*, and God introduces a *new creation* in accordance with His own counsels in Christ before the foundation of the world. The "new man" is created according to God, in truthful righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4: 24). In this Epistle, then, "in Christ" carries with it the present heavenly place and portion of the believer, before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently there is no justification in this Epistle at all, nor in the Epistle to the Colossians, which holds an intermediate place between the two others [between Romans and Ephesians], though partaking more of the character of Ephesians, and presenting Christ as our life as well as our Head, and as in us the hope of glory.

All this has been developed at length by others, and I do not enter into it further, except to notice two points which have already come cursorily before us: first, the different way in which we are associated with Christ in the three Epistles; secondly, the way in which God's work of quickening is presented in Ephesians and Colossians.

The Epistle to the Romans opens with the statement of the subject of the "gospel of God," promised afore by His prophets in the holy scriptures: it is "concerning his Son, come of David's seed according to flesh, marked out Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead -- Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:3, 4). This stamps the truth set forth in the whole Epistle. In resurrection we find Him declared Son of God in power; "He was raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father" (Rom. 6:4. 4). And we are brought in consequence into relationship with God who raised Him, and that as the result of His death for us; and so we have to walk in newness of life, and serve in newness of spirit.

The Epistle, however, does not develop this relationship in

72. This contradicts in principle Mr. Grant's theory as to the application of Rom. 7, but as it has been refuted by others, I do not dwell upon it further now. His *whole system* is seen to be imaginary and falls to the ground before this Epistle to the Galatians. The scripture refuses such a thought as the {Old Testament} saints' life being "in the Son," when it could not as yet be in Christ; for there was no such thing as "sonship" before the cross. To make it a mere matter of knowledge is altogether beside the question; the thing itself did not exist for man. There was a life of faith surely, but THIS life of faith did not, could not exist for the revelation on which it is founded had not been made. Christ had not come. The LIFE which the apostle lived, was, he says, by "faith of the SON OF GOD, who LOVED me and gave *himself for me*." This is developed in the writings of John, as we have seen. But Mr. Grant's system mixes up Judaism and Christianity, doing in another way just what the Galatians were doing; and this is the serious thing for us to note, and be aware of.

73. Mr. Grant writes (p. 14),

In the Son means "life in the Son," and correspondingly "in Christ" means "life in Christ."

A man must indeed be very full of his system to pervert the scripture in this way, and destroy its simple and positive statements.

connection with the Father's name, but unfolds the truth of God's righteousness, now for the first time revealed in the gospel, which is "God's power to salvation to every one that believes, both to Jew first and to Greek: for righteousness of God is revealed therein on the principle of faith to faith, according as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16, 17). The faith is in Him who "raised up from among the dead Jesus our Lord," and in His blood; for He "has been delivered for our offences, and has been raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:24, 25).

And see how far the justification goes. Its applicability "towards all" is in Rom. 5:18; its effect upon "the many" in v. 19: "as it was by one offence towards all men to condemnation, so by one righteousness towards all men for justification of life; for as indeed by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous" (vv. 18, 19). It is not merely the deliverance from the burden of sins which lay upon us, but goes on to the life manifested in the Lord's resurrection, which faith appropriates now, so that we yield ourselves to God "as alive from among the dead" (Rom. 6:13), a life which we shall know in its fulness with Him in glory, when He will be manifested as firstborn amongst many brethren. Nothing less could meet the Lord's having been marked out as Son of God in power in resurrection according to the Spirit of holiness. We are therefore waiting for the "adoption," the redemption of our body; for, as it is parenthetically stated in Rom. 8, in connection with the Spirit's operation, we are "foreknown" of God, and "predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son"; so that the call, the justification, and the glory, are inseparably connected.

In Rom. 5, this is shown forth beautifully as the effect of the abounding grace of God in contrast with sin having come into the world by one man, and death reigning by sin: the grace of God and the gift by grace has abounded unto many (v. 15); the act of favor is of many *offenses* unto justification, that is, here, a state of subsisting righteousness (v.16); and those who receive the abundance of grace and of the free gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by the one Jesus Christ (v. 17). In v. 21, we find these three things again -- grace, righteousness, eternal life: "But law came in, in order that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace has overabounded, in order that, even as sin has reigned in the power of death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:20, 21).

In Romans, then, the subject is God's righteousness, revealed when all are found to have sinned and come short of God's glory, -- God's righteousness by faith of Jesus Christ towards all and upon all who believe, Jew or Gentile. The only way of dealing with man is by death, whether his guilt be considered, or his state of ruin and powerlessness. But God has met him in grace in the death of His own Son; He has shown His love to us in not sparing Him; and through the shedding of His blood, Christ has become the "mercy-seat." He is so "set forth" by God, as the meeting-place between Himself and sinful man. We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Rom. 3 - 5:12). This same principle of death, applied in another way to the soul, gives deliverance from what would hinder all real fruit for God. For in flesh, no good thing dwells. The flesh, however it may be educated or polished, is flesh still, and in all its thoughts is enmity against God. Death alone delivers from

its manifestation, and from its works, which are only evil. The cross is the end, judicially and practically, of the old man (Rom. 6:6). Christ died to *sin*, as well as died for our *sin*; and faith receiving this and appropriating it experimentally, finds deliverance from self, and enters practically, as a consequence, into "newness of life," -- "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." And so the exhortation addressed to us, is to yield ourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto Him -- "servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom. 6).

The *death* of Christ is then what is applied to us here; it is appropriated in baptism; and our death is death to *sin*. Living with Christ is presented as the consequence, the hope of the redemption of the body, for which we patiently wait (Rom. 8:23-25): "for if we are become identified with him in the likeness of his death, so also we *shall be* of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5); "if we have died with Christ, we believe that we *shall also live* with him" (Rom. 6:8). And again in Rom. 8:11: "But if the Spirit of him that has raised up Jesus from among the dead dwell in you, he that has raised up Christ from among the dead, shall quicken your mortal bodies also on account of his Spirit which dwells in you."

The Epistle to the Colossians. In Colossians, where the subject is Christ as our *life*, and not the indwelling of the Spirit as in Ephesians, we are looked at as made meet by the Father to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, having been by Him delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son, and Christ is in us the hope of glory (Col. 1:12, 13, 27). And secondly, we are "complete in Him who is the head of all principality and authority." The *resurrection* as well as the death of Christ is applied to us here. Christ, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, is our object, our life, our portion, our Head, as well as the expression of our hope. We have died with Him and been raised with Him, "through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12, 20; 3:1). Our death is to the *world*, not to sin merely, as in Romans. And as risen with Christ, we are exhorted to have our minds set on things above, where Christ is sitting, at the right hand of God, and not on things on earth; "for ye have died, and your life is hid with the Christ in God; when the Christ is manifested, who is our life, then shall ye also be manifested with him in glory" (Col. 3:1-4). Christ is everything as the heart's object, and in all as life (Col. 3:11).

The Epistle to the Ephesians. In Ephesians, we are in presence of God's counsels, the good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, and which are expressed and centered in Christ: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath *blessed* us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the world's foundation, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love; having marked us out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has taken us into favor in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood . . ." (Eph.1:1-7). In this Epistle, we are not merely raised, but also, as sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, made to sit, Jew and Gentile together in the heavenly places IN CHRIST JESUS (Eph. 2:6). "In Christ," and by His blood, we have not only the forgiveness of our sins,

but we are brought nigh to God, we who once were afar off (Eph. 1:7; 2:13); and we learn Him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the first chapter, and first part of second, down to v. 10, we have God's work presented to us: from v. 11 and onward, it is Christ's work.

This leads us to the second point mentioned above, the way in which "**quickenings with Christ**" is spoken of in both these Epistles -- the only two places in which the expression is found. It is *God's* work, the fruit of His love; and Christ is looked at as in death, and as being raised out of it. In Eph. 2:4-6, we read: "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love wherewith He loved us, we too being dead in offences, has quickened us with the Christ (ye are saved by grace), and has raised us up together, and has made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, that he might display in the coming ages the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." In Col. 2:11, 12, it is written: "In whom also ye have been circumcised with circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ; buried with him in baptism, in which ye have been also raised with him through faith of the working of God who raised him from among the dead. And you, being dead in offences and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has quickened together with him, having forgiven us all the offences, having effaced the handwriting in ordinances which [stood out] against us. . ."

Ephesians gives the truth with much more detail; for the passage we have quoted is but the end of a long paragraph which begins at Eph. 1:15, showing what God has wrought in Christ in raising Him from the dead, and setting Him down at His own right hand in heavenly places. It is this additional truth which characterizes the Epistle, and distinguishes it from Colossians as to the way in which we are "in Christ," and are associated with Him. We do not find Christ's place in glory until the third chapter of Colossians; and then our relative place is presented quite differently from what it is in Ephesians. We are not there said to be seated "in Christ Jesus"; but we are looked at as on earth, and are to have our hearts and thoughts centered in the things above where Christ is sitting. Christ is our life, and in us the hope of glory; His death is our portion here: "we have died,"⁷⁴ and our life is hid with Him in God, while we wait for the time when *He* shall be manifested, in order to be manifested with Him in glory.

When these distinctions are borne in mind, the incorrectness of the systematic expressions of Mr. Grant's tract are felt at once. The passages are by no means "exactly parallel," as he states on page 18. Nor is his statement on page 6 other than a misrepresentation of the scripture: he says that "life is only now in Christ," "since it is only as risen and *ascended* He is made Lord and Christ." To introduce His ascension in this way when speaking of the life, is contrary to both passages; for though in Ephesians a superficial glance at the passage might seem to countenance the idea, a little

attention shows it is not stated, and in Colossians it is expressly omitted. It is the display of God's mighty power in the resurrection of Christ from amongst the dead, that is applied to us here, and which faith lays hold of. We are "*quickened together with him,*" as united with Him in life, out of the state of being "dead in sins." Only in resurrection can the word be used in this way with reference to Christ. "He loved us, and gave himself for us," going down into death where we were, without a movement of heart towards God, or even a felt need -- "*dead in sins*" -- and God raised Christ from among the dead, and us with Him; so that the life which Christ took in rising, is the life which we now have by faith in Him, and faith in God's operation. It is past death and Satan's power, as Col. 2:15 shows; and the law, the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, Christ has "nailed to the cross." Such is His love to us!

The reasoning of the tract based on wresting Acts 2:36 out of its connection, and thrusting it in here historically, confuses all the spiritual teaching of these passages, and deprives the believer of the direct blessing ministered by the truth in its simplicity. It was necessary in order to patch up the system; for as already shown, the omission of the characteristic truth of Christianity in the author's first *essay*, was *too* gross; but when it is introduced, it only serves to expose the weakness and the fallacy of the whole argument. As brought in by Mr. G., it gives a value to "life in Christ," which is contrary to scripture statements; and it is left out where the Spirit of God puts it in, that is in connection with "life in the Son." In both ways the system falsifies foundation truth; and the whole theory is found to be imaginary.

But all these pages (13 to 18) of the tract, especially the way in which the author writes of "union," is such confusion, that I spare myself and the reader the pain of going into it.

Enough has been said for those who are not under the power of the system, and blinded by it. It is grievous to find questions raised as to these blessed truths, and to be obliged to meet them; but we have to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints: this duty has urged me on. Here then, I leave the matter, only adding a word as to the practical application of the truth we have been looking at.

Difficulty arises from mixing up distinct passages of scripture, whether as Mr. Grant does, or in other ways, and thus practically making systems in the mind. Now God who is wiser than we are, and knows best how to adapt His truth to our state and spiritual needs, has chosen to give it to us in many separate Epistles, to say nothing now of the four different Gospels. To confound being quickened or passing from death unto life, as we find it in John, with the truth set forth in these two Epistles, denaturalizes it completely. And that in two ways, both however depending upon the way in which Christ is viewed in the different scriptures. In John the subject is the life as manifested in the Person of the Son, and consequently the revelation of the Father, whereas in these Epistles, it is the position in which God sets us before Himself, and Christ as the object of the heart, the Spirit forming our thoughts and affections, through feeding us with Him, and that in connection with the place in which He now is. Secondly, in John, He is seen acting, whether in His own divine nature or as giving Himself, whereas in the Ephesians and Colossians, He is viewed as dead, and God's power is seen in raising Him.

74. This is here stated in the most absolute way; it is accepted by faith in Rom. 6:11; and the practical realization of it, God graciously coming to the believer's aid, and working it out in the circumstances through which He brings him, is seen in 2 Cor. 4:1-12.

Poverty of Theology. The poverty of theological definitions becomes apparent here. For **quicken**, as to detail, is presented in the gospel of John in more ways than one, but not at all as in Ephesians and Colossians. In John 5:21, it is the Son in His own divine nature; and yet it is in connection with the love of the Father showing the Son what He Himself does; for the Lord had just said, "The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19). In v. 25, those who are spiritually dead hear the voice of the Son of God and live, and then the blessed Lord leads us into a fresh secret as to the life communicated: "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he *given* to the Son to have life in himself." Again, in John 6:32, 33, we read of Jesus as the life-giving bread come down from heaven, from the Father. And this reveals the double aspect of eternal life as known in Jesus, Son of God and Son of man; it is *heavenly* in its origin and character, and carries with it the knowledge of the Father as "*His Father*." In v. 27 it is the Son of man who gives the food which abides unto eternal life, "for Him hath God the Father sealed"; and yet He says (vv. 44, 45): "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Further down we find life is through feeding upon Him as *dead*. "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (vv. 53, 54). It is always through faith: he that believes has it. The one who receives Jesus is born of God (John 1:12); and so in James: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). But to enjoy in communion with God all these different phases of the truth, the scripture must be left in its own blessed simplicity.

Deliverance. As to the history of any individual soul, the moment faith is produced by the action of the Spirit of God through the word, that moment there is life; and the soul is brought into the presence of God, as having to do with Him, but has to learn what the life is in its various phases as presented in the scripture, and to find out experimentally deliverance from the power of sin, and the enjoyment of the perfect love that casts out fear. This under the government of God may be a question of time; for we do not readily come to the end of ourselves, though admitting the truth that the cross is the end of the "old man," and the resurrection of Christ out of death, the beginning of God's "new creation." Then comes the mortifying of our members on earth, and a holy walk in separation from the world, and this finds our hearts weak and negligent) the moment the eye is off Christ.

In Him. But how deep is the truth brought out in these Epistles! To learn powerlessness for good is one thing, but it supposes life at least, supposes good desires; but when my condition -- in which saving grace met me -- is described as being DEAD IN sins," the probe of the Spirit goes deeper into my heart. I learn that God saw me in a state of moral chaos and darkness, where the world and sin and Satan had it all their own way with me; and that, as one has said, "there was not one single thing in my heart with which God could link Himself, and nothing in heaven which my nature would like." It is out

of this state that I find, in Christ's resurrection, the entry into the new creation, where "all things are *of God*," and find too that He has communicated to me a nature capable of enjoying them; and, what is more, capable of knowing and loving Him. I learn His love in "the Beloved," who went down into death for me, to give effect thus to God the Father's purpose for me, and not for me alone, but for all His redeemed, and find that His grace has set us IN HIM, "accepted." More still, I find He cares that I should know something of His thoughts about the brightest jewel of redemption, the church which He loved, and for which He gave Himself -- the complement of the Son of man in glory, in the Father's presence -- the church which is His body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all.

I commend to the reader's careful perusal the article on "The New Birth," in *Collected Writings*, vol. 10.

W. J. Lowe

Chapter 2.8

Eternal Life in the Son Not Possessed by OT Saints Nor By Millennial Israel

Some Characteristics of Life in the Son

We have been considering the fact that quickening, i.e., the impartation of life, experienced in the new birth, is in itself not the full Christian position. Quickening is not the same as oneness in life with our Savior, life in the Son. Before His death and resurrection, He abode alone (John 12:24) but on the day that he rose from among the dead, Head of the New Creation, He (as the last Adam and life-giving Spirit) breathed upon His disciples (John 20:22) and brought them into oneness with Himself as the stalk of wheat in resurrection. The New Creation began on that resurrection day and He, in resurrection, was its beginning (Rev. 3:14). He connected them to Himself in resurrection and, thus, we can say that the divine life that they already had could now be characterized as resurrection-life. He no longer abode alone. They now had the divine life in a new way; i.e., as life in the Son. Now, eternal life, as spoken of the believer now, means all of this. This is more than speaking of possessing eternal life in its essence. The believer now has not only life in its essence, but also with the associations with which Christ, as a result of death and resurrection, has endowed it. Eternal life, as spoken of concerning the believer now, is life in oneness with the stalk of wheat in resurrection. It is life *in* the Son and not only *from* the Son.

Old Testament saints had life from (not in) the Son, though He was, of course, hidden in deity. To establish the Christian position, it was necessary for Him to come in manhood and die and rise again, as we saw in previous chapters, for we have life in Him as in One risen from among the dead.

The distinction between the new birth, which applied to all Old Testament saints (and will to millennial saints also), and eternal life as presented in John, is also borne out in John 3:12 where our Lord distinguishes between the earthly and the heavenly. Eternal life as presented in John is a heavenly truth and its *communication* is first spoken of in John 3 in connection with the necessity of the cross (see John 3:14).

It is true that the Spirit as the power of eternal life was breathed into the disciples while the Lord was still here. And so, historically, life in the Son was communicated before the

coming of the Spirit at Pentecost,⁷⁵ which coming effected union with the glorified Head in heaven. Now, however, the believer receives these two things together when sealed with the Spirit. Consequent upon sealing, the person is in Christ -- a new position; and he is a member of Christ (1 Cor 12). But also he is delivered (Rom. 7:24-25) from the law of sin and death. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). The Spirit is here characterized as "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"; Christ Jesus, the One Who rose from among the dead is now glorified above, and the Holy Spirit has been sent down during this present period. These are characteristic truths of the time of the heavenly calling.

Life in the Son is Bound Up with Knowledge of the Father

There are indeed dispensational distinctions concerning the position in which the saints of God stand. Saints now, in virtue of possession of life in the Son and having the Spirit, know the Father; Abba, Father. The revealed ground of relationship in which we stand has a bearing on the affections and spiritual exercises of the soul. The following citation from W. J. Lowe concerning this deals with the false notion that Old Testament saints had life in the Son.

If the saint's life were "in the Son" in Old Testament times, or even under the new covenant, *then* the Psalms are the expression of the exercises of heart which correspond to it. But the knowledge of the *Father* is not in the Psalms⁷⁶ nor does it form a part of the blessings promised under the new covenant (Jer. 31&c.; quoted at length in Heb. 8). It is not even in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which treats of another line of truth. So what becomes, in the experiences of the soul, of our highest Christian privileges? They are *lost*

75. The Spirit was always present everywhere. By His *coming*, Scripture means coming in a special capacity for a special function.

76. That is, of course, in the sense in which we are now speaking of it. The *word* is found, as expressing tender governmental care: "a *father* of the fatherless" (Psa. 68:5); or again, as a simile ("a father," Psa. 103:13), just as we meet with it also in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in connection with the "Father of spirits"; but it is said, "GOD dealeth with us as with *sons*" (Heb. 12:5-11). It is Jehovah God in wise and perfect government. Again, we have Psa. 89:26, "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation": this is spoken of David (cf. Psa. 18:1-2), and the sense accords with that of Deut. 32:4-6; God is seen as the Redeemer of His people, the Author of their being. (Compare Isa. 43:21.)

practically for one who adopts this system. The writings of John, Gospel and Epistle, are drowned, so to speak, in the Old Testament; and we are reduced for all dispensational advantage to the fact that life *now* is “*in Christ*” . . . ,⁷⁷ and the *essential* glory of the Person of the Son, who was *not then* manifested, is represented as characterizing the life the Old Testament saints had. Or else -- and this is the other horn of the dilemma -- you may have life in the Son, you may “be identified with the Son in life and nature,” and yet not know *the Father* at all; . . . not even know that it is possible that such a relationship could ever exist for mortal man! But that is just this system; which boldly asserts that the fact of even the Spirit’s presence in man does not “of necessity infer their freedom from the law of sin and death” . . . ! [Cp. Rom. 8:2]. It divorces the truth presented from the experience of it in the soul, reducing it to a lifeless dogma; and this is excused by complaining that “experiences are brought in to supplement Christ “in a legal way,” and by saying that “having Christ you have all.”

This theory, in giving “Life in the Son” an anticipative value in a way scripture does not, separates the knowledge of the Father from it; so that we have it presented to us shorn of its relationship, affections, knowledge, and responsibility; and based upon no revelation of God. Consequently, it is not a life *of faith* at all; for it can exist -- did exist according to this system -- for four thousand years without these things. Faith too, practically separated from it, is reduced to believing something about man, professedly suited to his misery no doubt, so as to bring him out of that, but into *what?* -- A life, which *for his soul* has no reality at all, so far as relationship with God and responsibility are concerned. The effort to apply to Abraham what he had not, just results in keeping out of sight what he had -- what is indeed the point of all his history, as divinely given in the scriptures: for he was called “*the friend of GOD.*”⁷⁸

Eternal Life as Presented in John Was not Possessed by OT Saints

OT saints did not have eternal life in the way that eternal life is presented in John’s gospel and epistle. The NT presentation of eternal life is connected with the fact that the new birth must precede sealing with the Spirit, be it only by a ‘hair’s breadth’ of time. God does not seal an unclean vessel; and so the seal follows after the new birth which made the sinner a *saint*. We are called upon to distinguish these two events in time⁷⁹ even though in a given case we may not be able to discern that time period.

One of the efforts to establish the mistaken thought that “all is ours from the first moment of quickening” involves the idea that OT saints had life in the Son. The reasoning process is this:

77. This is sought to be commended by insisting upon Christ’s actual place in glory as *characterizing* it . . . But is it not strange that though, according to the author’s *own* reasoning, life in Christ risen (that is, after His completed work), as distinguished from life in the Son, is what *characterizes* Christianity -- yet when he comes to speak of “sealing,” he connects it with faith in His Person risen and glorified, *not* His work? So that the characteristic of Christianity is, so far, set aside in the sealing! So much for a system which methodically separates the truth from the experience in the soul of him to whom it is presented.

78. *Life and Propitiation*, pp. 78-80.

79. This has nothing to do with Pentecostal/holiness type doctrines of second (or more) work of grace.

1. It cannot be denied that from the beginning life was in the Son.
2. OT saints were quickened by the Son with the life in Him.
3. Therefore, OT saints had life in the Son. To this it is added that Christ having come, this life in the Son is now necessarily life in Christ also.
4. Then it follows that all that is comprehended in the words “life in the Son” comes at the moment of quickening; both for Old and New Testament saints.

Of course, point 3 is false, setting aside the necessity of His coming in manhood, accomplishing atonement, and rising again as Head of a new creation in order for us to have life in the character of *life in the Son*. We have previously considered that we have life in Him in connection with His risen manhood {John 12:24}, He having died and risen, a thing impossible for the OT saints to have. Our purpose now is to examine the true portion and standing of the OT saints.

We have seen that Scripture calls OT saints children of God (John 11:52; Rom. 9:7, 8) but that they could not form a visible, manifested community of children. Indeed, while called children of God, we must not suppose that all that characterizes a child of God now, as indwelt by the Spirit, was true of them. Concerning the new nature, they were children -- born of God, having divine life from the Son; they were safe and just.

Of course, OT saints had eternal life in its essence, *from the Son*, which is to say something far different than that they had eternal life *in the Son*, eternal life as spoken of in John and in his epistles. Those who intelligently oppose the idea that OT saints had life in the Son did not, and do not, deny that they had eternal life in its essence. Bear with a number of citations on this point.

J. N. Darby wrote:

That God forgave Adam’s sin downward in respect of the cross is plain, and stated in Rom. 3:25; and that He communicated life to the old saints I do not doubt -- eternal life. It is too clear to me to reason on it here, for without it none shall see nor enter the kingdom of God.⁸⁰

You cannot separate eternal life and new birth; but though the essence of divine life is there, yet eternal life in Christ as man and finally in glory does go further -- man being quickened as accomplished in Christ glorified.⁸¹

In essence divine life is always the same: only that now Christ, who becomes our life, being not only a quickening Spirit, but also Himself raised from the dead, we have this life as ours according to the condition into which He is entered as man.⁸²

J. A. Trench wrote:

We are first asked to identify “eternal life” with quickening as “ours from the first moment of it” . . . Of course it is in fact: there is not -- there never was -- any other outside the forfeited life of the fallen man save life as flowing from the Son of God, who, in His own Person, is “that eternal life which was with the Father.” But I earnestly press, *that*

80. *Collected Writings* 8:30.

81. *Letters* 3:140.

82. *Letters* 2:405, 406

*it is not so that scripture speaks of eternal life.*⁸³

A. C. Ord cited part of J. A. Trench's remarks above and implies the same teaching throughout his book on this subject.⁸⁴ He indicated the same view in 1888⁸⁵ and later stated this:

For though He quickened souls with eternal life as the Son of God (by virtue of the life that dwelt in Himself, and of which He was the embodiment and expression, as having come from the Father), yet there was no association in it with others at that time. Nor could it be said to be continuous with, and in *this* way, inseparable from, His own life; as the words "Because I live ye shall live also," imply. It was indeed *from* Him by the power of His living voice and word; but it was not enjoyed *with* Him, nor *in* Him, till the resurrection, when (seen as the corn of wheat with its much fruit risen out of the ground, bearing the multiplied grain) it exists as one whole plant (John 12:24). He comes back to His disciples after His resurrection, and for the first time breathes into (*en*) them; not only that this life may be realized abundantly in the power of the Holy Ghost, but that it may be in inseparable association with Himself -- dwelling *in Him* and He *in us*. As He says, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." How are we to enjoy all the sweetness of the Father's love, as He enjoys it, and the depth of the relationship-- His relationship-- with the Father; save as having His risen life, and His Spirit? Thus only can He dwell in us Himself, as He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and *I in them*. And, these things I speak in the world, that they might have *My joy* fulfilled in themselves." This is not exactly union, though we dwell in God and God in us, by His Spirit, yet we are never said to be united to God, as some have erroneously taught.⁸⁶

It would seem that if a saint could have life in the Son before Christ took manhood, etc., it would involve being in deity; since life in the Son means "ye in me, and I in you." This could only be true except in connection with His risen manhood. But let us return to our point.

A. P. Cecil held the same teaching:

Now as to eternal life in one sense, they do have it, for no doubt quickening is from the Son, who was the eternal life with the Father from all eternity. The Son quickens whom He will (John 5:21). But this is not eternal life in the full Christian sense of it.⁸⁷

One more extract will suffice:

But though Jehovah's righteousness has ever been that in virtue of which sinners have been saved . . . and the subsisting justification which depends on and follows it, none could derive the benefit, as a known state and standing, till it became and was proclaimed as an existent

fact . . . It was spoken of, and trusted in, from of old, but not "revealed," nor could the Spirit consequently be given as the seal of accomplished righteousness (John 7:39), till the Lord Jesus died, rose, and was glorified in ascension. Paul however, formally dwells upon it as accomplished and revealed (Rom. 1:17; 3:26-26); and the whole teaching of the New Testament as to christianity, and even as to eternity, is based on it. Vain is the attempt, then, to obliterate distinctions God Himself has made, and to reduce all His dealings to one common level . . .

The glory of God, and blessing of man, have all and completely depended on Christ as Mediator. Through Him only have men ever been saved. But this does not mean that, in the administration of divine grace to men through Him, there have been neither degrees of spiritual intelligence nor diversities of spiritual privilege. An infant has not the intelligence of a full-grown man, and what is in this time in the case of individuals is true of dispensations. The spiritual status granted to saints of previous economies was wholly and in all cases inferior to the christian status, as is very clearly stated in Luke 7:28; and consequently the spiritual capacity and intelligence were also very different. It is fallacious to say that because Old Testament saints were born of God, and are now in heaven, that therefore what is known by the christian, such as remission of sins, justification of life, peace, the heavenly calling, &c. were known to them as to us. They had simple child like faith in Christ, and in His word, -- a faith given by God in the coming Messiah, sustained by Him, and which God did not disappoint, for He uses this resource in this world, and afterwards took them to heaven. But to apply to them, either as regards spiritual intelligence, state, or condition, truth, which for its revelation and subjective realization depended on the accomplishment of atonement, and on the descent of the Holy Ghost, is altogether a mistake, and (though unintentionally) disparages virtually the work and person of our Lord. The Epistle to the Romans, for example, is written from a christian stand-point: the spiritual experience and privileges, therein spoken of, must be taken as in the light of christianity, and can be understood only from the christian position, and by the christian sense. The sins of the Old Testament saints are said simply to have been "passed over," or pretermitted (Rom. 3:25). In fact the value and effect of the work of Christ could be known, in the intelligence and power of the Spirit, only after Christ had suffered, been raised, and was glorified. And the personal and practical state is necessarily and at all times contingent on, the revelation which God gives, varying in degree with it in such a way that whilst in each dispensation, individual and personal faith and apprehension varied, yet dispensational light, state, standing and privilege vary also, as a whole and as a system, -- the christian economy being the climax and perfection of all, and justification of life, and life in resurrection, being characteristically christian privilege. In Rom. 7:14-24, the man spoken of has light beyond that of an Old Testament saint, but not up to the full christian standard. As to the divine nature there was that in the saints of Old Testament times, which through grace enabled them to please God up to the light He gave them. They were born of God, and therefore feared, trusted, and obeyed God. But we must distinguish between the quickening grace of the Spirit, and the Spirit as indwelling and so the seal of accomplished righteousness. "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you," could not have been said till the Spirit was

83. *An Answer to "Life and the Spirit,"* p. 7. See also pp. 7, 17.

84. *The Teaching of Scripture on the Subject of Eternal Life . . .*, p. 39.

85. "Eternal Life," *The Christian Friend*, pp. 253-256, 1888.

86. *The Glory of the Person of the Son of God*, p. 13.

87. *Remarks on a Paper Called "Life and the Spirit,"* p. 2. See also *Things New and Old* 28:137 (1885). See also A. H. Rule, cited in B. F. Pinkerton, *Letters on Relationship with God and Corporate Responsibility*, p. 30. I regret to have to point out that W. Kelly later in his life asserted that OT saints had "life in the Son" though they knew it not as we do, or as we ought to do. See *The Bible Treasury, New Series* 5:61.

given. It is a test now, but would have been no test then, because, though born of God and by the Spirit, they had not the gift of the Spirit. Nor in their case was the distinction brought to light between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit, because flesh and Spirit were not then known to be irreconcilable. Without this profound and Spirit-taught knowledge, they simply walked in the fear of God, and with the sense of His mercy which enabled them to say, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord; for in Thy sight shall no flesh be justified"; whereas the christian knows that he will never come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life.⁸⁸

Eternal Life as Presented in John Will not be Possessed by Millennial Israel

It is true that the Spirit ever was here (cp. Gen. 1:2, etc.); yet He came (John 14-16; Acts 2). The point is that He came in a special capacity. He indwells the believer (1 Cor. 6:19, etc.) and the church (1 Cor. 3:16, etc.). When the saints are caught up, the Spirit will be gone (2 Thess. 2:7) in that special capacity for which He came from the Father and the glorified Son, as indweller of the individual Christian and of the church after the rapture. He will still be here to deal with individuals as He did in OT times, to quicken souls by the new birth. There will be an immense change, though, for millennial Israel under the new covenant. Christ will no longer be hidden in heaven (with the Holy Spirit on earth in that special capacity) but will have been revealed from heaven (2 Thess. 1:7). This change involves the fact that millennial Israel will not have the same position as those do who are alive during the time of Christ's rejection and who are indwelt by the Spirit come here in that special capacity. In that day the nation will all be saved (Rom. 11:26) and the covenanted blessing will be that God will remember their sins no more (Heb. 8). So under the new covenant Israel's position will be much greater than that of the OT saints. Regarding *the development of God's ways in the earth*, this is an immense step up. Calling and government will again be found combined in Israel in the day, but then under the new covenant, and under the reign of Christ. Christ does not reign over the church; He will reign over Israel and the whole earth, and we will reign with Him.

The Christian is heavenly and not part of the earthly purposes of God in government in the earth. Scriptures that speak of access to God provide an interesting illustration of this. Except for the high priest once a year, and not without blood, Israel of old had no access because of the unrent veil. The veil is now rent and we have boldness by His blood to go into the holiest (Heb. 10:19). The holiest which we enter is in heaven itself. Is this true of millennial Israel? No. Israel has an earthly worship. The Millennial temple will not have a veil but it will have two-leaved doors (Ezek. 41:24). This signifies a greater degree of access than an unrent veil, yet not the unimpeded access we enjoy -- besides Israel's worship will be on earth and not in heaven itself. Moreover, Israel will still have a class of persons who are priests. They are sons of Aaron, and

specifically the sons of Zadok have a special place (Ezek. 40-48); for God intends to fulfil his promise of the covenant of the priesthood to faithful Phinehas, the ancestor of the sons of Zadok. But though sons of Aaron, they shall be under the priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13). The priesthood of Christ will be after the order of Melchizedek, an order founded on the once-for-all finished work. That gives its character to the millennial sacrifices and thus they will be commemorative of the once-for-all finished work, and suitable for an earthly people. Still, Israel's place is not even in the holiest in the earthly temple, except representatively through the priesthood.

There are other things incompatible with being *in Christ*; for in Christ the distinctions between Jew and Gentile disappear (Gal. 3:28), which is not true in the millennium; and, indeed, Israel's national unity will be composed of twelve tribes. Ezek. 48 shows that the distinction of the tribes will be recognized.

Thus, as we consider the purpose of God and the development of His ways in earthly places, we see a progression in this for the earthly people of God. However, the church is "a heavenly parenthesis," a heavenly people, and not an earthly company. God has one purpose, but it is manifested in two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly. Our place is in the heavenly sphere and Israel's place is in the earthly sphere. God's one purpose is to glorify Himself in Christ, in both spheres, with Christ as head over the heavenly and the earthly (Eph. 1:10). But our portion is the highest and so is the character and associations of our life: life in the Son.

Life in the Son means to have Christ's risen life by Himself being our life. "He that hath the Son hath life." Life in the Son is to have life in oneness with Him, being one plant with Him as the resurrected stalk (John 12:24), a thing impossible before His resurrection. We have life in the Son by He being in us and we in Him -- "ye in me, and I in you" -- "Christ in you, the hope of glory" -- "when Christ who is our life is manifested . . ." This is the abundant life of which John speaks. What an unspeakable blessedness it is to have Himself as our life -- and eternally so. May He, by the Spirit, cause us to understand ever more deeply the reality of this relationship.

The Difference in Doctrine Between a Heavenly and a Millennial Saint

From, *A Voice to the Faithful* 8:247-256

While every believer will admit his imperfection in practice, he generally considers himself correct in doctrine; he may own that he is ignorant of a great deal of truth, but his conscience would not be at ease if he did not think that he held what was true. Hence it is more difficult to convince a saint of his error in doctrine, than of his defect in practice.

There cannot be correct practice with an assured conscience, but as there is correct doctrine. Once a saint is taught of God that he is heavenly as to calling {Heb. 3:1}, he may fail much in being practically heavenly {cp. 1 Cor. 15:48}, but as he knows the doctrine of his calling, he finds out that there is power given him according as he turns to the Lord to maintain his course as a heavenly saint.

88. J. B. P., *The Bible Treasury* 15:198-199.

In the first great point of doctrine the heavenly saints and the earthly saints are together; the sins of both are washed away in the blood of the Lamb: this one great truth is common to both, and to every saint since the foundation of the world.

Now because this first great doctrine distinctly and unquestionably belongs to both, the tendency or snare is to conclude that it is the same with regard to other doctrines, and this snare will always be in the descending or earthly line, and not in the ascending or heavenly. That is to say, the calling and blessing of the heavenly saint are brought down to the line of the earthly.

Now in the very terms earthly and heavenly there is an immense distinction involved; and the rest is easily learned when once this great distinction is admitted. The real difficulty lies in convincing saints of the fact that they *are* heavenly in the true sense of the term. Christians acknowledge it in a general way, because they know that heaven will eventually be their abode, but no one can see the heavenly standing who does not see that Christ being rejected from the earth, the saint, if united to Him now, must be united to Him in heaven where He is; and that if not united to Him there, he has no link to Christ absent, although he is absolved from his sins by the blood of Christ. Moreover he is on the earth where Christ is not ruling, (for He must come before He reigns,) so that the portion of a saint now, if he were not united to Christ in heaven, would be infinitely worse than that of a saint in the millennium.

The saint in the millennium will have the happy consciousness of Christ's rule over everything. Satan will be bound and Christ will order everything morally as the sun rules the day materially. Christ is now absent, and unless the Spirit of God unites the saint to Him in heaven where He is, it is evident he is on the earth in a worse position than the earthly saint. But the saint now is united by the Spirit to Christ, and as he belongs to a heavenly Christ, he is on his way to heaven as his own place, even though he still be on the earth.

I am not now stating the various doctrines which distinguish and peculiarly belong to the heavenly saint; I am seeking to establish the fact that a saint is now heavenly both as to standing and hope, because he is united to Christ in heaven, and that the one great difference between an earthly saint and a heavenly one is, that the earthly one will not be united to Christ in heaven, but will be on the earth when the Lord reigns. The Lord being now rejected, a saint must either be connected with the world and the order of things here, or he is dissociated from man here because united to Christ in heaven. There can be no middle course.

The difference between this present time and the millennium is very distinct. The Lord is not reigning now, but He will reign then. The saint now is joined to the Lord, and is one spirit with Him. This embraces a great deal, and if this point of difference be really and truly admitted, all the others will follow as a consequence. If I am united to Christ, He is my life; "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." I am not only born again, which is true of every saint (see John 3:3-12), but I am enjoying another life through the Holy Ghost, and this could not be without distinct and positive deliverance from the man in the flesh, so that the life that I now live in the flesh "I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." Here I am dead, and my life is hid with Christ in God. The earthly

saint lives here on earth, he is not united to Christ, he is not dead, he is a man living in all the commandments and ordinances of the law blameless.

As united to Christ, I have Christ living in me. I am to live Him who is not here in the place where He is not, but in order that I may be able to do this, I am united to Him where He is.

This then is a great difference -- the heavenly saint has a perfect sense of complete deliverance from the man in the flesh; while the millennial saint is through grace empowered to do what God required of a man in the flesh. "I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Heb. 8:10).

The heavenly saint is not below this in walk, but he is greatly beyond it, and if he be not, he is, as I have said, worse off than a millennial saint, because he is now where Christ is not present, nor reigning.

Again, the way into the Holiest of all is now made manifest. We -- the heavenly saints -- "have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" {Heb. 10:19}. The earthly saint, though cleansed from his sins by the blood, cannot speak of being inside the veil, because his economy or dispensation is connected with this earth. If we admit that our place as worshipers is inside the veil, we must admit another great difference between a heavenly and an earthly saint.

One more difference I would notice: the saint united to Christ in heaven, knowing perfect deliverance in Him, and worshiping in the holiest of all, has a place in heaven prepared for him by Christ, which the earthly saint could never speak of. True he can speak of knowing the Lord of heaven and earth, and eventually he will be in the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, when all things are made new; but he cannot speak of having a place prepared for him in the Father's house, and still less can he speak of being raised up together with Christ now, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Thus we see there are four great differences in doctrine between the heavenly and the earthly saint -- first, the connection with Christ is different, the saints during His rejection being united to Him, a privilege not known by, or granted to, any other class of saints, neither to the saints before His first advent, nor to the saints after His' return. Secondly, the deliverance is different because the saints united to Him are in Him, and He is their life. Thirdly, the worship is different; the saint in perfect deliverance is inside the veil; and lastly, while the saints before the coming of Christ looked forward to a prospect of a heaven -- "they looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God" -- the saint at this time, not only knows that Jesus has prepared a place for him in heaven, but he knows too, that by the Spirit of God he is there, in Him through faith; now, with regard to the millennial saint, his hope and position are simply earthly.

If we admit these differences between the three classes of saints (and I apprehend they cannot be denied), it is evident that any saint who now loses sight of his calling as a heavenly one, will be weak in his soul as to all these blessings which I have spoken of -- namely, his union with Christ, his perfect deliverance, the true worship, and the place -- the Canaan given him of God.

All the saints are set upon the earth, but each of the three classes is called to a very distinct and peculiar relation to it. The Old Testament saint found that the prospect of heaven was the relief from the confusion and evil here; the millennial saint will be able to enjoy everything here, because the power of evil will be restrained, and the Lord will reign. Hence it remains that the saints on the earth during the absence of Christ should not be of it, but having received greater blessings, should walk here during His absence, studying only to be like Him whom men refused and to be unlike those who refused Him. The snare is that because they are forgiven their sins and have been relieved of the fear of judgment, they turn to the earth, and expect favors from God in connection with it; and when they do, they practically surrender the great truths which distinguish them from the earthly saints, and they are necessarily low in practice because low in doctrine. They fail in testimony and are, according to the light and opportunity which they have not answered to, subjected to chastening; “for our God is a consuming fire,” and His “jealousy is as cruel as the grave.”⁸⁹

Conclusion

In his book, *Life and Propitiation* . . . , W. J. Lowe not only objected to the false system being put forward at the time he wrote, but also the reasoning, rationalist approach to Scripture on which the system depended. It set aside the way in which Scripture presents the truths we have been considering. In conclusion, he reminded his readers of some last words of J. N. Darby and then reminded them of B. W. Newton’s doctrine concerning life, and included a lengthy extract from JND’s reply to BWN -- with which we will close Part Two.

Has Mr. Darby’s last warning already ceased to echo in our midst, that so many are allowing themselves to be blindly led away, as if they were unable to detect the evil at work? I recall his words:

I do add, let not John’s ministry be forgotten, in insisting on Paul’s. One gives the Dispensation in which the display is: the other, that which is played.

. . . Forty years ago, a cultivated mind (B. W. Newton) allowed itself to indulge in speculation upon the scriptures, with the result of falling into blasphemous doctrines as to the Person of the blessed Lord.⁹⁰ Now the written word itself is the object of the enemy’s assault, so as to reach the saints in their last fortress, and disarm them. “If the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” If the word of God becomes food for human reasoning, instead of reaching the conscience and judging the thoughts and intents of the heart, what can become of the Lord’s testimony in these last days, in the hands of saints who are to wait and watch for Him with their loins girt and their lamps burning -- to “tarry till He come” who, by His own presence in His FATHER’S house, has prepared for them a place, where the “eternal life” will be enjoyed and

manifested for His glory in its own proper sphere?⁹¹

And here is what JND wrote in 1845 regarding BWN’s prophetic views:

There is a very deeply and fundamentally false principle running through all the author’s reasonings on this point. I mean this, that, if life be there, inasmuch as it is always of God, or divine life, it is always essentially the same, whatever official distinctions there may be as to dispensation. Now, as to the possession of life by man, it must be holy in the principle of its nature, obedient, and have God for its object. So far, it must be fundamentally the same. But this makes man the end and essential object of all this. Then these things, man having life, may be termed “official” distinctions (though, even so, it is most sad to say that those things by which God acts peculiarly on His saints are mere official differences). I do not think a spiritual holy mind that loves Christ can help being shocked at being told that that possession of the Comforter, which made it expedient that Christ should go away -- which guides him into all truth -- give him communion with the Father and the Son -- which is an unction by which he knows all things, the things freely given to him of God, yea, the deep things of God -- which enables him to cry, Abba, Father -- by which the love of God is shed abroad in his heart, and by which he knows that he is one with Christ, in Him, and He in him -- that all this is a mere official distinction.

But the truth is, this principle shuts God out of the matter, in making the difference as to man the end. These differences of dispensation are the displays of God’s glory; and therefore of all importance, and most essential, because a positive part of His glory. The law maintained His majesty, and title to claim obedience, as the gospel displayed His grace; and gave the obedience of a child. To say that the breaking down the middle wall of partition, and the accomplishment of the glorious work by which it was effected produced only an official difference, because man had life, and man was forgiven, or forborne with in view of it, is to say that the display of God’s glory was an unessential thing: the display of all His glorious wisdom, power, and love, in that mighty work which stands alone in heaven and earth, the object of angels’ research. Was it unessential to them, who found scarce even an official difference, though doubtless it affected their position, to see Him who had created them, nailed to the tree in that mighty and solitary hour which stands aloof from all before and after? Let us only remember that dispensations are the necessary displays of God’s glory, and we shall soon feel where we are brought by what makes mere official difference out of them.

Besides, the difference is very great indeed as to man. It is everything as to his present affections, as to his life. Because God puts forth power, power too which works in man through faith, according to the display He makes of Himself. And therefore the whole life, in its working, in its recognition of God, is formed on this dispensational display. And this is the field of responsibility too. Thus, if God reveals Himself to Abraham as Almighty, Abraham is to live and walk in the power of that name. And so of the promises given to him. Israel is to dwell in the land as the redeemed people of the Lord -- their affections, ways, responsibility, and happiness flowing from what God was to them as having placed them there. So to

89. *A Voice to the Faithful* 8:247-256.

90. {BWN taught that Christ was at an “unspeakable circumstantial distance from God.” See my *Precious Truths Revived and Recovered*, Vol. 2, 1845-1850, in which this is documented. He taught these things after the original troubles. His present-day promoters do not seem to be able to find it out or understand his words. Such is the blinding power of party.}

91. *Life and Propitiation* . . . , pp. 125, 126.

us -- the presence of the Holy Ghost Himself being the great distinguishing fact, with the knowledge He affords. Because all this is what faith ought to act upon, and the life which we live in the flesh we live by faith, for the just shall live by faith. Hence the Lord does not hesitate to say, This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent {John 17:3}. That could not have been the life of those before. Had they then not life? Nay, but it could not be stated in that way -- their life was not that; and to undo these differences is to make a life without affections, character, responsibility, in a word, without faith. You cannot do it; for to us to believe is to live. The more you succeed in levelling them to one thing, the more you succeed in stifling divine affections, and active human responsibility (destroying, as far as may be, divine communion, and frustrating divine grace), the more the glory and energy of faith is null, and hence God's glory in us.

There is another point connected with this, that I would not leave untouched: namely, that making a difference of position in glory is setting aside the value of Christ's blood, and making our place on high depend on something else. Now I meet this difficulty in the face. And I say there is a difference in glory; and that difference does not depend on the precious blood of Christ; and that to say that it does, takes away its value from that blood. Difference there is. The Savior recognizes the setting on His right hand and on His left; and many other passages prove it. Now, if this depend on the blood of Christ, this would attribute a various value to it, making it uncertain and imperfect in the extent of its efficacy. The blood of the Lamb gives to all their sole title to be in the glory, and gives to all an equal and perfect justification from sin; and therefore in its effect, there can be no difference. To suppose a difference is to call in question the completeness of its efficacy. But there is a difference. And this (while the title to be in the glory is for all in the blood) depends therefore on something else. It is, in the accomplishment of the counsels of God the Father, given to those for whom it is prepared; and given (though man is not in the least the judge of that labor, and there are first that shall be last, and last first) according to the working and energy of the Spirit of God, and faithfulness through grace in service. God does what He will with His own. Still we know that in doing so He displays what He is, and is consistent with Himself; and position and reward answer to the sovereignty of God, which has given us a position, and the operation of the Spirit by which we have walked in it. It is the sovereignty of God we know from the Lord's answer to the sons of Zebedee, and the parable in Matt. 20. It is the fruit of labor, as we know from 1 Cor. 3:8; the parables (Luke 19 and Matt. 25); 1 Thess. 2:19, 20; 2 John 8. I suppose it will not be questioned that this work is through the efficacious operation of the Spirit of God.⁹²

And finally:

The life and spiritual energy of a saint depends on his faith in what is proper to his own dispensation. This is so true, that, if he only believed what belonged to the last, it would not be life to him; it has ceased to be the test of faith to him. To Abraham, faith in Almighty God was living faith: is this (though living faith surely owns it) what living faith consists in now? A Jew, not owning Jehovah, would have failed from the covenant. And it is true of power too. If the Holy Ghost be not fully owned, if the proper heavenly

place of the Church be not fully owned, no general idea of salvation, however true, will give the power, nor form and guide for Christ's glory those who neglect the former. What is special to the dispensation is the power and testimony of the dispensation, and not what is said to be common to all.⁹³

92. *Collected Writings* 8:25-27.

93. *Collected Writings* 8:112, 113.

Part Three:

*Deliverance from the
Law of Sin and Death*

Chapter 3.1

Introduction to Romans 7

Introduction

Sorrowfully, as with most truths, there is a great variety of judgments concerning the status of the man of Rom. 7. Arminians view him as an unregenerate man.¹ Calvinists regard the state described as the *normal* Christian state,² i.e., the state of one sealed with the Spirit, and one should not look for deliverance from this state in the present life. Neither is correct.

There are two other views of Rom. 7. The truth is that Rom. 7 describes the struggles of a person who is born again but is not sealed with the Spirit. It may be objected that this makes two classes of saints: sealed and not sealed. True, and if you regard the man of Rom. 7 as sealed, you make two classes of sealed saints: delivered, and those not delivered. Such a view makes the person to be a sealed saint without any of the marks presented in Scripture of being sealed! And that makes the matter one of attainment rather than the soul coming into a new position before God, the Christian standing and state (Rom. 8). It makes of Rom. 7 a saint merely seeking holiness. Well, certainly it is a saint, a quickened soul, seeking practical holiness, but it is not one sealed with the Spirit, for the man of Rom. 7 is not merely seeking holiness; he is in “captivity to the law of sin” (Rom. 7:23). But all sealed saints are delivered from captivity to the law of sin (Rom. 8:2) and have “liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17).

J. N. Darby wrote:

Sealing on the new birth is a mistake in principle; it leaves out the sprinkling with blood for forgiveness. I know of no ground for delay save knowing this. (See Acts 2:38; 10:43, 44).³

In Rom. 7 what is he talking about? Just self -- not Christ at all. Is that humility? Not a word about Christ and the Spirit! And I am told that it is a Christian. There is nearly forty times “I” and “me,” and not once Christ and the Spirit, just the law and me; and poor things those are to bring together! Very useful for ploughing up, bringing down to self-knowledge. Then he sees there is no good in himself, and he gets set free, and it is all at an end. Rom. 7 is just a quickened man, without the knowledge of

redemption.⁴

Part of the immense recovery of Christian truth during the 19th century involved the truth of deliverance and the Christian position and state. While J. N. Darby was the chief instrument in the hand of God concerning this, these truths taken up by writers and preachers and teachers of the Word brought many souls into the liberty and joy of Rom. 8. They taught that the man of Rom. 7 was quickened (cp. Rom. 7:22) but not sealed with the Spirit. The reason that the man of Rom. 7 needs deliverance (Rom. 7:24) is because he is a *captiv*e to the law of sin (Rom. 7:23). If he had the Spirit he would be *free* from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2) and thus in Christian *liberty* (2 Cor. 3:17). One who is in liberty is not a captive.

J. N. Darby’s teaching regarding Rom. 7, is, I believe, what the Scripture teaches. What he taught was held by him from virtually the beginning of his ministry. The following quotation makes this definite as well as stating succinctly his view of it.

You know that I reject the thought (I have done so for five and forty years) of the experience of Romans 7 being a Christian state. It is the state of a regenerate soul under law, under the “first husband” of the chapter; not the delivered soul under the second husband, that is, Christ risen.⁵

It is clear from Rom. 7:24 that the man is quickened; he has the “inward man.” And it is also clear that the man is “wretched” and is undelivered (Rom. 7:24), whatever that means. He needs deliverance. Regarding deliverance, J. N. Darby wrote, “. . . indeed it is one special ministry in which I have been blessed, and on that deliverance I should insist.”⁶ What this deliverance entails is the subject of the articles that follow. First we will have a summary of the teaching.

1. See *Collected Writings* 3:180, 203; 23:184, 187.

2. See *Collected Writings* 21:199.

3. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:138.

4. *Collected Writings* 27:134.

5. *Collected Writings* 23:184.

6. *Collected Writings* 33:74.

Summary of the Teaching of Romans 7

HOW TO UNDERSTAND ROM. 7

There are those who realize they are indwelt of the Spirit who experience something of Rom. 7 and judge that the man of Rom. 7 is sealed with the Spirit. Someone commented on this thus:

Now there is no doubt that many who are sealed are in a measure *experimentally* in the state described in the seventh of Romans, but this experience by no means proves that the Spirit of God is describing in this chapter one who is sealed. I believe that the error into which some who are sealed have fallen, is that they do not sufficiently distinguish between experience and doctrine, and when they find that their own experience in measure agrees with the state described in this chapter, they conclude that the chapter itself describes the experience of one who has been sealed . . . It has been truly remarked by another, that the seventh of Romans describes a state in which no one ever really was, viz., with the will always right and the action always wrong, and it is, therefore, only in a measure that any person's experience is described in this chapter; and though there is no doubt that the experience of the seventh of Romans is in measure gone through by one who is sealed, yet this fact does not warrant anyone in interpreting the doctrine of the seventh of Romans by his experience, nor to conclude because his experience answers in measure to that which is described in this chapter, that therefore the Spirit of God, through the apostle, speaks in this chapter of one who is sealed.

Scripture is consistent in all its parts, and in no portion of it, where the Spirit of God addresses the saints, are they addressed as being in the state described in verse 7 to end of Rom. 7, but, on the contrary, they are always addressed as being in a state the exact opposite to that described in the latter part of this chapter, and are thus addressed not in one or two details only, but in every one of the several details mentioned in that chapter and above referred to.⁷

QUICKENED, THOUGH UNDELIVERED

There are a number of things that are true of the man in Rom. 7 before the deliverance is experienced and these show that the person is quickened (made alive -- born again).

1. He has a changed understanding (Rom. 7:24, 14).
2. He has a changed will (Rom. 7:18).
3. He has a changed heart (Rom. 7:22).

It is clear that this person has two natures and a struggle is going on. He has the old nature inherited from fallen Adam and he has the "inward man" (Rom. 7:22), a new nature from God. However, he has a problem.

HIS PROBLEM IS THAT HE IS A CAPTIVE

But I see another law in my members, warring in opposition to the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which exists in my members (Rom. 7:23).

It is most important to allow this scripture to have its weight with us. That he is captive to the law of sin is the direct statement of Scripture.

A law is a "fixed principle" of operation. A law denotes the uniform acting of something. Captivity to the law of sin is captivity to the uniform operation of the old, evil nature that man acquired in the fall. "Sin" here is the internal enemy from which sins (sinful conduct) spring. "Sin" is the spring, the root. Furthermore, he is captive to the law of death. What uniformly tends to death has him in captivity. He cannot be free and in slavery at the same time. In conscience he is under the principle of law in his relationship with God and *this writes the sentence of death in the conscience*, for that is the meaning of the reference to death and dying in vv. 7-13.

THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM

The man of Rom. 7 is in a captive state. He seeks power to overcome indwelling sin (the root principle, the evil nature from which sinful acts spring). He looks within himself for power. His resource, he thinks, is within himself. He is going to please God and thus God will be favorable to him. He is before God, concerning his conscience, on the principle of law. I did not say *the* law, but it may well take the form of the law of Moses. He is before God, in conscience, on a legal basis. The legal basis is thinking that God is disposed toward me as I am toward him. Such do not have settled peace and do not have the knowledge of being in the forgiven position before God. The legal principle cannot give scriptural peace and such a soul does not know what it means to have no more conscience of sins (Heb. 10:2), sins as standing against himself. Rather, such have the sentence of death written in their conscience (cp. Rom. 7:11), for literal death is not meant. How can such a soul be sure of eternal salvation?

Rom. 6 shows that the Christian is free from one master and now serves another. The man of Rom. 7 is captive to the wrong master (cp. Rom. 6:18). Rom. 5 shows that the Christian has changed heads. There are two headships spoken of -- Adam's and Christ's. The man in Rom. 7, so far as his conscious standing is concerned, is in Adam, and "in the flesh" (Rom. 7:5, 6). As Jews under law, whether born of God or not, were addressed by the law as in the Adam standing and responsibility, and in the flesh, so the man under law in conscience, in Rom. 7, is "in the flesh."

He is under law as a principle (Rom. 7:9-13). Rom. 6:14 shows that one who is in the Christian position is under grace -- and also that sin does not have dominion over him, yet the man of Rom. 7 is under the dominion of the law of sin. In this condition, "this body of death" (Rom. 7:24) is very much active; but concerning one in the Christian position it is said, "the body is dead on account of sin, but the Spirit is life on account of righteousness" (Rom. 8:10).

The man of Rom. 7 is, according to the illustration in Rom. 7:1-4, not dead to law -- for in conscience he is under law (Rom. 7:7-13). Thus he is not in the good of true circumcision (Phil 3:3) for such a one does not trust in himself -- which self is exactly what the man of Rom. 7 is trusting in, for power over indwelling sin.

Thus there is the struggle to gain the victory, on the legal basis, to be acceptable to God; in effect, to warrant His favor.

7. A. B. P. *Remarks on Romans VII*, pp. 2, 4.

There is a sort of looking to Christ and recognizing that when first turned toward Christ, one's past sins were forgiven. But future ones? Such are not resting on the finished work of Christ for the knowledge of their sins forgiven and that they are in a forgiven position before God. Hence, the man must struggle until he recognizes the hopelessness of obtaining victory and power over indwelling sin and experiences deliverance from the law of sin which exists in his members and holds him captive. Step by step he gains experimental knowledge and learns to distinguish two forces at war in his members. Finally, he faces up to the fact of his wretchedness, which consists of the frustration of his godly desires by the dominating law of sin, and cries out, "who shall deliver me . . ." Thus he turns from looking for power within himself to a Deliverer, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE DELIVERANCE

Turning to Christ, resting on His Person and work for the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, knowing that he stands before God as one forgiven, he is sealed with the Spirit. He believes the gospel of his salvation and is sealed (Eph. 1:13). The gospel of our salvation is not that our past sins were forgiven when we believed and thereafter we might be lost again. No, no. We are forgiven, and as resting on that work we are delivered from the law of sin. We receive the Spirit as power over indwelling sin. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 8:2). The man in the condition described in Rom. 7 was not free from the law of sin. He says he was a captive to it (Rom. 7:23). The deliverance is thus deliverance from this captivity. This is experimentally realized in the soul. The Spirit indwelt person now has operative in him a new law. This new law is called: "the law of *the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*." This new law "has set me free from the law of sin and death." It is clear that this law was not operative in the man of Rom. 7 else he would not have been a captive. But now, having the Spirit and this new law operative in him, he is free. Being free, he is not a captive any longer, but stands in liberty. "Where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is, there is] liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17).

When Israel was sheltered by the blood on Passover night, they were safe from the judgment. Were they delivered from the power of the taskmaster? No. They feared until they were safe on the other side of the Red Sea. Compare Ex. 14 with 15. The patent fact is that they were not saved until they were through the Red Sea. If they had experienced salvation, why Ex. 14:13? "And Moses said to the people, Fear not: stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah . . ." Salvation from what? from the power of the taskmaster! They needed *deliverance* from the power of the taskmaster. A work began on Passover that was now to be completed. And when they were over the Red Sea and it closed on the power of the taskmaster, the first recorded song in Scripture commenced. When redemption in type was completed, then singing began. They sang: "My strength and my song is Jah, and he is become my salvation" (Ex. 15:2). There is a new vocabulary in Ex. 15. Read it carefully and prayerfully. Compare Ex. 14 with Rom. 7 and Ex. 15 with Rom. 8. Observe the great change. Ex. 15 and Rom. 8 are about liberty, salvation and deliverance. In Exodus it is typical and in Rom. 7 and 8 it is

the experience of the soul. Afterward, just as Israel in the wilderness typifies, there is more to learn, but one is not subsequently undelivered.

The Red Sea typifies the death and resurrection of Christ for us. When the bearing of that is apprehended by the soul, there is deliverance from captivity to the taskmaster. And it is death to the power of the taskmaster, hence the sea closed upon Pharaoh's forces. The word *salvation/saved* in the NT is a large, comprehensive word. It means more than being safe for the glory. It includes being safe; but more, being saved from the power of indwelling sin. It includes deliverance. Christ saves from the penalty of sin and from the power of sin *now* -- and soon He will come and save us from the presence of sin. This is part of the glad tidings of our salvation and we are sealed with the Spirit forever; sealed now as a consequence of that deliverance. And we can rightly sing the song of salvation (cp. Ex. 15).

We have been brought into the merry place as was the prodigal son. When he came to himself (Luke 15), that is like the new birth. He started going to the father's house and made up a speech suitable for a servant, not a son. Yes, he expected something from his father, that is true. But notice that he was going to request a servant's place. He was going to be there on the basis of working as a servant. This is the legal basis. This is the spirit of Rom. 7. The man in Rom. 7 has the spirit of a hired servant. The law of Moses certainly did not put the Israelite in the place of sons. So the prodigal was not going to take a son's place but he would work for what he would get. He had **the spirit of a hired servant**. Oh yes, it would be grace that the father would show in allowing him to be as a hired servant, but after that point, well, he would have to work to earn his father's favor. Such was the state of the prodigal, such is the state of the man of Rom. 7 and such is the state of many souls today. *That*, if it were truthfully articulated, is their thought of God. The father kissed that notion away. He fell upon his neck in compassion "and covered him with kisses." The son confessed that he had sinned and that he was "no longer worthy to be called thy son." How true this is, yet the father then and there attired him for the son's place and they enjoyed sweet communion eating the slain fatted calf (signifying the Person and work of Christ), "And they began to make merry" -- never to end.

He now had **the spirit of a son** -- and this is seen in Rom. 8 where the delivered one has the Spirit of adoption, i.e., the Spirit of sonship. "For ye have not received a spirit of bondage again for fear [Ex. 14 and Rom. 7], but ye have received a spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

Cornelius was a man whose prayers God heard (Acts 10:1-4, 35). He was a born again soul. Cornelius was told by the Lord to send for Peter, "who shall speak words to thee whereby *thou* shalt be saved . . ." (Acts 11:14). Here we see a distinction between new birth and being saved. Why not learn from this? Of course Cornelius was safe for the glory, but the word saved, while including that, includes more. Cornelius was not resting on the finished work of Christ for the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins; i.e., he didn't know what it was to be in a forgiven position before God.

Peter declared unto him the resurrection (Act 10:40, 41), the seal of Christ's work, and "that everyone that believes on him will receive through his name remission [forgiveness] of sins" (Acts 10:43). Thus the Person and work of Christ was preached and that he could have the forgiveness of sins. The listeners believed and the Holy Spirit fell on them. Now the word "saved" properly applied to Cornelius. He believed the gospel of his salvation, trusted in Christ and His work, and was sealed (Eph. 1:12, 13) with the Spirit. Receiving forgiveness of sins does not mean that merely the past sins to that point are forgiven (which is true in itself but hardly the whole truth), but that the person is in a forgiven position before God (though governmental consequences of a previous life may remain).

Before this sketch is closed I would add that it is not to be supposed that OT saints were all in the condition described in Rom. 7. This is a state in which God allows souls to be learning something about the powerlessness of self in view of the position in Christ into which He brings souls in this time of the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). Yes, Cornelius lived in a transition period, but that does not annul what we learn from his case concerning new birth and salvation. I would add that difficulties will be considered at the end of Part 3, keeping in mind the statement of JND that once a teaching of Scripture is established, no amount of difficulties can overthrow it.

Chapter 3.2

The Place of Romans 7 in the Book

The Two Main Divisions of Romans 1-8

In order to understand the teaching of Rom. 7 and why the things spoken of in the chapter appear at that place in the book of Romans, it is instructive to see that Rom. 1-8 divides into two main sections:

ROMANS 1 - 5:11

This section deals with sins -- what we have done -- and justification by blood. It is about the person's guilt and the grace of God that meets it. We are brought

from conscious guilt into divine favor and knowledge of divine love, as justified by Christ's work The doctrine of sealing is not found here; but the person is sealed . . . the first part is complete in itself; the man is a pardoned, justified man, enjoying God's favor, His love in his heart by the Holy Ghost given to him, and rejoicing in the hope of glory.

ROMANS 5:12 - CH. 8

This section deals with sin -- what we are, what our state was -- and justification of life. It deals with deliverance, the new power, state and standing. It has to do with our state that resulted from the sin of Adam. It is not dealing with what I have done but with what I am as connected with *sin in the flesh*. In this section we are brought "into the knowledge of ourselves as having died with Christ to our old state, and being in Him before God."

Now, while these two divisions in the book treat these several subjects, it would be a mistake to read these two divisions as if a continuous process in the soul were involved proceeding from ch. 3 through ch. 8. Rom. 3 - 5:11 is contemporaneous in the soul with Rom. 5:12 - 8. Thus the matter of deliverance from the law of sin and death (Rom. 7:24; Rom. 8:2) is settled when the matter of justification is.

Now, while that is also true, it does not follow that the man of Rom. 7 is sealed and is before God, in conscience, on the ground of justification. Rom. 5:12 - 6 describes a person who is delivered. "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). "But thanks [be] to God, that ye were bondmen of sin, but have obeyed . . . (Rom. 6:14). "For when ye were bondmen of sin . . . (Rom. 6:20). Observe carefully that Rom. 7:7-23 describes a person who is *not delivered from the law of sin*. So Rom. 6 teaches that the Christian is not under the law of sin, while Rom. 7 describes one who has the inward man (Rom. 7:22) but

is "*captive to the law of sin* (Rom. 7:23).

Rom. 8:2 says that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and of death." The person described in Rom. 6 is one that is free from the law of sin and death because "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is operative within him. If this is necessarily true of every quickened soul from the first moment, what is that law doing when that soul is in the state and position of Rom. 7? He is captive to the law of sin (Rom. 7:23) and is set free from the law of sin (Rom. 8:2) and thus is not captive to the law of sin (Rom. 6:14, 17 and 20) all at the same time -- an impossible situation. And this really is the result of asserting that the man of Rom. 7 is sealed. **He is not sealed.**

So, while Rom. 3 - 5:11 is indeed contemporaneous with Rom. 5:12-8, Rom. 7:7 - 25 is a parenthesis; it is parenthetical and describes the deliverance of an unsealed, quickened soul, under law in conscience, seeking power over indwelling sin on the legal principle. That is, he is before God, in conscience, on the basis of his performance for acceptance. When the lesson, that self cannot accomplish this, is learned, the soul looks away from the legal principle to Christ, is delivered and sealed with the Spirit and has a new law operative within him (Rom. 8:2); and thus delivered from the law of sin and death, is in liberty. "Where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is, there is] liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17).

Rom. 7:7-23 cannot be contemporaneous with, or sequential to, Rom. 6. The fact is that the quickened soul's experience of deliverance is what brings it into the good of Rom. 6. Rom. 7:7-23, then, precedes Rom. 6 and also, of course, Rom. 8. We do not mean by "experience" that no act of God is involved. Of course there is. When the soul, by faith, turns from the legal principle to Christ's work alone as the basis for its continuing place before God, that is to believe the gospel of its salvation and God seals that soul. The soul is then in Rom. 6 and 8, whatever subsequent experience there may be concerning the flesh -- as was the case with Israel in the wilderness after their deliverance from the power of the taskmaster.

We have not examined the place of death in this matter and this will be done when considering Rom. 7:1-6, which will follow this part of our enquiry.

We may conclude this section with a few general comments. At the end of ch. 5 we learn about two heads and in ch. 6 about two masters. The sealed saint is under a new head. There has been a change in head. Under one head we are constituted sinners (nature), under the other, righteous.

But there is a change in master also (Rom. 6). Sin shall not have dominion. We had been servants to that taskmaster, sin -- sin referring to a power in our members (and this indwelling sin produces sinful acts). How has God dealt with this taskmaster within? How is its dominion broken? How do we learn about it practically in our souls? We have also changed husbands, according to the figure in Rom. 7:1-6. Not that the first husband died, but *we* have died (v. 6) and are to another, even Christ. Also, in ch. 7 there is knowledge acquired about two natures within. These are not the subjects of Rom. 1-5:11.

In connection with state, Rom. 7 speaks of the acquisition of some self-knowledge. This is gained through the soul being before God, in conscience, on the legal principle. The experience of the consciousness of lust teaches the person what he is as a sinner (constitutionally); teaches what the root of the problem is. The man must learn something of what sin in the flesh is and that the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom. 8:7). The man is learning that there is an absence of power. The process causes the desire to have Christ instead of self for the basis of one's acceptance. And this leads to deliverance and sealing with the Spirit. The soul finds out what it is to be in a forgiven position before God.

The Role of Law

The word "law" appears often in Rom. 7, sometimes without the word "the" and sometimes with it. If we speak of *the* law, reference is to the Mosaic law. The word law, without a preceding "the," refers to the principle of law; i.e., the legal principle considered abstractly. A person may, in conscience, be before God on the principle of law without it taking the form of *the* Mosaic law, although it certainly may take that form.

The law cursed (Gal. 3:10), killed (Rom. 7:9, 11) and was a ministry of death (2 Cor. 3:7, 9). It did not communicate righteousness (Gal. 3:21) nor eternal life. It made the offense abound (Rom. 5:20) and sin, by the commandment, became exceedingly sinful (Rom. 7:13).

The law did not distinguish the children of God from those who were not children of God. It was not given to Israel as a company of children of God, nor could it be so given, for they were not that. It was given to a mixed people (Heb. 4:2) and addressed them in responsibility -- Adam responsibility. It addressed man in his fallen, responsible position -- but in the person of the favored Israelite (and only Israelites). Thus, it addressed man in the flesh in the person of the Israelite.⁸ This was the position of one under the law as to standing -- in the flesh. The fact that some were children of God does not change the fact that the way the law addressed the Israelites

was as standing in Adamic responsibility -- in the flesh. I urge reflection on this point: those of Israel who were actually quickened souls were, as to their standing before God under the law, in Adamic responsibility; i.e., in the flesh, though, of course, safe for the glory since they were actually children of God.

The children of God put under the law were like children in their minority (not 'come of age') until God's appointed time (Gal. 4:2). The Christian is not under it. He is looked at as in the position of sonship (come of age). Those who were born of God and were under the law could walk before the Lord in integrity (Psa. 26:1; cp. Isa. 38:3 and Luke 1:6). This is not true of the man described in Rom. 7. It is not true of a born-again person now who, having heard something of the gospel, is before God, in conscience, on the legal basis.

The fact is that there are born again souls who are before God, in conscience, on the legal principle, and such are not in the Christian state and position. Rom. 7 addresses this matter and shows in vv. 1-6 how freedom is obtained from law and vv. 7-23 show that one in this state is not in the Christian state and position and cannot answer to this state and position. Rom. 7:1-6 shows that it is by death that freedom from this condition is experienced.

I want once more to direct attention to the fact that the man of Rom. 7 is *alive under law*. He does not know what it means to be dead to the law through Christ's death for him. It is not merely that he does not know better, and needs to be taught that he is not really alive but is dead with Christ. The Word of God says he is alive and that the Christian is dead. If a soul receives all at new birth then he is dead with Christ. How comes it about, then, that the one described in Rom. 7 is alive? Why, it is false that the soul receives all at the moment of quickening. At quickening, the soul receives divine life from being dead in trespasses and sins. But he may be, for a shorter or longer time, in a state of being alive under law -- and that is not being dead with Christ, which becomes true of the person when delivered from the law of sin, which has power over a born again soul while alive under law. According to the figures used in Rom. 7:1-6, the person is married to the law and is in need of a change of husband. This results from the person's death ("made dead to the law by the body of Christ") and being, then, to the second husband. Let us look at these verses next.

8. We are not discussing here another side of the law, namely, that it was also a covenant with the nation. It was never given to Gentiles, theology notwithstanding. None-the-less, it was a test of the condition of man, but the test was confined to a special, favored people. The result of this test case (not to teach Him Who knows all, but to demonstrate to man) is that all are proved lost, etc.

Chapter 3.3

Romans 7:1-4: A New Husband

ROMANS 7:1 & 2

Are you ignorant, brethren, (for I speak to those knowing law,) ⁹ that law [or, the law] rules [“As ‘have dominion,’ ch. 6:9,14”] over a man as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband so long as he is alive; but if the husband should die, she is clear from the law of the husband (Rom. 7:1, 2).

As a matter of fact there is much ignorance concerning this matter of law and its function, but it is explained in Rom. 7, a chapter misunderstood by the vast majority of Christians. The statement made in Rom. 6:14 is explained here -- for the subject of Rom. 7 is how freedom may be obtained from the dominion of sin and how that dominion is connected with law; i.e., with being before God on a legal basis. We shall consider this fully as we go on with this chapter.

Verse 1 speaks of a person under law. It is clear that the law rules over a living person, not a dead one. So v. 1 speaks of a person *alive* under law. Also, observe that the man of Rom. 7:7-23 is under law *in his conscience*. Pay careful attention, therefore, to the fact that **the man of Rom. 7:7-23 is alive under law**. He is before God, in his conscience, on a legal basis. It is most important to see what this means. It means that he is not before God, in his conscience, on the basis of what Christ is for him, but on the basis of what *he is* for God. This legal basis may, in practice, take the form of the law of Moses or it may not take that form.

Being alive under law (vv. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13) is his *state*. A person in this state is before God on the ground, or basis, of Adam responsibility and not on the ground of being dead with Christ. The death of Christ terminated the trial of the first man. The man of Rom. 7 does not apprehend, in conscience, that the first man, tested by law, has no standing in that way since the cross. True, he may not consciously realize that he is taking up Adamic responsibility, but that is just what it is. He does not realize what Paul really meant by “I am crucified with Christ,” else he would realize that the legal basis is not the Christian standing.

Being alive under law is a state from which he needs deliverance in order to be in the state described in Rom. 8 as being led of the Spirit. Rom. 6:14, speaking of one in the state

described in Rom. 8, says, “For sin shall not have dominion over *you*, for ye are not under law but under grace.” Gal. 5:18 says, “but if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under law.” So one that is alive under law (that means that in his conscience he is not dead with Christ) is not regarded as led by the Spirit; and if Scripture is to be believed, is not under grace. ¹⁰ Moreover, one that is in the state and standing described in Rom. 8 has died with Christ: “Now if we have died with Christ . . .” (Rom. 6:8). The man in Rom. 7:7-23 is not regarded as having *died* with Christ, but rather he is *alive* under law.

In v. 2, the apostle used an illustration from marriage that shows that clearance from the law of a woman’s husband is by his death [divorce is not the subject or the point here]. He will use this point later except he will change the matter around. Here, his point is that **death is the instrument of change**. There are two husbands: the law and Christ. We shall see that the first husband, the law, does not die, but the one who is to this first husband (the one who is under law) needs to die in order to be free of the first husband. The point is that *death* effects release from the position of being *alive* under law, which rules over a man as long as he lives.

ROMANS 7:3

So then, the husband being alive, she shall be called an adulteress if she be to another man; but if the husband should die, she is free from the law, so as not to be an adulteress, though she be to another man (Rom. 7:3).

Here it is pointed out that a woman would be an adulteress if she is to another man while her husband is living. Of course, it is physically possible to be to two men: but that is not the point. It is beside the point. The illustration is meant to bear on the position of the man of Rom. 7. The law is the first husband: and clearance from it is only by death -- that is the point. **It is not a question of making progress**. Such a notion falsifies the passage. It is not a matter of making progress in a process of dying. The point is that the soul is connected with one or the other of the two husbands and the change comes about through death. It is not a matter of slowly

9. These words in parenthesis do not say “*the* law” as if Paul is here singling out Jewish believers (as is claimed by H. A. Ironside and A. Pridham). “Brethren” here does not mean Jewish believers. Gentile believers knew something about “law” also. Some attention is required concerning when the word “law” is preceded by the article “the” and when it is not.

10. C. Crain, *Readings on Romans*, New York: Loizeaux, p. 73, n.d., says, “He is a man indwelt by the Spirit. While he is not walking according to the Spirit, yet the indwelling Spirit is leading Him.” I suggest that this is in flat contradiction of the express statement of Scripture. The man in Rom. 7 is under law and Scripture says, “but if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under law.” The statement by C. Crain is part of, and necessitated by, a system of doctrine that says that all belongs to the new-born soul at the moment of quickening.

becoming detached from one and being attached to the other. The great point to the illustration is clearance from law by death in order to be to another. To be connected to both at the same time is compared to the sin of adultery. But let us come to how the change is effected.

ROMANS 7:4

So that, my brethren, ye also have been made dead to the law by the body of Christ, to be to another, who has been raised up from among [the] dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God (Rom. 7:4).

Here is the application of the illustration -- but with the change mentioned above. The law answers to the first husband; and Christ crucified and raised from the dead answers to the second husband. Note well that the first husband did not die. The law is not dead. So the person is cleared from the law, not by its dying, but by the person dying (not physically, of course). This means that the person appropriates the meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ sufficiently to realize that he is dead with Christ -- that His work has dealt with what he is, and Christ has been raised for him. He then knows that he is in a forgiven position before God.

Concerning one who is in the state and standing described in Rom. 6 & 8, it can be said of him that the ground he is on before God, in conscience, is what Christ is for him -- and not what he is for God. He is, in conscience, dead with Christ. He is transferred from being alive under law to being dead with Christ and connected with Him as living. How so? We "have been made dead to the law by the body of Christ." Yes, His very body was given in death for us. And why so? "to be to another, who has been raised up from among [the] dead." Rom. 7:7-23 describes the experimental (experiential) process through which the soul is passed by God in order to reach the end of the soul's being before Him, in conscience, on the legal basis. And so the soul, alive under the law, cries out to One for deliverance; and through the appropriation of His finished work for the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, thus becomes, in conscience, dead to the law -- having appropriated for himself what Christ is for him, as the Christian position before God.

It is death with Christ that effects this. We are connected with One Who is raised from the dead. We are to another Who is on the other side of death; the corn of wheat Who died and then stood forth in resurrection-life and power -- Who thus risen breathed on those who had already been quickened, connecting the life they already had with Himself in resurrection, so that it could rightly be said that they had resurrection-life. This was abundant life, life in resurrection power. They were thus one plant with Him, the risen stalk, identified in life with Him. That had never been true before that wonderful moment when He communicated the Spirit, not as the Pentecostal gift of union with a glorified head, but as power of life. This is life in the Son.

But though the man of Rom. 7 is quickened, the above is not true of him until deliverance from law occurs. He is not dead and risen with Christ, as to his standing: he is alive under law, having the penalty of death by the law written in his conscience (Rom. 7:9). He has not the Spirit, for if he did, he would be under law and dead to the law, under grace and under the law, in bondage and in liberty, at the same time, a

thing rejected by Rom. 7:1-4.

J. N. Darby remarked,

In Rom. 7 the experience is that of a man quickened but not dead. In the early part of the chapter we have the doctrine that we have died, and so we cannot have the two husbands; and the law cannot have power over us, because we have died. It will be seen therefore that chapter 7 is the application of the doctrine of chapter 6 to the question of the law, and there the experience is given of a man that is under law who cannot say that he is dead. There it is not "risen with Christ," but married to another who has risen. You cannot have law and Christ together. Then the figure is changed; for it is we that have died, though it is the same in principle. And in the end of the chapter we have the experience of a man that is under law, and is not delivered; he has the life given [is regenerate], but he is not dead and risen. It is the fullest expression of a man under law, and having life. And as such we are delivered by finding out, not merely that Christ died for our sins, but also that we have died with Christ. And this is the doctrine of chapter 6.¹¹

We have been made dead to the law to be to another "in order that we might bear fruit to God" (cp. Phil. 1:11; Gal. 5:22). The man of Rom. 7 is not looked at as bearing fruit. Rom. 6:22 says, "ye have your fruit unto holiness." How is this if a quickened soul necessarily has all from the first moment of quickening?

There is always a time interval between quickening and sealing with the Spirit, though it might be so small as not to be noticeable to others. A soul that hears a full, delivering gospel is fruitful at once (Col. 1:5, 6), of course. None-the-less, each soul must learn something of self; and such will experience something of Rom. 7, but in a modified form. This will be considered later.

11. *Collected Writings* 26: 411, 412.

Chapter 3.4

Romans 7:5, 6: Contrast of the New with the Old

The Old: In the Flesh in Adamic Standing and Responsibility Romans 7:5

For when we were in the flesh the passions of sins, which [were] by the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit to death (Rom. 7:5).

The expression “in the flesh” may mean in the body, but that is not its meaning here. The state described as “in the flesh” (the standing, or position is “in Adam”) is the result of the fall and is connected with Adamic responsibility as fallen. Thus, it describes a natural man’s state before God. It also describes a person under the law -- because the law addressed man (in the persons of Israel) in their standing in Adamic responsibility. You will recall that the law made no distinction between one who was quickened and one who was not. Thus, under law, a child of God was not addressed as a child of God, but as standing in Adamic responsibility -- hence in the flesh -- though in the purpose of God he was otherwise. “In the flesh” in Rom. 7 describes one who is alive under the law now. Some of our readers may be startled by this as if this was some novel point with the writer. The case is far otherwise. W. Kelly wrote,

It is impossible rightly to understand the passage if applied either to a natural man or to a Christian. There may be, there is, a transitional state constantly found in souls when they are born again, but not yet in conscious deliverance; and this is the precise state here in question. Paul may have passed as most do through this experience more or less during the three days, when without sight he neither ate nor drank. He was converted then, no longer therefore a natural man, but not yet filled with the Holy Ghost. Certainly he personates the case and reasons it out fully from verse 7 to the end of the chapter. It is the case of one quickened, but not yet submitting to the righteousness of God. Hence, being jealous for God but ignorant of the full place in which redemption sets the believer, such a soul places itself under law; and the operation of the law is therefore exhibited to us. There is an awakened conscience, but no power. If the new nature were not there, such experience could not be: if the Holy Ghost were there, power would follow, as we see in chapter 8, where we have the proper normal state of the Christian. The state described, however, is in no case I believe final, but transitional, though bad and legal teaching may keep a

soul in it till grace acts fully, it may be, on a deathbed, or what is equivalent.¹²

J. A. Trench wrote,

It is a quickened soul as we have seen, one truly born of God, but who, as to the ground upon which the soul actually is, is still in the flesh, under law that *applies* to that condition and that condition only. “If ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law” (Gal. 5:13). A soul under the law is in the flesh, according to the clear force of the expression in Romans 7, a state fully developed there, and with which that of Romans 8 is directly contrasted (cp. 7:5, 8:9).¹³

C. Wolston said,

This chapter gives us the way in which the believer is delivered from the law, and from the state, as in the flesh, to which the law applies¹⁴

J. N. Darby remarked,

A regenerate man may be in the flesh, as to the condition and standing of his own soul, though he be not so in God’s sight; nay, this is the very case supposed in Romans 7, because he looks at himself as standing before God on the ground of his own responsibility, on which ground he never can (in virtue of being regenerate) meet the requirements of God, attain to His righteousness. Perhaps, finding this out, he has recourse to the blood of Christ to quiet his uneasy conscience, and repeated recurrence to it, as a Jew would to a sacrifice, {as} a superstitious man to absolution. But he has no idea that he has been cleansed and perfected. . . .¹⁵

W. Story pointed out that:

To be under sin’s law is to be still in the flesh, i.e. seeking a standing for flesh before God on that ground, if it be put in the sense of the 7th of Romans. . . .¹⁶

. . . it is a man who may be quickened, but who is not

12. *Notes on . . . Romans*, London: Morrish (1873), pp. 102,103.

13. *An Answer to “Life and the Spirit,”* p. 10.

14. *Words of Faith*, p. 25 (1884).

15. *Collected Writings* 7:372.

See also *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:481; 3:120,142; *Collected Writings* 31:260,269,270; 26:241 (old ed.); *Words of Truth*, New Series 1:210,211;

A. C. Ord, *The Teaching of Scripture on the Subject of Spiritual Life*, p. 49;

Things New and Old 33:170, 171, and H. H. Snell, *ibid.*, 26:256;

C. Stanley, *On the Epistle to the Romans*, London: Morrish, p. 84, n.d.

16. W. Story, *A Brief Review of a Book Entitled “Life in Christ and Sealing With the Holy Ghost,”* p. 22.

delivered, in fact is not *saved*, has not yet believed the gospel of salvation, and consequently has not the Spirit of God, and so cannot be in the Spirit, for the Spirit dwelling in us is what constitutes being in the Spirit and not being born again.¹⁷

The trouble, said J. N. Darby, is:

What he is, not what Christ is, is the ground on which he judges of his state before God. As to his conscious standing, he is in the flesh.¹⁸

Again,

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. It is, as to our moral state -- which in itself is true -- making the disposition of God towards us to depend on what we are towards Him. Of this the law is the perfect rule. It says, if conscience is awakened, I am such and such: God will be so and so towards me. Grace is on the opposite ground: God has been, and is, through Christ such and such, and I shall be so and so, as the fruit of it. But this changes everything.

Take the parable of the prodigal son. When he came to himself, you hear much about him; he owns his sin, that he is perishing, and sets out to his father, for confidence (not peace) always accompanies divine awakening, but he says as a consequence, Make me as one of thy hired servants. Arrived, with his father all this disappears, and he with it, and his place is wholly what his father is to him and does for him. When converted and in the right road, he had not yet the best robe, nor his father on his neck, to make him in his own consciousness and actual place what the father's thoughts were towards him.¹⁹

“When we were in the flesh” in this context does not mean before a person was quickened.²⁰ Gentiles, before quickening, were sinners of the Gentiles, “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). The nations were not under the law (Rom. 2:14). To say that this phrase refers, in this context, to a person's unregenerate state is to set aside the true meaning of Romans 7. This person, when in the flesh, is quickened and is pictured as under law; and needs deliverance from *that* state.

The reason why some persons who believe the man of Rom. 7:7-23 is sealed will not have it that he is “in the flesh” is because Rom. 8:9 says, “But *ye* are not in flesh but in Spirit, if indeed God's Spirit dwell in you. . . .” To admit that the man in Rom. 7 is “in the flesh” is to admit that he is not sealed.

So the man in Rom. 7 is in the flesh because though quickened, is yet in his conscience under law, as to position before God. Such was the position of Old Testament saints under the law. Not that they knew about what it was to be in the flesh. “The distinction of flesh and Spirit is founded on the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and the

possession of the Spirit promised by Christ, and the present fruit of His redemption work.”²¹

The law aroused and brought to light “passions of sins.” Sins are committed; passions lie within us and give rise to actions. The penalty of the law is death and so what was “wrought in our members” does the opposite of bearing “fruit to God” (v. 4); rather, there is “fruit to death” (v. 5). The first husband, the law, said, “Don't do it.” The controlling passions of sins prevail and she does it. Sin was there and the law could not control it. The law gives nothing. It demands, and curses disobedience with death. However, when the new nature stands in relationship with the second husband, the Spirit is there as power.

Verse 5, then, speaks of four things that are connected:

- in the flesh
- passions of sins
- by the law
- fruit to death

IN THE FLESH -- IN SPIRIT

The NIV translators do not understand what it means to be “in the flesh” as found in Rom. 7:5. Hence they change a perfectly good translation in the KJV to “For when we were controlled by the sinful nature . . .” (NIV), though for “sinful nature” a footnote says, “Or *the flesh*; also in verse 25.” Note that the footnote does not say “in the flesh.” Being controlled by the flesh is not the same thing as being “in the flesh,” which is the standing of the first man, i.e., man viewed in his Adamic responsibility.

In Rom. 8, *sarx* (*Englishman's Greek Concordance*, pp. 680, 681), i.e., “flesh,” is translated “sinful nature,” “sinful man,” “sinful mind” in the NIV.

The man of Rom. 7 is born of God but is not delivered (v. 24; “rescued,” NIV). He has the “inward man” (v. 22; “inner being,” NIV). He is captive to the law of sin, however (v. 23), from which one who has the Spirit is set free, or delivered, as Rom. 8:2 shows. The man in Rom. 7, then, as to his standing, in conscience, is on the ground of law in principle (not necessarily *the* law of Moses, although in some cases it is so, practically). The law addressed man regarded as in the flesh, in the Adam standing. The man in Rom. 7 is, in conscience, on this ground before God and is “in the flesh,” the “inward man” (the new nature) unsuccessfully struggling for victory until he looks away from within, for power, to Christ (v. 24, 25) and is then sealed with the Spirit. Rom. 8 then takes up the new place and power for one who is in Christ.

“But ye are not in flesh but in Spirit . . .” (JND; Rom. 8:9). This states the power (the Spirit) of the new life. The NIV reads, “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature, but by the Spirit . . .,” perhaps implying that external control is imposed on the person, which is something quite different.

JND helps us on Rom. 8:9, “. . . but if any one has not [the] Spirit of Christ he is not of him.” Interestingly, A.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

18. *Collected Writings* 26:161. See also J. A. Trench, *op. cit.*, 1:12, 13.

19. *Collected Writings* 31:260,261.

20. W. R. Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse*, p. 253, would have it that this phrase refers to Jewish believers, “otherwise verse 5 becomes unintelligible.” I do not think it does so in the least.

21. Letters of J. N. Darby 3:394.

Marshall reads, “. . . this one is not of him.” The NIV reads, “. . . and if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.” Where do they get the second “Christ” from? This is interpretation, not translation. “. . . not of him” does not mean that the person is not Christ’s in any sense whatsoever. The man in a Rom. 7 condition is safe for the glory but not having “the Spirit of Christ” is therefore “not of him”; i.e., not in the full Christian position of being “in Christ.” “The Spirit of Christ” denotes the Spirit as the formative power of Christ in the soul. This the man of Rom. 7 does not have though he has the “inward man.” The man of Rom. 7 does not have deliverance from the power of sin in his own soul as he himself confesses (Rom. 7:24). He says he is a “captive to the law of sin” (v. 23). This shows he does not have “liberty”; “. . . but where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is, there is] liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17). Rom. 8:2 states that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death, thus showing that the man of Rom. 7, who is “captive to the law of sin,” is not under the “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” He has not the indwelling of the Spirit; though as having the “inner man” we see he is born again.

It is clear, then, that the man of Rom. 7 has not the Spirit but the man of Rom. 8 does. Rom. 8:9 means that such a person as ch. 7 describes has not the Spirit of Christ, is not under “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” The man of ch. 7 is safe for glory, but he is “not of him” in the sense of being in the true Christian position -- delivered, “in Christ” and “in the Spirit.”

“**In the flesh**” denotes one in the Adam standing and responsibility. The man in Rom. 7 is, *in conscience*, before God, in such a position, though he has the inward man.

“**In the Son**” denotes source of life, relationship and character of life, *with knowledge of the Father*.

“**In Christ**” generally denotes place and standing as accepted in Him.

“**In the Spirit**” denotes the characterizing power to express the true position “in Christ.”

flesh but in Spirit . . .” (Rom. 8:9).

The last half of v. 6 tells us the object of being “clear from the law” is “so that we serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter.” Obviously, “the letter” is the law. There is an outward thing that speaks of death and that is baptism (Rom. 6:4) and that has in view a walk in newness of life; i.e. “life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2). Here, clearance from the law is with a view to service in newness of spirit. The man in Romans 7 has the spirit of a hired servant (Luke 15:19) and serves, under the legal principle, in that spirit. Service in newness of spirit is to serve in loving and responsive sonship, led of the Spirit.

In summary, Rom. 7:1-6 describes two states and positions:

- (1) Alive under law (v. 1) and in the flesh (v. 5) as to state and standing; with passions of sins bringing forth fruit to death. Such a person, as to headship, is in Adam.
- (2) Dead to the law by the body of Christ (as having died and being free of the first husband, to be to the second husband); and bearing fruit to God (v. 4), serving in newness of spirit (v. 6). Such a person, as to headship, is in Christ.

Romans 8 gives us the state and standing of the second case (Rom. 6 gives the doctrine of it); while Rom. 7:7-23 speaks of the first case -- to which we turn in detail in the next chapter.

The New: Clear from the Law, Having Died Romans 6:7

But now we are clear from the law, having died in that in which we were held, so that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter (Rom. 6:7).

Notice that the law has not died. Indeed, text says that the law “held” persons. But the Christian has died in that in which he was held. We have died to the former state of being alive under law and are thus clear from the law (Rom. 7:1). One not under law is under grace (Rom. 6:14), free from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2). Of such a one it can be rightly said, “But ye are not in

Chapter 3.5

Romans 7:7-20: The State Under The First (Husband) Manifested

Introduction

We now enter upon an account of the experience of an undelivered man by one who is delivered. Before entering into the details of this portion of Scripture, some introductory remarks are in order. Rom. 7:7-23 describes a born again person:

1. He has the "inward man" (Rom. 7:22).
2. He has a changed understanding (Rom. 7:17).
3. He has a changed will (Rom. 7:19).

But concerning his state, he is captive to the law of sin (Rom. 7:23). In view of this, A. C. Ord asked,

Can any reasonable person accept the statement that the believer here is not only sealed, but "in the enjoyment of a liberty of which he knows not the first terms."²²

It seems to me that the result of such teaching that all is possessed from the first moment of quickening leads to this. The reader will have to judge of this in the light of the following Scriptures:

But where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty (2 Cor. 3:17).

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace (Rom. 6:14).

Now, having got your freedom from sin . . . (Rom. 6:18)

Rom. 7:4 spoke of bearing fruit to God. However, it must not be supposed that Rom. 7:7-23 is merely about fruitfulness. Rom. 7:4 itself pointed out that fruitfulness is the result of death coming in. W. Story remarked:

Is not death the end of man in the flesh? and the man is dead in the 6th chapter -- **not only dead but buried**. How then can he be made alive in the 7th chapter 7-24? He is not made alive, it is the state of a man, seeking his standing on the ground of the first man, a living man, not a dead man at all. The law is the measure for that man. He is not under grace, he is earnestly seeking to maintain his cause on the ground of law. He finds no fruit, no life, no deliverance. It is not a question of seeking fruit only, it is also the fullness of life and deliverance. If this is seen it will be clear that it cannot be the orderly sequence in experience of the man in the 6th chapter. There the man has eternal life in Christ, has "fruit unto holiness," is made free from sin (deliverance), not sins forgiven, but made FREE FROM SIN (Rom. 6:22).

Now we will look at Col. 1:5: "The word of the truth of the Gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the

world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth." And thus we see that fruitfulness is there **at once**, when the Gospel comes in power to the soul, and the **grace of God** is known in truth.²³

The fact is that Rom. 7:7-23 is not about a saint seeking fruitfulness. It concerns the seeking of power over indwelling sin. The matter of fruitfulness arises when deliverance has been realized.

Notice also that the chapter involves more than a conflict between the old and new natures. It is indeed a conflict, but a conflict of two natures **when the conscience is under law as its standing before God** -- the person being alive under law. The chapter describes the experimental process that brings the soul to identification with Christ in His death -- and into the state and standing to which the above cited Scriptures apply.

No one who speaks of law and being under it has ever known the wickedness of his own heart.²⁴

Since Galatian legalism is sometimes confounded with Rom. 7, let me say that the Galatians began in the Spirit and wanted to be made perfect by the law -- foolishness indeed. But we must not confuse wilderness behavior with the subject of deliverance.

In Rom. 7 it is a question of acceptance, not knowing oneself accepted before God as in a forgiven position. After deliverance, a question of acceptableness, or agreeableness of behavior, may arise, but that is altogether a different matter.

Rom. 7:7-11: The Sentence of Death Written in the Conscience

ROMANS 7:7

What shall we say then? [is] the law sin? Far be the thought. But I had not known sin, unless by law: for I had not had conscience also of lust unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust.

Since v. 6 had stated that we who are in the Christian position "are clear from the law," the question might be raised, "Is the law sin?" No. That is not the trouble. Rather, the law brings home to the soul that sin dwells within. What is meant by sin dwelling within? **Sin** refers to that nature acquired in the fall that renders a person unsubject to the will of God. It is the root

22. *The teaching of Scripture . . . on Spiritual Life and the Sealing of the Holy Ghost*, p. 48.

23. Story, W., *A Brief Review of a Book Entitled "Life in Christ and Sealing With the Holy Ghost"*, p. 28.

24. *The Bible Treasury* 13:274.

principle of evil denoting an incorrigible nature within. Thus one sins (commits sinful acts) because he has a sin-nature that loves to sin. "But I had not known sin, unless by law." The law is here regarded as the detector of sin within. The natural man does not take cognizance of lust working within because of this nature here called sin. How sin is known by the law is this: "I had not had conscience also of lust unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust" (Rom. 7:7; Ex. 20:17).

"Sin" utilizes the law's prohibition and provokes the will into lust. **Lust**, "the will in evil," is the first movement of the nature called sin. It is having a desire without reference to the will of God. The law, by saying "thou shalt not lust," causes the conscience to take cognizance of lust, which leads to taking cognizance of the disposition from which it springs -- namely, sin. That is, lust being forbidden causes one to consider where the lust comes from, namely the sin-nature.

Sin as a nature was, of course, in the world before the law of Moses, but souls did not take account of it: "for by law [is] knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20).

ROMANS 7:8

But sin, getting a point of attack by the commandment, wrought in me every lust; for without law sin [was] dead.

This explains that the commandment serves to manifest sin to the conscience (mentioned in v. 7). The prohibition provokes the will of the flesh, or sin, and stirs up lust -- in opposition to the commandment; and thus the conscience becomes active with respect to these lusts.

"Without law sin [was] dead" does not mean that sin was inactive, or dormant, or non-existent. Keep in mind that v. 7 has brought the conscience before us in this matter. Sin was dead, without law, with respect to the conscience. The conscience took no cognizance of sin or lust until the commandment came, and in this sense sin was dead. It means that sin was unstirred into activity by lack of a prohibition.

ROMANS 7:9-11

But I was alive without law once; but the commandment having come, sin revived, but I died. And the commandment, which [was] for life,²⁵ was found, [as] to

25. "I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life . . ." (Rom. 7:10, NIV).

"And the commandment, which [was] for life . . ." (JND).

A. Marshall has, "the commandment for [eis] life,"

while W. Kelly has, "the commandment that (was) unto life."

It seems to me that we find a theological system at work in the NIV. The fact is that the law could not impart (eternal) life, or anything else. It required something from man; but "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). The law demanded; but Christ imparts something. The law was "for life" in that if one kept it, he would not die. Perfect law-keeping does not impart eternal life, but the natural life would continue. God did not intend that man should have life by that way. Why was the law given? What was God's intention?

Now we know that whatever things the law says, it speaks to those under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be under judgment to God (Rom. 3:19).

Rom. 8:2 in the NIV seems to indicate that the translators do not understand these subjects. The NIV says, ". . . because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free . . .," whereas JND renders this, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free . . ." A. Marshall essentially (continued...)

me, itself [to be] unto death: for sin, getting a point of attack by the commandment, deceived me, and by it shew [me].

Obviously the person does not literally die. The explanation is that the sentence of death is written in the conscience. So, without the law he was alive; i.e., the sentence of death was not written in the conscience. "I was alive" as a child of Adam without the consciousness of indwelling sin. When the commandment came, sin revived; i.e., sin was provoked into activity, producing lust. The law discovered to me the evil nature because of the imposed restraint. Thus the sentence of death was written in the conscience by the law which said, "Do this, and thou shalt live." (This did not refer to eternal life, but to continuous living in the world as not earning the wages of sin.) The man, believing he had power to obey God (like advocates of moral free-will) was deceived. Sin, using the commandment, slew him. J. N. D. remarked that "sin is personified as someone who seeks to kill the soul." Sin, then, by the instrumentality of the commandment, slew him, wrote the sentence of death in the conscience. This raises a question about the law itself, to which we now turn.

We must not confuse v. 9 with v. 1. "But I was alive once" means that the sentence of death was not written in the conscience in his unregenerate days. He was alive under law, in Adamic responsibility, nonetheless, as we have seen previously.

Rom. 7:12-13:

Law and Sin Contrasted

ROMANS 7:12

So that the law indeed [is] holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Verse 12 indicates that the person has learned that the law is the expression of what is right conduct for the creature. The commandment is:

1. **Holy.** We have seen that the law forbids lust. However, it brings nothing, but requires something of the creature. It cannot make the creature holy.
2. **Just.** This refers to its requirement of consistency in responsibility towards God and man.
3. **Good.** The source of the law is God, who is good.

Thus the soul may be on the ground of law in principle, in conscience, seeking self-power to carry out God's will.

I repeat, as it is important, wherever we reason from our state to what God's acceptance of us may be, that is, in principle, law, just as the prodigal son between his conversion and meeting his father. It calls itself holiness, will insist that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, which is necessarily and eternally true, but mixes it with God's acceptance of us, connecting this and our state, so that it is really righteousness, not holiness, that the mind is occupied with: for in holiness we hate evil because it is unholy, not because we are out of divine favor by it; but, whatever shape it takes, it is always really law, a question

25. (...continued)
agrees with JND.

of evil that makes us unacceptable to God.²⁶

ROMANS 7:13

Did then that which is good become death to me? Far be the thought. But sin, that it might appear sin, working [or, 'working out'] death to me by that which is good; in order that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

The words, "in order that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful," means that sin was always there, but the law discovered it to the conscience and showed how heinous it is. It was sin that brought death (i.e., the sentence of death) to the conscience by the instrumentality of the law. The law, then, exposed sin and its working to the conscience, that sin might appear in its true character. Keep in mind that sin is referring to the nature, not the acts.

If a child were commanded not to go near a precipice, but it goes, falls over and is killed, it was not the commandment that killed the child. The child had a will to disobey. That evil nature, sin, worked death to the child by that which was a good command. This somewhat illustrates v. 13 concerning what it is that works death. Also, it illustrates how the evil becomes "exceeding sinful" by wanting its way in direct defiance of the commandment.

Rom. 7:14-17: The Natures Manifested

ROMANS 7:14

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am fleshly, sold under sin.

"For we know that the law is spiritual" indicates that one who has been delivered and is in the characteristic Christian position is speaking. "We know" indicates Christian knowledge (cp. 1 Cor. 8). The delivered man is recounting the experience of the soul prior to receiving the deliverance. He tells us, too, that the law is spiritual.

Here also the spirituality of the law is seen, for it detects and judges sin in the nature, the principle of lust, which the law cannot but condemn²⁷

But while it is thus spiritual, there is no power in it for victory.

"But I am fleshly" is the state of a child of Adam. (The "I" is here identified with, and characterized by, the sin-nature.) Here is the trouble. The law can only condemn such a one. He is "sold under sin." This is an admission that sin does have dominion over him, but Rom. 6:14 says, "sin shall not have dominion over you." Rom. 6:14 is true of the delivered soul, whose state and standing is seen in Rom. 8. We also read, in Rom. 6:22, "But now, having got your freedom from sin . . ." Of whom is the apostle speaking? Why, those at Rome who were Christians -- enjoying liberty. The man of Rom. 7:14 is not in liberty; he is sold under sin and has not obtained freedom from sin. He is not in the Christian standing and state. He has not the Spirit indwelling (Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:17).

The Corinthians were carnal (1 Cor. 3:1), but it is a mistake to confound that with Rom. 7:14. 1 Cor. 3:1 is like Israel in the wilderness (fleshly walk as men), whereas Rom. 7:14 answers to Israel undelivered, before they crossed the Red Sea. The subjects are quite different. F. G. Patterson stated the difference in this way:

There are two words in the original tongue for "carnal" (σάρκινος and σαρκικός), the only difference being one letter. They are found in 1 Cor. 3:1 and Rom. 7:14, and elsewhere. One word is applied to the *standing* of an awakened {quickenened} man, still "in the flesh," that is, having the sense of his responsibility, as a child of Adam, and no deliverance before God. This is Rom. 7. The other is applied to saints, whose practical *state* was not spiritual: they "walked as men" (1 Cor. 3). This latter is opposed to the normal state of a saint as a "spiritual" man. We find in the context (1 Cor. 2, 3) the "natural," the "spiritual," and "the carnal man." The first a man merely with a natural soul unquickenened: the second, the normal state of the saint; the third, the saint walking after the flesh.²⁸

ROMANS 7:15

Next, he sees that he has a new will, but no power.

For that which I do, I do not own: for not what I will, this I do; but what I hate, this I practice.

To be sure, in this state he desires victory, but, alas, in order to be satisfied with himself. He would like to have self-power, but finds that he is mastered.

ROMANS 7:16, 17

But if what I do not will, this I practice, I consent to the law that [it is] right (v. 16).

His new will would do what God requires, but his practice is otherwise. Yet, the new will consents to the rightness of the law.

Next he learns to distinguish "I" from the indwelling sin.

Now then [it is] no longer I [that] do it, but the sin that dwells in me (v. 17).

There is an "I" of identity. There was a man named Adam before the fall, and a man named Adam after the fall. There was the "Adam" of identity, but after the fall he had in addition an evil nature besides the Adam of identity. The man in Rom. 7 has made some such distinction between his inmost being and the evil nature called sin.

Rom. 7:18-20: Experience of Helplessness

ROMANS 7:18

To learn that we are without strength (Rom. 5:6) is much harder to learn than that we are sinners and are ungodly. Arminianism thrives on finding something in the natural man upon which God can work. The quickened soul, however, must needs learn this, rather:

For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, good does not dwell: for to will is there with me, but to do right [I find] not.

26. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 29:458, 459.

27. Ord, A. C., *The Teaching of Scripture . . . on Spiritual Life and the Sealing of the Holy Ghost*, p. 47.

28. *A Chosen Vessel*, London: Morrish, p. 44, note, n.d.

The difference in vv. 14-17 compared with 18-20 is that in the former the point is that it was learned that he is “sold under sin,” while here the **helplessness** is more stressed: “but to do right [I find] not.” There is in his body a new will and understanding and also the inward man. But these are not in his flesh. Thus, he does not mean his body here when speaking of his flesh. “The mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be” (Rom. 8:7).

ROMANS 7:19, 20

For I do not practice the good that I will; but the evil I do not will, that I do. But if what I do not will, this I practice, [it is] no longer I [that] do it, but the sin that dwells in me.

Verse 20 ends with the same statement as v. 17. In vv. 14-17 he learned that he is “sold under sin.” It is one thing to recognize the fact; it is another to confess and own the helplessness experienced by that fact, as we have in vv. 18-20. He did not practice the good that his new will wanted to do. Rather, the evil that his new will rejected was the thing he did. So that the “I,” the “I” as identified with the new nature, was not the source of the evil done; it was indwelling sin operative within that dominated.

Note that no one with a new nature ever did only evil and never good. No one with a new will had ever only the will perfectly right and the conduct ever only evil. Verse 19 is abstract.

Romans 7:21-23: Experience of Captivity Under the Old is Acknowledged and Summarized

These three verses begin with three I’s: I find, I delight, I see.

ROMANS 7:21

I find then the law upon me who will to practice what is right, that with me evil is there.

There is a powerful enemy within. There is within me a law in operation. A law is a fixed, a uniform, principle of operation. This is the law of sin.

ROMANS 7:22

For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

Here we see that the person has “the inward man,” hardly a description of an unquickened person, as Arminians claim him to be. The unregenerate does not delight in the law of God though he may take it up as a religion, as did unregenerate Israelites in Moses’ day. It is utterly contrary to all of Scripture to suppose an unregenerate person delights in God’s law. To stay within Romans, see Rom. 3:9-19. An unregenerate person has the carnal mind (Rom. 8:7) and has no new nature that delights in God’s law. Delight in God’s law is according to what? the carnal nature? No, the inward man. Yet, we learn that even this being so, the new nature in itself is not power for the Christian. It gives capacity for divine things and a love of God’s will, but not power over the taskmaster, as we learn in Rom. 7. Such struggles are not there where there is no inward man.

ROMANS 7:23

But I see another law in my members, warring in opposition to the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which exists in my members.

“The law of my mind” is here mentioned for the first time. In Rom. 8:7 we read of “the mind of the flesh.” That stands in contrast to “the law of my mind” here. Rom. 8:7 refers to the will and desire of the flesh, the operation of the law of sin. That is “another law in my members.” The other, and opposite one, is “the law of my mind.” This refers to the will and desire of the new nature seen in moral character as subject to God’s will. There are two opposites in the person and clearly he is not an unregenerate person. To say that he is not quickened is to say that the first man is not entirely lost; that the first man has within him godly desires. It falsifies Christian truth and the first man’s true state before God.

The force of the evil law in our members directs the person into captivity to the law of sin. The law of sin holds the person captive. Now, this is not the Christian state and we have the explicit testimony of God’s word that the person in the Christian state and standing, sealed by the Spirit, is free from this dominion (Rom. 6:14, 22; Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:17).

Romans 7:24, 25: Deliverance Through Another

O wretched man that I [am]! who shall deliver me out of this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I myself with the mind serve God’s law; but with the flesh sin’s law.

It is indeed a wretched condition that is described, because it is self-occupation -- looking to self for power over sin. “Who shall deliver me” is the looking away from self to another for power to be delivered from this state.

In the notes on Rom. 7:5 we observed a statement by J. N. Darby:

What he is, not what Christ is, is the ground on which he judges of his state before God.²⁹

The person now looks away from what he is; and rests upon the Person and finished work of Christ for the knowledge of forgiveness of sins (recognizes the forgiven position) as the true basis of what he is before God. He believes the gospel of his salvation as Paul preached it. He recognizes that it is not merely forgiveness of past sins (Jewish, administrative forgiveness), but that God has provided a forgiven position.

And so he is sealed with the Spirit and delivered. “**Deliverance is known by sealing, as being in Christ.**”³⁰ “Where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is, there is] liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17). “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2).

The belief in the gospel of salvation (Eph. 1:12, 13) is what brings deliverance and sealing and the assurance of salvation. W. Kelly remarked,

Salvation always means a great deal more than that my sins are judged in the death of Christ. Salvation means that I am brought consciously to know God in the triumph of

29. *Collected Writings* 7:244.

30. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:120.

redemption by Christ for me. Hence it will be found that in the doctrine of the New Testament there is never the allowance of such a thought as that salvation is only the beginning of the blessing. People not imbued with scriptural truth are often apt to talk of salvation in a slighting or at least superficial way. They speak of a person perhaps as “not happy; but at any rate he is saved.” Never do we meet with language like this in the New Testament. Salvation means known conscious deliverance. It is not merely a good hope of being delivered, but that the person himself by grace has no doubt about it. Of this people often lose the true force by an unscriptural phraseology. Indeed the denial of salvation as a present status is part of the current coin of Christendom, and the truth is opposed in one way or another by the parties who otherwise oppose each other. Arminianism naturally resists it, as its doctrine causes salvation to turn largely on man’s deserts; while Calvinism would consent to salvation in “the purpose of God” or some jargon of the kind, while meanwhile the object of it may have no comfort, nor solid footing whatever for his soul. Far removed from both is the truth and language of Scripture; and to Scripture we must hold.³¹

Also, the quickened soul, while having divine life, but being undelivered and unsealed, does not have that life in connection with the risen corn of wheat. In sealing with the Spirit, that life is brought into a new association, with Christ risen, and that divine life may then be rightly called resurrection-life, even life in the Son, *which we have in connection with His risen manhood.*

Not only are the words “salvation” and “saved” used loosely, so is the word “believer.” A believer is one who has believed the gospel of salvation. The quickened but undelivered soul is not resting on the Person *and* work of Christ for the knowledge of forgiveness of sins, having no more conscience of sins (Heb. 10:2) -- he is quite conscious of sins as possibly hindering his acceptance. His thoughts and conscience are concerned about self before God, as to standing, and not what Christ is before God for him. And so while he believes in Christ he is not, properly speaking, a believer, i.e. one who is resting on *the work of Christ for him* as the basis of his position before God. The following answer to a question will clarify this further.

“A. N. L.” -- Does sealing take place immediately on believing; or, is it possible for a person to be a believer and not be sealed in this dispensation?

A. Sealing takes place at once on believing. Eph. 1:13 is plain on the subject: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed (or ‘having believed’) ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” The Apostle connects sealing with “the gospel of your salvation.” God’s salvation is announced by the gospel; I have believed in the gospel of my salvation, and forthwith I am sealed by the Spirit. A saved man is one who has no doubts.³² Scripture

never speaks of a man being “saved” who has any. We must not confound the state of many quickened souls with those who have believed. The action of God in quickening and in sealing are as distinct as possible. He quickens a sinner who wants life; He does not seal a sinner as such, surely; that were to seal him in his sins; nor does He seal a quickened soul in his misery. He does not seal Peter when he cried out “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5); or when the soul is crying out “O wretched man that I am.” He seals a believer; and “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;” not doubts, and bondage, and fears.

These two actions of the Holy Ghost are never, as far as I know, synchronous -- they do not happen at the same moment; while on God’s part there is of course no reason why it should not be so. Many cases testify as to this in Scripture.

The disciples were quickened before the day of Pentecost, yet they were not sealed till then. The Samaritans received the gospel and were quickened before Peter and John came down, and they were not sealed till then; (“as yet he was fallen upon none of them.” See Acts 8:5-17.) “There was great joy” we read, and there is often this without peace with God. Peace is a full and perfect word; it is far more than joy. A soul that has peace with God has been sealed by the Spirit. Paul was quickened by a voice from heaven (Acts 9:4), and yet he did not receive the Holy Ghost till the third day after, when he had gone through all the deep work in his soul for the three days. (See v.17.) Cornelius was a devout man, one that feared God, and prayed to God always -- a quickened soul. He is told to send for Peter to hear words of him, whereby he and all his house would be saved (Acts 11:14). God does not call him a saved man, as merely quickened. When Peter comes he does not tell him he must be born again, which as a sinner he needed and had been, but he points him to Christ, and they accept the message, and the Holy Ghost fell on them. You get the same thing in Acts 19; those at Ephesus who were quickened souls had not as yet received the Holy Ghost.

It is not possible for a person to be a believer in the present dispensation without being sealed. There are many quickened souls who are not sealed, but no Christian ever dies and passes away from this scene, where as to personal place the Holy Ghost is since Pentecost, without being sealed. This is why you see cases in which there was no liberty, or peace with God, enjoyed during the lifetime, with occasional gleams of joy; and yet when on a death-bed they have got perfect peace with God, and are sealed.

I think we use the word “believer” too indiscriminately, for every state of soul in which God is working. A believer in Scripture language is one who is sealed. Scripture allows but one basis, or normal condition, for Christians. When we come to look at the condition of souls we find that in many cases they are not there; while there is no reason on God’s part why they should not be.³³

Until the soul is delivered from captivity to the law of sin there is not the peace of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Certainly the man of Rom. 7 does not have settled peace! To have the peace of which Scripture speaks the soul needs to know forgiveness for what it has done *and* deliverance from captivity to the law of sin.

31. *Lectures Introductory to ... the Pentateuch*, pp. 163,164.

32. {Notice this. “A saved man is one who has no doubts.” That is, a person who has doubts is not sealed. We are not speaking, observe, about a person who was sealed and because of the character of his walk loses the joy of his salvation as a governmental consequence.

J. N. Darby remarked: “Those who speak of the sixth and tenth . . . [of] Hebrews certainly are not delivered.” What this means is that those who speak of these chapters as if they show a person can be lost again are not
(continued...)

32. (...continued)

delivered (and so, not sealed). I had long since come to this conclusion before finding these comments.)

33. *Words of Truth* 3:137-139.

J. N. Darby remarked,

Peace through forgiveness is, as to Christ's work, the evidence of faith in Christ's work, and that work received by faith is the ground of sealing: then one is delivered. . . The intelligence of sealing is the consequence of sealing.³⁴

This brings up a point. Perhaps you have heard that (1) Christ has delivered us from the guilt of sin; (2) He is delivering us from the power of sin; and (3) He will deliver us from the presence of sin. No. 2 is falsely stated. The sealed saint is not being delivered from, but *has been* delivered from, the law of sin (Rom. 8:2). This deliverance enables a Christian to apply the death of Christ practically in his walk.

The cry was for deliverance "out of this body of death" (Rom. 7:24). It also involves "the body of sin" (Rom. 6:6). Another explained "the body of sin," that it

signifies the whole condition of the natural man as fully subjected to sin and its dominion.³⁵

The result of this is death and so deliverance is sought from this result; deliverance "out of this body of death."

So then I myself with the mind serve God's law; but with the flesh sin's law (Rom. 7:25b).

This does not describe the state of the undelivered soul. It tells us that the two natures subsist in their respective disposition and character after the deliverance is experienced. "The law of my mind" (v. 23) is still the same; so is the flesh -- which desires to serve the law of sin. The character and disposition of the *two natures* does not change as a result of deliverance, but the person has now a new power within -- the Spirit of God.

Speaking in the language of the type at the Exodus, we may say that, among other things, deliverance brings us into the wilderness journey. Israel sang the song of salvation (the first recorded song in Scripture) when redemption in type was accomplished, having been delivered from the power of the taskmaster. But then came the wilderness experience. So we learn that the flesh never changes. We learn more about self and also what God is for us in spite of what we are in ourselves. And as we think of Israel in the wilderness, we realize that they never again were in the position they were in before they crossed the Red Sea. A soul never again is in Romans 7 though he may approximate it when he allows the flesh power over him. Still, he is in the wilderness, so to speak, as Israel was. The wilderness brings out the working of the flesh after deliverance. Numbers in particular records their fleshly conduct, but the wilderness is not Ex. 14.

One source of help on the subject of deliverance is the *Letters of J. N. Darby*, which every home ought to have. Here are the volumes and page numbers where comments may be found:

1:500;

2:351, 165, 147, 417-420, 431, 404-407, 452, 453, 351.

3:90, 91, 120, 169, 147, 148, 368-369, 155, 156, 434-436, 394, 3:506

See also his *Collected Writings* 31:265-270.

The "Sin-nature" Is not Put Off

Refer to Col. 2:11:

In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sin-nature (footnote: "or *the flesh*"), not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ (NIV).

In whom ye were also circumcised with circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ (JND).

In whom also ye were circumcised with a circumcision not handwrought by the putting off of the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ (Marshall).

If the putting off "the body of the flesh" is not the putting off "the sin nature," then the NIV has distorted the text and hidden the meaning from the reader. The putting off "the body of the flesh" refers to the flesh in its totality. As found in Colossians, which answers to the journey of Israel through the Jordan and just to Gilgal, where the reproach of Egypt was rolled away, it indicates that we are outside the first man, i.e., outside the standing we had in Adam as fallen.

The expression, *the body of the flesh*, is suitable to the teaching of circumcision found in Colossians. A body is circumcised, not a nature. It involves "sin being looked at as a principle characteristic of the body."³⁶ In Romans we read of "the body of sin" to which death applies.

The NIV is damaging to spiritual growth.

34. *Letters* 2:351.

35. *Words of Truth*, New Series 2:227.

36. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 27:256.

Chapter 3.6

Some Practical Considerations

The Practical Use of Deliverance

In the following letter I suppose J. N. Darby wrote about putting deliverance into practice.

... I know well how few know deliverance; but it is a great thing to know that I, a poor worm, should be before God and the Father in the same acceptance and favor that Christ is, loved even as He is loved. But it is the greatness of infinite love. Then it is not generally preached with intelligence; next, it is experimental; and, above all, we must be in earnest to have it. Who is willing to be dead to what nature and flesh would desire? Yet that is the only way of deliverance. People will tell you it is our standing in Christ. I admit it as Colossians 3, and as faith owns in Romans 7 and Galatians 2; but who is willing to be in the standing? It is standing, or else we are in the hopeless effort of Romans 7, or an honest monk's labor, which I have tried; and even if we have experimentally learned, as it must be learned, who is carrying out 2 Corinthians 4 so as to have the conscience living in it by an ungrieved spirit? But if experimentally taught, it is of the greatest use to souls; and the joy of being blameless in Christ before God is exceeding great, and one that is eternal and divine in its source and nature -- a wonderful thing; "for he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." The world is a terrible snare, and a subtle one, and greatly hinders this deliverance. A soul enjoying deliverance has its object elsewhere. (See Rom. 8.) Then we must remember, "the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." I press, when souls are in earnest, "My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness." For we learn we are without strength for deliverance, and walk in the sense of it if we can be used in service; but His grace is sufficient. Knowing we are nothing is the place of blessing, for then God is everything; and the place of strength, for then Christ can put forth His strength.³⁷

What About Unsealed Souls at Death?

W. Kelly wrote,

There are no souls that have looked to Christ but what God will give them the Spirit of adoption, and they will thus be brought into full blessing. But often this may be upon a death-bed, which ought not to be the case with a Christian.³⁸

Another remarked,

There are many quickened souls who are not sealed, but no Christian ever dies and passes from this scene, where as to personal place the Holy Ghost is since Pentecost, without being sealed. This is why you see cases in which there was no liberty, or peace with God, enjoyed during the lifetime, with occasional gleams of joy; and yet when on a deathbed they have got perfect peace with God, and are sealed.³⁹

What About Old Testament Saints and Romans 7?

The question that arises is this: since Old Testament saints were not sealed with the Spirit, was their state as is described in Romans 7? The answer is no. J. B. P. wrote:

... They had simple childlike faith in God, and in His Word, -- a faith given by God in the coming Messiah, sustained by Him, and which God did not disappoint, for He uses this resource in this world, and afterwards took them to heaven. But to apply to them, either as regards spiritual intelligence, state, or condition, truth, which for its revelation and subjective realization depended on the accomplishment of atonement, and on the descent of the Holy Ghost, is altogether a mistake, and (though unintentionally) disparages virtually the work and person of our Lord. The Epistle to the Romans, for example, is written from a Christian standpoint: the spiritual experience and privileges, therein spoken of, must be taken as in the light of Christianity, and can be understood only from the Christian position, and by the Christian sense. The sins of the Old Testament saints are said simply to have been "passed over," or pretermitted (Rom. 3:25). In fact the value and effect of the work of Christ could be known, in the intelligence and power of the Spirit, only after Christ had suffered, been raised, and was glorified. And the personal and practical state is necessarily and at all times contingent on the revelation which God gives, varying in degree with it in such a way that whilst in each dispensation individual and personal faith and apprehension varied, yet dispensational light, state, standing and privilege vary also, as a whole and as a system, -- the Christian economy being the climax and perfection of all, and justification of life, and life in resurrection, being characteristically Christian privilege. In Rom. 7:14-24 the man spoken of has light beyond that of an Old Testament saint, but not up to the full Christian standard. As to the divine nature there was that in the saints of Old Testament times which through grace enabled them to please God up to the light He gave them. They were born of God, and

37. *Letters* 3:90, 91 (1880).

38. *Galatians*, pp. 66, 67. Cp. *Letters* 3:117.

39. *Words of Truth* 3:138.

therefore feared, trusted, and obeyed God. But we must distinguish between the quickening grace of the Spirit, and the Spirit as indwelling and so the seal of accomplished righteousness. “Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you,” could not have been said till the Spirit was given. It is a test now, but would have been no test then, because, though born of God and by the Spirit, they had not the gift of the Spirit. Nor in their case was the distinction brought to light between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit, because flesh and Spirit were not then known to be irreconcilable. Without this profound and Spirit-taught knowledge, they simply walked in the fear of God, and with the sense of His mercy which enabled them to say, “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord; for in Thy sight shall no flesh be justified;” whereas the Christian knows that he will never come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life.

As soon as our Lord came into the world, hearts were opened to see in Him the Savior, and to receive Him as such. Simeon takes up the blessed Infant in his arms and said, “Now lettest Thou Thy servant, O Lord, depart in peace according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.” And when thirty years after, that Blessed Man, anointed with the Holy Ghost, went forth upon His mission, far surpassing any that the Old Testament saints knew was the privilege of those who saw, heard, and received Him. In short His appearance in the world constituted an epoch (1 John 1), a fresh starting point in every sense, and in all God’s dealings with men, either spiritually or temporally. Saints were not merely quickened but made “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,” with the Spirit of adoption given to enjoy it and cry to the Father.⁴⁰

Subsequent Conflict

Romans 7 and deliverance is a question of the conscience not knowing **acceptance**. One under law, in conscience, with the sentence of death written there, could not know acceptance in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6).

After deliverance, it is a question of being **acceptable**, or agreeable, to God in our conduct. Are we manifesting our deliverance in practice, are we enjoying our liberty (freedom from self to please only Him)?⁴¹

In contrasting the two situations, J. N. Darby wrote,

... conflict with one who ties me down is different from conflict with one whom I have power to tie down.⁴²

Israel’s deliverance at the Red Sea (typifying Christ’s death and resurrection for us) brought them into the wilderness; and the wilderness is the place of the detection of the workings of the flesh after deliverance.

With the preaching of a fuller, clear gospel a soul may be quickened during the preaching and believe on the work for

the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and be sealed. He still must learn self, but this will be a modified form of learning self compared to being actually in the Rom. 7 state. J. N. Darby wrote,

... In my case, like thousands of others, before I got forgiveness I had found out what I was; I learned the seventh before I learned the third. But when a full gospel is preached and forgiveness known, the knowledge of self will still be by law, but the form of it is modified. The way more often is, “I hope I am not deceiving myself; I thought I was forgiven. How is it I do so-and-so? how is it I find this power of sin still here?” The flesh is never changed. The truth is they are distinct points, and treated apart; only self-knowledge is the deeper point, and so treated last. But it is law, not for condemnation, but powerless to free, though it may kill and condemn too. (Compare 2 Cor. 3.)⁴³

Again, I repeat, it [Rom. 7] is not the state of one who has been set free, but of one who has not: and this paper plunges the truth and souls into confusion by seeking to make out that it is the condition of one who has received the Holy Ghost. It is not that there are not those who have the Spirit, who may not have to pass through the experience in a modified way, as the effect of bad teaching or not having previously learned themselves; but this is not Romans 7 in the principle and true force of its instruction. Of course it is the experience of “a saint,” if by saint is meant one who has been truly born of God. All question of fruitfulness only comes after the “saint” has been set free from the bondage of sin.⁴⁴

I would add, as a further help, that if there is heart indifference, or even sloth, it is not surprising that we do not find deliverance, or if there is a walk contrary to the mind of the Spirit, or what a Christian should seek, deliverance by the power of the Spirit is hardly to be looked for. But further, if a person who has found deliverance is so walking, though the soul may not get back into uncertainty as to its standing, or return into a state of Romans 7, yet the Spirit which is the power of this new state, being ever grieved, and so communion with the Father and the Son lost, though not the knowledge of the relationship, the affections not being filled with what belongs to this new position -- all is confusion and obscurity in the soul. One is a child, but where is my father? I belong to heaven, but where for me is the heaven I belong to? What I know of both serves but to make me sensible of my actual loss of them. Hence, though it is not subjectively a question whether I am a son, it is objectively a failure of what a son enjoys, so that darkness is on the spirit. I hardly know whether I can call myself so, though I do not doubt it. For this the only remedy is humiliation, and drawing near to the Lord, and giving up the hindering idol.

In dealing with the souls of others, the first point is to discern whether the soul is really delivered, or if it be negligence when it has understood its position in Christ before God. This is a matter of spiritual discernment. Where there is a legal and self-judging temperament, it is not always so easy. And we must remember that there are

40. *The Bible Treasury* 15:19.

41. See *Collected Writings* 32:326.

42. *Letters* 3:147.

43. *Collected Writings* 21:179. See also vol. 29:458,459; 31:279; 26:407,408; 23:334; 21:179; *Letters* 2:418, 419, old ed.).

44. J. A. Trench, *An Answer to “Life and the Spirit,”* p. 13.

many true souls who do cry, Abba Father, with God, but through bad teaching are afraid to take their place in acceptance; these we must seek to make clear by the word.⁴⁵

Galatian Error

The Christian reader may perhaps ask the following question, viz.: If the one in Romans 7 is not sealed, how is it that my experience answers apparently in so many respects to the state described in Romans 7? I reply, that it does answer apparently, but only apparently; but the reader may respond-- But I am sometimes wretched, just as the one in Romans 7 is wretched; yes, and it may be true that one who has been sealed may be wretched as well as the one in Romans 7, but this by no means proves that even the experience of the two are alike.

Now in order to understand the apparent similarity, and at the same time the real difference in the experience of one in Romans 7 and of one who is sealed, it is needful to turn to the epistle to the Galatians, which is addressed to those who, after being sealed, desired, through the deceitfulness of the flesh, to be under law, for this is the result of the flesh acting in the Christian, who may thereby be entangled again in the yoke of bondage, may yield his members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, may seek to become perfect by the flesh, and be wretched. (See Gal. 5:1; 3:3; 5:15 and 26; and Rom. 6:13.)

The experience of the Galatian saint may be in many respects apparently similar to the experience of the one in Romans 7, but the Galatian saint is not in the flesh, though the flesh is in him, and his experience, when rightly understood, is quite different from that of the one in Rom. 7.

The Galatians, being Gentiles, had never been under the law, but had been amongst those who had been carried away to dumb idols (1 Cor. 12:2). From this state of blindness and lawlessness they had been delivered, and the apostle could write to them as those who were the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, who were standing in the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free, and who had received the Spirit of the Son into their hearts by which they cried, "Abba, Father." They had run well, but became hindered from obeying the truth, and were desiring to be under law, and were observing (as many now do) days, and months, and times, and years. The apostle designates them as turning again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto they desired again to be in bondage. This is remarkable as showing that the Galatians, in desiring to be under law, were turning to the very principles which they had followed as heathens. In order to preserve them from such foolishness, he shows that those Jews who, like himself, had been under the law, but who had believed in Christ, were under it no longer, and writes to them thus, viz., "But before faith came, we were kept under law" (Gal. 3:23); "The law was our schoolmaster unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24); "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the principles of the world, but when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, come of woman, come under law, to redeem them that were under law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:3, 4, 5).

Now, after faith had come, those who, as the apostle, had been under the law were no longer under a schoolmaster (Gal. 3:25); they were then the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26); and thus having become sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). Their position was thus completely changed, they had passed from the first state described in Rom. 7 to the second state therein described.

It is well to notice that although faith is not once mentioned in Rom. 7, yet faith is shown in the exclamation, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and thereupon instead of "I" and "me," mentioned in almost every verse of the latter part of Romans 7, we find the Spirit (who is not once mentioned in Romans 7) mentioned more than a dozen times in the first 16 verses of chapter 8. It is by the hearing of faith that we receive the Spirit (Gal. 3:2).

The Galatians were sealed, and though not in the flesh (Rom. 8:9), yet the flesh was in them, and its influence for evil is seen in the legality from which the apostle labors so earnestly to deliver them. This legality was manifest from their desire to be under law (Gal. 4:21), and the seeking to be made perfect in flesh (Gal. 3:3), and produced very sad results, for they seemed to count the apostle, who told them the truth, as their enemy (Gal. 4:16), they turned to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto they desired again to be in bondage (4:9), they did not obey the truth (5:7), but listened to those who were not rightly zealous after them, and who troubled them (4:17 and 5:10), and it was necessary to warn them not to bite and devour one another, lest they should be consumed one of another (5:15), and to exhort them not to be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another (5:26).

Such are some of the results when one who is sealed turns to law, he has begun in the Spirit, but afterwards seeks to be made perfect in the flesh; but he is never again in the state described in the 7th of Romans, though being wretched and entangled again with the yoke of bondage he may believe that such chapter describes his experience.⁴⁶

A Worldly, Careless Walk

There are other causes of subsequent distress, such as a worldly, careless walk. In his paper "Deliverance From the Law of Sin," J. N. Darby wrote,

... You cannot accuse a dead man of a perverse will or evil lusts. But the flesh is in me. Now, captive to the law of sin in my members is not the place of conflict nor of victory, any more than Israel had to fight in Egypt. There may be carelessness as regards our communion with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; but this is only deadness of soul, and the power of present things, the want of spiritual feeling. But if we do not mortify the deeds of the body, there is a positive evil power at work, positive evil rises up; if there be conscience, the sense of a bad state is there, and a worse one if there be not -- the spiritual judgment is deteriorated. The flesh has a power which does

46. A. B. Pollock, *Remarks on Romans 7*, pp.10-12. See also *Collected Writings* 31:261, and W. Story, *A Brief Review of a Book Entitled "Life in Christ and Sealing With the Spirit,"* pp. 22,27.

not answer to deliverance, and we see persons who have not lost the sense of their standing with God, and are in that sense at liberty, in whom the flesh works as if spiritual power in Christ were not there.

Now, in such cases, the remedy is not to deny the deliverance; "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." Entangling the soul again in the yoke of bondage is not what gives power. Slaves are not combatants, the yoke has to be broken. Where there is liberty and spiritual power, there is conflict. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." Hence it is so beautifully put in the end of Romans 6. Now you are free, dead to sin, and alive in Christ to God, to whom are you going to give yourselves? to sin, or to righteousness and God, with fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life? Such is God's way, by freeing us from the law of sin, and putting us in the liberty of adoption with Himself, to set us in the conflict, to realize fruit unto holiness here. Our standing is perfect, our state in no way; . . . Still, down here, we are passing through temptations and snares, and watching and praying constantly is needed not to enter into them, because the disposition of nature, if not will, is there. Power is there in Christ for us. We are not under the law of sin, but spiritually free, and there is no excuse for failure, but we do all fail. Where there is not diligence in watching and praying, we do not lose the sense of our position, but we act inconsistently with it. A son may never for a moment have such a question rise in his mind, but he may be a naughty, rebellious son.

So sin has power over the unwatchful unpraying believer, who yet never doubts of his place in Christ when he has been set free. He is not a slave, but a son, but more faulty than if he were a slave. He is not under the law of sin, but he is practically governed by it in his ways, because he is not profiting by the grace and power of Christ, his conscience and heart keeping far away from Him. The standard of his Christianity becomes frightfully lowered, and he sees "no harm" in things from which, in times past, he would have shrunk -- not because they were prohibited, but because the life and Spirit of Christ in him found no food or attraction in them, but the contrary. Yet he may not have lost the sense of his place before God; in that sense he has deliverance, as a child goes on in the sense that he is a child, though heedless of his father's will, and of his father's pleasure. But this is a sad state. The remedy is not making him doubt of his adoption, but pressing with the claim of Christ's love his walking worthy of the calling wherewith he is called.⁴⁷

Instead of making certain cases a rule by which to interpret Scripture, "we are not to make human inconsistency the criterion of divine truth, but the reverse."⁴⁸

Defective Teaching

Some difficulties after deliverance are caused by defective teaching.

Now when Christ is at all truly preached, even where the efficacy of His work is not clearly applied, still what has that efficacy is placed before the soul as a truth. According to

ordinary evangelical ministry, people are told they must be born again -- quite true -- and to examine themselves if they are; and if the value of Christ's blood is spoken of, they are carefully warned and guarded, lest they should have any false confidence, not to deceive themselves, etc. The effect is, that the mass (where the word reaches the soul) remain in the spirit of bondage, and searching their own state to see if God can accept them; the ground may be laid, but are they fit for heaven? the efficacy of the blood being a resource at the end of their career, many truths for living by, as men say, one to die by. 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, they 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, that is, 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. Let watchfulness, diligence of heart, the fear of God, working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, be pressed on the redeemed and saved with all diligence, but on such as such, and when they are such. For though we have the assurance of being kept and confirmed to the end by divine power, yet if we are redeemed, and because we are, we have the wilderness to pass, where all is sifted and tried in us (John 10; 1 Cor. 1) . . .⁴⁹

47. *Collected Writings* 32:329-331. See pp. 324, 325. See also 29:461, 462; A. P. Cecil, *A Sequel in Answer to the Tract on "Life in Christ and Sealing With the Spirit,"* pp. 26, 27.
48. A. C. Ord, *The Teaching of Scripture on the Subject of Spiritual Life and the Sealing of the Holy Ghost* . . . p. 50.

49. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 31:279. Cp. p. 276. See also: J. A. Trench, *op. cit.*, p. 23; W. Story, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-28; A. P. Cecil, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 27.

Chapter 3.7

In Christ, and the Flesh in Us

In Christ, and the Flesh in Us

"I know a man in Christ" (2 Cor. 12:2)

by H. H. Snell

... The sense of guilt has been cleared, in divine grace, by the death and blood-shedding of Jesus once for all; who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, suffered for sins, and died for our sins under the judgment of God. Thus all our need, as to sins and guilt, has been fully met in righteousness, and all who believe are justified by His blood, justified from all things. Instead, then, of guilt we have a purged conscience, for we know that all is now clear between us and God. Our sins and iniquities He will remember no more. Instead of imputing sins, He accounts us righteous, so that we have "no more conscience of sins," are no longer guilty, but justified freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. It is God who justifies. We are also delivered from condemnation, because, when law was unable to produce good in us, on account of the unclean and corrupt qualities of our nature, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as a sacrifice for sin, condemned our old evil nature -- "sin in the flesh." Thus our old man, with its sinful passions and lusts, has been crucified with Christ; we have died with Him, who, in such wondrous grace, was made sin for us; who became our Substitute, and bore that condemnation which was due to us. The whole condemning power of God on account of sin having been poured upon Jesus, there is no condemnation left for us. Hence we are assured, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

But sin is the master of man naturally -- it has dominion over him. Sin reigns unto death. He is the slave of sin, and cannot free himself. But God, in His grace, has set the believer free. He has died unto Christ, his Substitute. Neither sin nor law can have anything to say to a dead man. He that is dead is set free, or justified, from sin. You cannot charge a dead man with lust. Being then set free from sin, and become an object of divine favor, it is said of such, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but 'under grace.'" We are delivered, and brought to God. We are become servants to God. What an unutterable difference between being a slave of sin and a servant to God. We are alive to God in Christ, that "henceforth we should live, not to ourselves, but to him who died for us, and rose again." His death has brought us deliverance as well as peace. By it we have been for ever freed from guilt, condemnation, and the dominion of sin. Blessed indeed it is to grasp these precious realities.

We must not, however, forget that God has not only wrought, in His exceeding grace, to save us from wrath, but

has acted agreeably to His own goodness and nature. Nothing less could suit Him than that we should be before Him in love, in conscious nearness and relationship in eternal glory. He is therefore bringing many sons to glory. Jesus once suffered for sins that He might bring us to God. Redemption is God's way of bringing us to Himself; the wisdom, work, and results are all for His glory, as well as for our eternal blessing. It was necessary, therefore, that the whole question of sin should be settled in righteousness, for the glory of God, as well as to meet our need. Atonement was for God; it fully answered the just demands of His throne. In this way God has been glorified, and we have been cleansed, delivered, and brought to God as purged worshipers.

God has also given us life -- a risen and eternal life. It is His own gracious gift. Blessed be God! We read, "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." It is life in Him who is risen from among the dead, and given to us as a present possession, to be known in activity and power in our soul. God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11, 12). Christ, then, is our life, and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death" {Rom. 8:2}. Christ lives in us, and we are in Him. We are, then, associated with Christ in life -- a risen and eternal life. Hence we are addressed as "risen with Christ," and consequently exhorted to "set our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." The believer has passed out of death and into life. This transition scripture fully recognizes. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. We have also received the gift of the Holy Ghost. "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

The believer, therefore, is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit -- he is in Christ; he has died out of his old Adam standing in the death of Jesus, and has been quickened, raised up, and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. He has been brought out, and brought in. Hence scripture speaks of us as "accepted in the Beloved," "complete in him," "preserved in Christ Jesus," and "sanctified in Christ Jesus." We are a new creation in Him who is Head of all principality and power, are always before God in Christ, in all His acceptability and nearness, and loved by the Father as He loves the Son. This is where redemption has brought us, where divine perfect love has set us, so that we may have boldness in the day of judgment,

because as He is, so are we in this world. We have died unto sin, died with Christ, and are alive unto God in Him. Having received remission of sins, we are united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, joined to the Lord -- one spirit. This is a man in Christ. "We were in the flesh," but having died with Christ, and risen with Him, we have eternal life in Him, and are united to Him by the Spirit.

The great trouble of every believer is not so much what he has done as what he is. It is the painful consciousness of having this evil nature -- pride, self-will, and lust cropping up within, even if it does not come out. And the more his desire to live for the glory of God, the greater his sorrow at the garment being spotted by the flesh. This is his greatest enemy, his constant opponent, that upon which Satan and the world can act, and which neither time nor circumstances can improve, so desperately wicked is it, and deceitful above all things. The more we are occupied with it, the weaker we are toward it, because it becomes an object in the stead of Christ. The secret of power over it is to know that it has been crucified with Christ because of its incurable badness -- to reckon it dead -- to disallow its cravings, and to find all our springs of comfort and strength in Christ glorified -- to "reckon ourselves to have died indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:6-11). In the heavenly glory we shall not need so to "reckon," for we shall be completely and for ever delivered from it. But to so reckon now is because "the flesh" is still in us. Yet it is equally our privilege to say with the apostle, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I [that is, not the old nature], but Christ [my new life] liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh [that is, in this mortal body], I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). This is Christian life.

To be occupied with what the flesh is in its various activities and deceitful workings, is not to be reckoning it dead; to be regarding it as an antagonistic force to be overcome, is to reckon it living; but to be holding it dead in the death of Christ, as judicially put to death in Christ our substitute, and to find all our resources in Christ risen and glorified, is to reckon ourselves to have died indeed unto sin, and to be alive unto God in our Lord Jesus Christ. In this way we have power over ourselves, and can daily bring forth fruit unto God. The way of faith is always to look at things from God's standpoint, to take sides with Him who regards our old man as having been judicially set aside for ever in the death of Christ, and who always sees us complete in Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

It is quite true that we are the objects of the continual care and discipline of the Father of spirits. If we walk after the flesh, instead of after the Spirit, this may call for His loving rebuke and chastening; but that in no way interferes with the precious truth of our continual acceptance and standing in Christ, by whose one offering we have been perfected for ever. The fact is that, through grace, we "are not in the flesh, but in Christ," yet the flesh is in us; but our part is to reckon it as having been, before God and to faith, judicially put to death in Christ crucified: and thus to be so constantly occupied with the triumphant Son of God, as to find all our resources, all our strength, all our springs, in Him.

Nor does age, experience, or change of circumstances improve the flesh. It is wholly unimproveable, though its desires and habits, in youth and old age, in affluence or poverty, may show themselves differently. Its principles of lust and wilfulness remain the same. Paul had been in the third heaven, and heard unutterable things, which it is not possible for mortal man to speak. Was the flesh improved in him by such a wondrous change and experience? We are told that he needed "a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him," lest he should be exalted because of the exceeding greatness of the revelations. Now surely, when in the glory, we shall not need such a thorn, neither did he when in the third heaven, but afterward; when among men, there was such tendency to the pride and lust of the flesh being stirred up, that a messenger of Satan was needed to act upon him, as a preventive of fleshly conduct. So deeply distressing and humiliating was this "thorn," that he three times besought the Lord to take it away; but this could not be done, that the servant might not be exalted above measure. Instead of removing it, the Lord said unto him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." His path, therefore, for the remainder of his earthly pilgrimage was to go forward, having no confidence in the flesh, but boasting in his weakness, that the power of Christ might rest upon him; for, said he, when I am weak, then am I strong (2 Cor. 12:10).

How vastly different was the experience of this honored servant of the Lord when in the third heaven, and when buffeted by Satan on earth! But was he not equally secure in Christ, when filled with anguish or irritation through the "thorn in the flesh," as when hearing the unutterable communications of paradise? Surely his standing before God in Christ was in no way altered by this remarkable change of circumstances and experience. And it is very important to observe this. For have not most believers their bright times and their dark times? Did not Israel taste the bitterness of Marah, and then realize the delightful change of Elim's palm-trees and wells of water? And do not most of God's children know what it is, on some occasions, to be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and at other times to be in heaviness and distress, having the heart lacerated with the sorrows of the way? But are we not as secure and blessed in Christ, when in the trying path of humiliation and anguish, as when we are so happy in the Lord, so near, that it is only the thinnest film which appears to intercept our vision of Himself, and His own glory seems to shine down upon us? Surely it is always true that "ye are complete in him, who is the Head of all principality and power," and that no change of circumstance or experience, whether dark or bright, can in any degree shake our security and standing "in Him"; though it is quite true we may lose the enjoyment of this, if we are taken up with experience, or anything else, in the place of Christ. How wise, then, it is for the believer to abide in the Lord Jesus, to be occupied with Him; for then we have always blessing. "We all, with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

So clearly does scripture recognize "the flesh," with all its evil capabilities, even in those who are born of God, that they are enjoined to "lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings, and as new-born babes to desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow

thereby” (1 Pet. 1:23; 2:1, 2). Here we find persons who are born again instructed how they can grow in grace, &c., and charged not to let these dreadful workings of the old man come out. Again, because we are “risen with Christ,” and hope to reign “with him in glory,” we are exhorted thus -- “Mortify” (or put to death) “therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” -- the vile workings of the flesh, the things which the ungodly practice, and which bring down the judgment of God upon them. “For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.” Observe, scripture nowhere says that we are to crucify the flesh, because our old man has been crucified with Christ, and thus we are said to “have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts”; but as risen with Christ, and having a new life in Him (though still having the flesh in us), we are so to reckon ourselves dead as not to suffer these things to live in us, because we have died with Christ. Again, therefore, we are enjoined to “put off anger, wrath, malice, filthy communication out of your mouth, and lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new” (Col. 3:1-12).

Now it is clearly impossible that such injunctions should have been given to those who are born of God and risen with Christ, unless they still have “the flesh,” in which is nothing good. Let us turn to another scripture on this point. “If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:13). This is spoken to those who are said to be “in Christ.” Observe, it is not the body which is to be flagellated, or put to death, but the deeds of the body -- those things which the body is capable of doing, which are in opposition to God’s mind. Again, notice that the power for this is the Spirit of God; not flesh against flesh, but a new and almighty power given to us, by which we may practically keep in the place of death the workings of “the flesh.” Nothing, then, can be more clearly taught in scripture than that the believer is “in Christ,” who is his life, and one with Christ by the Holy Ghost; and, at the same time, that “the flesh” is in every believer. He is therefore a compound of two natures; with one, “the mind,” he serves God’s law; and with the other, “the flesh,” sin’s law. The indwelling Spirit strengthens the new nature, and keeps us occupied with Christ, our righteousness and strength, so that we may reckon ourselves to have died unto sin, and thus practically hold as dead the buddings forth of “the flesh.” May the Lord graciously help us more and more in this.

It is important, however, to remember that the knowledge of having “the flesh” in us is of itself no hindrance to “our fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ”; but allowing it to come out practically does hinder it. We have not a bad conscience from its existence in us, because we know that the flesh, or the old man,⁵⁰ has been judicially dealt with in the death of Christ. Neither need the believer sin.

He is enjoined to sin not, and he has no excuse for sinning. “These things write I unto you that ye sin not.” It is, moreover, not correct for a believer to say sin is not in him, for “if we say we have no sin” -- not sins, but sin, the corrupt nature, or old

man -- “we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” If, however, the believer does sin, or commit sins, the fruit of the Adam nature, he finds his conscience troubled, and his communion with the Father and the Son interrupted. It is a question of communion, not of salvation. Provision has graciously been made for it. Christ is our Advocate with the Father concerning it. Self-examination, self-judgment, repentance, and confession are wrought in our souls by the Spirit, and by the application of the word -- “the washing of water by the word” -- we become restored. The advocacy of Christ is based upon propitiation for our sins having been made, and He who takes up our cause is the perfectly righteous One. Hence it is written, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:1, 2).

On confessing, we are cleansed perfectly, forgiven in righteousness, on the ground of the sacrifice once offered; so that we are told, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-10). It is not the believer taking the place of a miserable sinner; but a believer taking the place before God of an offending naughty child, counting on the faithfulness and justice of God to forgive his sins because of the sacrifice of Christ, and to cleanse him, and thus to restore him to happy communion. This is the divine way of restoring an erring child of God. He may be the weakest and most faulty of God’s children; still he is a child to whom the Lord does not impute sin, and never can be, strictly speaking, a miserable sinner, even when feeling the dreadful character of his sin, before God in confession.

Happy indeed are those who are occupied with the personal glory and excellencies, finished work, and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ, so as to have always the comfort of their Father’s love, and the joy of their security and completeness in Christ, and to be waiting for His coming.

H. H. S., *The Bible Treasury* 12:91-92, 104-106.

50. [See Chapter 4.6, “The Old Man and the New Man.”]

Part Four:

New Creation

Chapter 4.1

Christ's Place is Our Place in The New Creation

The Resurrection of Christ is the Beginning of the New Creation

In John 3, our Lord had spoken to Nicodemus about the new birth. Because he had difficulties in apprehension, our Lord asked him how he would understand heavenly things (John 3:12) if he had difficulty with earthly things about which he had just spoken (the new birth). So by "heavenly things" our Lord meant something more than new birth. *Subsequently* we read of "abundant life" and what was connected therewith (John 10:10). So the new birth is not the new creation wherein we enjoy abundant life, i.e., life in the Son -- though, of course, one cannot be of the new creation who was never quickened.

There is, then, a heavenly order of things; this is called in Scripture the "new creation." Christ is the beginning of it (Rev. 3:14). In resurrection, in resurrection-life, He rose as Head of the new creation.¹ The new creation was begun by His resurrection and he was thus the Head of the new creation. And on that very resurrection day He brought into the new creation those into whom He breathed the breath of the new-creation-life (John 20:22).

When Christ breathed the breath of new creation life into the disciples, it could then be said they were quickened together with Him. One might think from Eph. 2 that in our day quickening together with Christ takes place at the first moment of quickening, because Eph. 2 does not appear to allow for a possible time between quickening and quickening together with Christ. The following quotation may be helpful in this regard:

Remark, too, in the details of God's working with souls, that a point here (largely developed in Epistle to the Romans, chapter 7, which comes in between the quickening of the dead soul and union with Christ by the Spirit), which does not appear in Ephesians. I refer to the exercises passed through after the soul is quickened and converted to God, but before union takes place. This experience is needed, because of our state. Life is in the soul long, it may be, before the Holy Ghost dwells in us, thus uniting us to Christ. This is because Ephesians only treats of God's operations in chapter 2, in carrying out the counsels of chapter 1; not that of the soul's history when under these operations, which we find in Romans doctrinally, and in Acts historically. Hence all experiences of the soul (as Rom.

7) are omitted.²

We might notice from John 20 that the disciples, after receiving abundant life, i.e., life in the Son, i.e., resurrection-life, were not yet united to the Head in heaven as members of one body -- since the One appointed to be the Head of the body was not yet ascended to glory, and since the baptism in the Spirit, which formed that body (cp. Acts 2:32, 33 and 1 Cor. 12:13), had not yet taken place. That would take place 50 days later from when Christ breathed into them. This illustrates the difference between identification of life, or *oneness* (John's writings, where we are viewed as one plant in the Son, in manhood, John 12:24), and *union* (Paul's writings, where we are viewed as one body in Christ) -- by which those who properly distinguish things that differ mean the connection of the members of one body with the Head of the body in heaven. There is indeed a distinction between oneness and union. This is not hair-splitting, as the spiritually slothful may say, but a key to understanding the inspired writings of John and Paul. It is a blessedness to the soul to contemplate the vast array of blessings that we have in Christ, light and blessing radiating from each facet of the truth, Christ's work being the foundation of all, and the glory of God the result.

A Thought or Two on the New Creation

(From an Unpublished Manuscript -- J. G. B.)

The death of the Lord Jesus was at the end of the old creation. In resurrection we see Him as the beginning or foundation of the new.

The old was not allowed to pass till it had been fully vindicated, as it was in the Person, character, ways, and life of the Lord. He stood as the immaculate and perfect sample of it, in the midst of all the ruin in which it was involved. But having been this, and done this, He died, as under the doom of the old creation -- "the Just for the unjust" -- and in Himself, as risen from the dead, He laid the foundation of the new creation.

Let me, however, as I pass, suggest this. His resurrection stands in four relationships: to God, to the world, to sinners, to believers.

In relation to God, it is the display of His glory and of His

1. Cp. A. C. Ord, *Justification and Acceptance with God*, p. 58, available from the publisher.

2. *Words of Truth*, New Series 1:210, 211. See also J. A. Trench, *An Answer to "Life and the Spirit,"* p. 15.

purposes. It is His victory.

In relation to the world, it is its judgment. It tells them there is a question between God and them about Jesus -- that they cast out the crucified, the One whom He has raised and glorified; and that judgment awaits the world because of this, as Peter preaches in Acts 10, and Paul in Acts 17.

In relation to sinners, it tells them of redemption, that the sacrifice which puts away sin has been accepted at that very throne which holds the balances that try the claims of God, and weighs the utmost of His demands in righteousness upon sinners.

In relation to believers, it pledges, as firstfruits, their own harvest, or resurrection in glorified bodies.

It is the one thing; but it has these various aspects, and stands in these different relations. The angel that witnessed it in Matt. 28, accordingly changes his aspect, when turning from the keepers of the stone to the poor women. In their sight he had descended in terror, an earthquake attending him, and the lightning expressing him, and his appearing put the sentence of death into them -- for they represented *the world* who had crucified the Lord of glory. But on turning to the women, this same angel is all gentleness. His terror does not make them afraid. The light is one to guide and gladden, not to alarm. It is the resurrection in the sight of poor, anxious sinners, as the other was the resurrection in the sight of the world.

This twofold aspect of the resurrection may be seen again in the appearing of Christ Himself to Saul of Tarsus. The risen, glorified Lord, I may say, descended, as in lightning and earthquake, on the road which lay between Jerusalem and Damascus. Saul was then representative of the world's enmity -- as the keepers of the sealed stone had been -- and the glory of the risen Jesus throws him to the earth, and lays the sentence of death in him as it had in them. But quickly it becomes a guiding, gladdening light; for it tells him of his own hopes and services and securities under this same risen Jesus. (Acts 9; 22; 26).

But this, rather, as I pass on.

The resurrection is the laying of the foundation of the new creation, as we have already said, and such foundations are immovable, as is all that rests on them. It is, the Son of God in victory. The old creation rested on the tested Adam; and falling in the temptation in his encounter with Satan, the creation fell, and became a mighty ruin. But the Son of God has come, the Repairer of the breach, and has stood where Adam fell, has conquered where Adam was defeated, has broken the gates of hell, and in Himself and in His victory has laid the foundation of an unassailable creation, which is a new, a redeemed creation, and which is to get its beauty as well as its strength from Him.

J. G. B., *Words of Faith* 3:221-223.

Knowing No Man After the Flesh in the New Creation

In connection with 2 Cor. 5:14-19, some extracts from J. N. Darby³ are given here. Some comments on this passage will also appear in subsequent chapters.

We learn that flesh may keep our state below the revelation we have really received, so as to be an adversary to Christ, for in minding earthly things we are adversaries to Christ, enemies of His Cross -- for if we follow the Son of man, the Cross is the path He trod and we tread. Paul stood and started on this ground, "If one died for all, then were all dead", and he knew no man, not even Christ, after the flesh. It is not therefore a passing, as often noticed, from Judaism to the Church, but a passing from man in the flesh to a resurrection manhood through the Cross and death. The Christ-hood living connection with Israel, according to the flesh, being thus gone, and the Son of man taking up man's case, entering into and putting man into a wholly new condition in resurrection beyond death and Satan's power. That, as to the Son of man -- but, on His being the Son of the Living God, the Church also is built, His then Christ-hood being then broken down, but this is in connection with the wider place of Son of man. The Church is not built upon His being "Son of man," but on the Son of man being the "Son of the Living God." The "Son of man" is individual and general -- its public result and state is in chapter 17, Luke 9, etc.⁴ ♦

But a man may, as a special vessel of the power of the new creation, be disconnected with the natural relationships of the old. Paul knew no man after the flesh. Not that he did not daily need grace, diligence, and even a thorn in the flesh, as others might; but that there was positive power in which he lived above the whole scene through which he moved. He did not merely live as a Christian, keeping his body under, and, we may say in a general and very full sense, out of the evil which corrupted the old creation; but, as to human relationships, out of the old creation as to his course and walk. He was before the world exclusively as a minister of God. But this is a question of power, and even of gift. It is not unconnected with deadness to the whole scene around; but still it is a matter of power and service. It was for the gospel's sake to carry out the activities of God's love more undistractedly in the midst of the evil; he insisting carefully on the other as established of God, being good. A man may live to God in them, acting up to them as of God, though, the power of evil having come in, he has to sit loose to them; 1 Cor. 7:29. He may in a legal way dread them, as not free to God; or he may, as outside of them, if really free, have nothing to say to them, yet recognize them in their place, because he is free.⁵ ♦

There was no link formed by Christ Jesus with other men by His incarnation. Preparation was made for it: but it issued in the judgment of this world. If we look to life and union in the church, the body of Christ, its fullest and highest character; is it in incarnation, or with a glorified Savior, and (for us) by a new creation? No union till He is glorified! "What is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward

3. See also his article, "The New Creation," *Collected Writings* 34:437.

4. *Notes and Comments* 2:300.

5. *Collected Writings* 23:366.

who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, . . . and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." He is not in the place of head till He is glorified. And, when we were dead in sins, God hath quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ. We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. If any man be in Christ, it is a new creation: "old things are passed away, all things are become new." Therefore the apostle knew no man after the flesh; yea, though he had known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth he knew Him no more. Christ had come as the Messiah of the Jews, as the crown, if He had been received, of humanity; but as such He had been rejected; and now it was only through redemption by blood, and as a glorified Christ that man could have connection with Him. ⁶ ♦

Christ's Place is Our Place

It is of all moment for us, not only to understand it as stated in Scripture, but to have the statements of Scripture transferred to our hearts and consciences, that we are in an entirely new creation, "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." So the first man was made in the image of God, though now a lost ruined creature. In death and resurrection man gets a new place altogether, not only quickened, but quickened together with Christ. A man may be quickened as to the state of his mind, and yet think he is alive in the world, which is the very thing we are not. As to our condition before God, we do not belong to the life that is on this side of death. A new life may be given, and the man left down here; but Christ is looked at as a man who has died here, after having come into our place, taken the judgment -- the cup, and gone away beyond it; and this is our place; not as to our bodies of course, for we have the treasure in earthen vessels, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies; but our place in faith and in life is Christ's place, the Second man's place, and not the first man's. If our bodies, it is the first; if our souls, it is the Second. We are taken out of the old place by redemption. I repeat it, for it is very important for the apprehension of faith, that Christ the Son, a divine Person, communicated life, but Christ died, and now we are quickened together with Him. The place we were in by sin and disobedience, He was in for us, and, He having perfected the work needed to redeem us, we are taken up into the place where He is, and when He comes to raise the dead, we shall be there actually. Now it is putting on the character of Christ; then it will be actually the thing in glory. ⁷

Our Identification with Christ Where He Is

The treatment of these subjects is not exhaustive. For example, it should be kept firmly in mind that different NT books present truth from various aspects. For example, the Christian, who is a person sealed with the Spirit, is seen in what answers in type to the wilderness in Peter and Hebrews and Romans. Romans does not develop the teaching of our death and resurrection *with* Christ. It does view us as those for whom Christ died and rose again. This answers to the Red Sea. That speaks of Christ's death and resurrection for us and we are delivered from the power of the taskmaster (Rom. 7). Romans goes to the entrance bank of the Jordan. The Jordan typifies our death *and* resurrection *with* Christ. In Colossians we are seen as passed through the Jordan, up the bank on the far side and just reaching Gilgal, the cutting off of the flesh, and looking up into the land. In Ephesians we are looked at as Quickened from a state of death, quickened *with* Christ, raised up together *with* Him, and seated together in the heavenlies *in* Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6).

In Colossians, then, we are not in the land proper; hence we are exhorted to "seek the things [which are] above" (Col. 4:1). It is in keeping with this to say "look up." However, when we view ourselves as seated there, as in Eph. 2:6, that is not warrant to say "keep looking down." That is not a Scriptural thought at all. It may sound pious, but it is erroneous and betrays an unbalance with regard to truth -- and unbalance always results in erroneous views concerning what one is seeking to emphasize in such an unbalanced way.

But it is not purposed in this book to enlarge on these distinctions -- merely call the reader's attention to them. But more will be said regarding Colossians and Ephesians when considering the subject of the New Man. We proceed then to some extracts from J. N. Darby regarding our identification with Christ and some of the implications of this.

But what is the extent of this grace towards us? It has given us the same portion that the Lord Jesus has. "We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." It is not only certain that grace has visited us, has found us when we were "in our sins," but it is also certain that it has set us where Christ is; that we are identified with the Lord Jesus in all but His essential glory as God. The soul is placed thus in the consciousness of God's perfect love, and therefore, as it is said in chapter 5, "we joy in God." ⁸ ♦

In this church of Philadelphia we have the promise which met the hope which the faithful had of being with Christ in glory. Identification with Him in His position connects them with Himself, and with the word of His patience. They had not all the professing church of one mind with them; and they were not yet enjoying the full result of His love (not having Christ personally and fully present with them, I mean); and if Christ's love is to be the guide of my conduct, what the heart wants is, that Christ should be with it, for if we love a person we surely want to be with him. But having Christ in our hearts, we are keeping the word of His patience. Such is a trying, sifting, purging, exercising time, no doubt, but we must wait. And mark, further, how this blessed identification and connection with Himself is kept up all through, as it is not simply the word of patience, but "My patience." And why "My patience"? Because Christ is

6. *Collected Writings* 29:308. See also 7:187, 348; 17:98; 25:367; 26:336; 29:221; 34:236; *Notes and Comments* 4:158; 5:108; *Notes and Jottings* 436.

7. *Collected Writings* 31:237. See also 10:178; 17:15; 27:144; 28:35; 29:315.

8. *Collected Writings* 12:194.

still waiting (see Psalm 110); and it is this which determines all our conduct, for if Christ is waiting we must wait also. Christ has to wait in a state of expectancy, so to speak, in the exercise of patience, for the Father's time; and it is in this sense, I doubt not, that He is said not to know the time which the Father hath put in His own power. Christ has done all that was needed for His friends to present them to God, and is set down at the right hand of God, "expecting till his foes be made his footstool." Christ is waiting until He gathers in all His friends before He does, as He says, His "strange work" on the earth, in dealing with His foes. And hence this word of "My patience" is just what is needed, for we are waiting for that day of which Christ tells us (John 14), "I will come again and receive you unto myself."⁹ ♦

We go up to meet Christ in the air. Nothing clearer, then, than that we are to go up to meet Him, and not await His coming to earth; but that this coming to receive us to Himself is not His appearing is still clearer, if we pay attention to Colossians 3, which shows that we are already with Him when He shall appear. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." This identification of the church's hope and glory with Christ Himself is of the essence of the church's blessing. He is our life, our righteousness; the glory given to Him He has given us: we are members of His body, we are of His flesh and of His bones. We reign with Him, suffer with Him, are glorified together, being like Him -- conformed to His image. He is hid in God: our life is hid with Him in glory; but for this we must be caught up to meet Him, and that before He appears at all when He does, we are already with Him and appear with Him. This does not state the epoch of the rapture of the church, but, what is far more important, it does clearly shew the entire difference of relationship of the heavenly saints with Christ, and of those who only see Him when He appears. The one are blessed under His reign, and are connected with the earth; the others are identified with Himself-with Him who reigns-appear and reign with Him. Wherever this is enfeebled, Satan is at work.¹⁰ ♦

In the wilderness God is humbling, proving us, and making all work together for good. Circumcision is not practicable in the wilderness. Israel come to Jordan and cross it. Here we have a figure, not of Christ dying for me, but of my dying and rising with Him. It is not simply that Christ died for us, but I am crucified with Christ. I reckon myself dead and have received Christ as my life; I am dead, risen, and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; I am gone out of the wilderness altogether. We were dead down there in sins, and Christ came down and died for sins; and now we are quickened, raised up, and seated in Christ. This is the new place altogether; and it is the doctrine taught in Ephesians. I am no longer looked at as alive in the flesh at all; I have got into heavenly places; and the moment I have got there, all is mine -- "All spiritual blessings in the heavenly places"; but then it is only as I set my foot on my blessing, that I make it practically my own. And then I find that there is another foot there: the enemy is in possession; so that I have need of the whole armor of God. The place we have to pass through is the world as a wilderness; but, as to my

position, I am in the heavenly places, and I must walk accordingly. If I am living in the world as a man in the flesh, I meet my neighbors and I may find them kind and obliging; but directly I begin to talk of heavenly things, I find them opposed.¹¹ ♦

It is the same with regard to the expectation of Christ: if I consider myself as a man responsible upon earth, I expect Him for the deliverance of all things, and to put an end to all suffering, and to all the power of evil; and so individually myself, as a servant, I look to receive at His appearing here the testimony of His approval, as a Master, before the whole world. But if I think of my privileges, as a member of His body, I think of my union with Him above, and that I shall come back with Him when He shall come and appear in His glory. It is well we should know how to make this distinction; without this, there will be confusion in our thoughts, and in our use of many passages. The same thing is true in the personal religion of every day. I can consider myself as united to Christ, and seated in Him in heavenly places enjoying all the privileges which He enjoys, as Head of the body, before God His Father. I may also look upon myself as a poor weak being, walking individually upon the earth, having wants, faults, and temptations to overcome; and I see Christ above, whilst I am here below -- Christ appearing alone for me before the throne-for me, happy in having, in the presence of God, him who is perfect, but who has gone through the experience of my sorrows, who is no longer in the circumstances in which I find myself, but with the Father for me who am in them. This is the doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whilst the union of the church with Christ is more particularly taught in that to the Ephesians.¹² ♦

I have got then to shew forth Christ in living relationships. If it is true that I am in Christ, it is true also that Christ is in me. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." The standard is not a man running on towards heaven, but it is showing out the Christ that is in me. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body --this and nothing else. "Death worketh in us, life in you." I hold that Paul is dead. It was Christ acting through Paul. If we fail, that is wilderness work. If Christ is in me, I must never let a bit of anything but Christ be seen. Now you have Christ in you, this is positive power and nothing else. Now look to it that this be seen and nothing else. Joshua says, "Set your foot on." It is yours. I have got into Canaan and conflict comes directly. I am sitting in heavenly places in Christ. It is all mine, and now I am seeking to get hold of the things that I have a right to. "As captain of Jehovah's host am I now come." We get testing in the wilderness, conflict in Canaan. When I am in Canaan, I have spiritual intelligence and activity in that which belongs to me. "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" -- how much have we each realized of the spiritual blessings which are ours?¹³ ♦

9. *Collected Writings* 5:354. See also 3:79; 5:320, 354; 11:247; 12:12, 62, 64, 69; 16:234; 27:411; 29:295, 315; 31:173; 32:242; *Notes and Comments* 1:242

10. *Collected Writings* 11:153.

11. *Collected Writings* 19:325

12. *Collected Writings* 19:253

13. *Collected Writings* 19:326. See also 3:297, 374, 381; 19:331; 27:86; *Notes and Comments* 1:246.

Abide in Him on High

Now, the foolishness of God is wiser than man; and He teaches us that it is by the revelation of a heavenly glory in the pattern man, that His image is formed in us -- whatever the means; that it is in making us heavenly that we cease to be earthly and carnal. The life of Christ here is the pattern of our walk; but it is by abiding in Him on high, that we are like Him below. He was what He was by always abiding on high. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and no man receiveth our testimony. And no man has ascended up to heaven but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven." It was the life of a heavenly man. He could say so, as a divine person; we, by being united to Him, and knowing Him there. For the Spirit takes the things of Christ and shows them to us; and we, "beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory" {2 Cor. 3:18}. Hence of that eternal life, which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us, and which, so to speak with the apostle, "we have seen, heard, looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life," but which abode alone while here {John 12:24}, it can now be said, "which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" {1 John 2:8} But this is when He was on high; for He is spoken of as our advocate with the Father, as the propitiation for our sins; though it was the same, even eternal, life in Him (and hence an old commandment had from the beginning), manifested in all its perfectness in that blessed One. Blessed be God! it is so; for in Him, as living down here, I can see that heavenly life, which is mine, in all its proper perfectness, and yet say, That is my life, for Christ is my life. But yet it is a new commandment, as true in Him and in us, because He had ascended up on high when He had made propitiation for our sins, that He might be the head and source of life to a new family, to be formed after the pattern of the heavenly man: a life to be manifested in the mortal body, by always bearing about in it the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be manifested in these earthen vessels. It is the gospel of the glory of Christ {2 Cor. 4:4} who is the image of God; as another apostle says, as we have seen, "We are called by glory and virtue."

The humiliation of Christ in love draws our affections by grace.

The knowledge of and union with Him in heaven forms us into the walk and spirit in which that heavenly Man, that blessed One, walked upon the earth; of Him to whom our souls are knit in love, to whom we are united by the Spirit. One is the practical reflex down here of the other.

It is living union that we have with a living Christ by the Holy Ghost, through whom we are one with Him (for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit {1 Cor. 6:7}, in contrast, note, with one flesh) -- a union which will result in our fully bearing the image of the heavenly {1 Cor. 15:49}, who is the image of God . . .¹⁴

Chapter 4.2

*“The Beginning of
the Creation of God”*

“The Beginning of the Creation of God”

Revelation 3:14

by R.

Few things are more calculated to give stability and comfort to the heart of a saint in passing through this world than the conviction that, according to the counsels of God, he has been introduced in a divinely effective way into an entirely new order of things, and that he is eternally established therein upon immutable guarantees. So wonderful and so impressive is this discovery of the “new creation,” that most of those who have any adequate apprehension of it can probably remember what a moment it was to them, when, in all its blessedness, it broke in upon their souls, opening up a lovely and an incomparable scene, and revealing at the same time their own integral part in it, in the length of it and the breadth of it, without restriction and without reserve.

But one is painfully convinced that the subject is foreign to the minds of believers generally, forming no part of the creeds of churches, and unknown as a doctrine in the theology of Christendom; also, among ourselves, alas! many have never possessed themselves of it in its marvelous sublimity and precious import. What, we may ask, do such make of the last title of Christ to the church as a professing body on earth, the title specially taken by Him in view of these closing Laodicean days -- “the beginning of the creation of God”? If Laodicea set forth a spurious and apostatizing form of Christianity, denying the power of godliness, such as in its incipient state at least is disclosing itself everywhere around us, and by means of which Satan is making the name of Christ as a football in the streets, the title which our sovereign Lord takes at such a moment is peculiarly refreshing to every loyal heart, indicating as it does a new glory inalienably reserved to Him, and distinctly suggesting to our souls that sinless, cloudless, domain into which He has brought us even now, and where no unholy element can ever enter, nothing that defileth or worketh abomination, but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Nothing, probably, can supply motive and power more blessedly than this truth for the threefold deliverance which the Lord loves to effectuate for us as believers -- from self, from the world, and from Laodiceanism. Each of these spheres pertains to man as alive in the flesh, and is characteristically marked by the workings of the human will. How many dear children of God there are who have never known deliverance from these things, simply because they have never learnt the

truth of the new creation! They have known their deliverance as sinners from their sins, from guilt and from judgment, but they know not the further deliverance which grace effects for them as believers. Yet it is impossible that I can say with truth and candor, I know that I am part, a veritable part, of the new creation, until I am divinely assured that for faith every link has been broken that connected me judicially and morally with the first man, Adam, and the effete creation of which he was constituted the responsible head. If personally I have not got beyond being a responsible man in the flesh, in the very nature of things my will works, the flesh is allowed some liberty to act, I hold to the fact that the earth has been given to the children of men, and human religiousness is the consistent sequence of such mistaken reckonings of my bearings as a believer!

But the only innocent man of the old creation, set in a paradise of earthly blessing, sinned away his innocence and his Eden directly the hot breath of the enemy touched his cheek; thus he sank into a debased and fallen being, under sentence of death, with its premonitions, too, in every sorrow and suffering which befell him in the cursed scene he went forth to occupy, under pressure of sin and its penalties. Such was the first man in the first creation in the results of his responsibility.

Into that same creation, when morally it had ripened to the utmost, “in the consummation of the ages” (Heb. 9:26), came the second man, the last Adam, God’s Man; not set in a paradise, but in the blighted scene that the first of his race had turned that paradise into, and, as another has said, the only perfect man that ever trod this earth has died out of it.

What a character do these two Adams -- the first and the Last -- impart to the old creation! The first a man of the earth, created upright and innocent, and set in an Eden -- yea, in a garden which the Lord God had planted for him -- yet becoming disobedient and self-willed, bringing upon himself the catastrophe of a moral and physical ruin involving all his race. The second Man, from heaven, the untainted, the holy, and the true, in the same creation in grace, but being hated and refused, dying out of it, thus abrogating, and morally closing to faith, that creation for ever, for all who have died to it with Him.

Rising, then, from among the dead by the glory of the

Father, in the power of a new and endless life, He is “the beginning of the creation of God” {Rev. 3:14}; “the beginning” of that which will have no ending, the head of that unchangeable order of things which grace loves to unfold to faith, and that will find its illumination and display in the glory for ever!

Of the first creation we read, “all things were made *by* him;” and again, “All things were created *by* him and for him;” not so the second, for the formula of this is “in him.” It is “the creation of God” with Christ its Head, as the former was by Christ, with Adam its head. Accordingly, in Ephesians -- the birth-book, or book of the generations of the new creation ({cp.} Gen. 2:4) -- we are said to be God’s “workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has before prepared that we should walk in them.” So that this new creation, and the works morally suited in character to it, are as truly as the first creation divinely formed and prepared. And, what is of deepest moment, they are altogether and exclusively in Christ in every respect. Thus we are chosen in Him, have redemption in Him; are made nigh, sealed, blessed, accepted, and seated in Him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, &c. (Eph. 1, et seq.) in the same epistle, too, we read, “Having put on the new [man], renewed into full knowledge, according to the image of him that has created him, wherein there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondsman, freeman, but Christ all things, and in all.” Clearly we see here the righteous title of Christ as sovereign Head of the new creation, and the same scriptures constitute our title-deeds to this inheritance in Him, in whom all its moral characteristics find full and blessed display.

Now in Rom. 6:11 we get the first mention of this new ground, “So also ye reckon yourselves dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” So in v. 23, “the wages of sin is death” -- that is the old creation -- “but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” -- that is the new; for, be it observed, it is not only eternal life, but “in Christ Jesus our Lord,” which establishes it as this new, positive, order of blessing which is ours in association with Him, as “the beginning of the creation of God,” and which is perfectly exemplified only in the moral beauty of His own character. Then, in Rom. 8:1, “No condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” making clear our deliverance judicially from the curse of the first creation. In Adam is condemnation, in Christ Jesus none; because in the reckoning of faith we have died with Him out of the creation to which condemnation belonged, and for those who are his it is irrevocably abolished. “So if any one be in Christ [there is] a new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17). This is the positive side, as the other was the negative, and essentially and positively blessed it is. For, observe, it is not that this creation is a matter of hope, or a matter of attainment, but there it is, a positive present portion; we are actually upon the virgin soil, as it were, of a new creation -- “in Christ, a new creation”; the words are forcible in their terseness, and sublime in their simplicity! “The old things have passed away”; this was indispensable, for it is impossible that we should have at the same time a standing in Adam to answer for ourselves, and a standing in Christ who has answered for us. It is the total relegation, morally, for faith of the former and

abrogated creation, now no longer acknowledged, and carrying with it a final repudiation of the flesh and its activities, so that it has no longer a recognized existence, and even “Christ after the flesh” is not known.

What a thorough, what a perfect, deliverance is this! In fine, it is God’s solution for us of every problem as to our relation morally to man’s world. “I have died in the death of Christ” is the reckoning of faith, and in the same reckoning, “the old things,” in which the life of the first man found gratification, “have passed away,” be it the world, with its lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and pride of life; or be it the flesh itself, with all its nameless variety of ways of working; or be it man’s religiousness, or will-worship; all that God traces to that parent root of self will, or lawlessness, He, in His supremacy over the evil, assures us that all has “passed away,” as between us and Him!

One need scarcely say that, inasmuch as we have yet to wait for our glorified bodies, those we have belonging to the old creation, this leaves untouched every human relationship, and the natural affection belonging to it, as well as of moral duties the laboring for our bread, and submission to authority, all which things God has specifically ordained for the scrupulous observance of the believer. And He has thus established, upon the highest ground, for those of the new creation just so much of what belongs to the old; which indeed constitutes the special title upon which these things are held or exercised by us. Seeing that now, according to faith’s reckoning, we are not here in the way of nature, and therefore cannot speak of “rights,” but by the grace of Christ as sent into the world, one recognizes the gracious hand of our Father in ordaining for the need of His children the comfort to be found in (1) these natural relationships; (2) in honest labor; and (3) in submission to the powers that be: so much, and only so much, of the old creation is ours, and one delights to take it, not upon natural grounds, but upon the new title of the Father’s consideration for His children.

In the old creation one has to be peremptory with oneself in expressing its total abrogation to faith (save as stated), but in this “all things have become new, and all things are of God” (2 Cor. 5: 17, et seq.); its sphere, its nature, its character, its headship, its everything, is essentially new; and faith affirms its investiture with every privilege found therein, and reckons, not only that we are “dead to sin,” but in the same reckoning, that we are “alive to God in Christ Jesus,” and thus orders its ‘way in traversing the old creation in the light and power of the new, where -- pervading the whole scene -- God in everything prevails, and all is altogether of Him! Seeing this, how peculiarly fitting is the term, “the creation of God”; God protecting it, too, by divinely enforced exclusion of whatever is not of Him, no trail of the serpent ever marring its pristine loveliness. For a brief moment all things were of God in the former one, but how soon evil entered, probably on “the opening day” of Eden, “when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God’ shouted for joy,” and a greater than they rejoiced “in the habitable parts of his earth.” Thus what was of Satan, through his victim, man, quickly became more manifest than what was of God, and this has developed more and more ever since, so that now those who have eyes to see find emblazoned upon the world’s brow, “all things are of

Satan and of man.” And how cheering when that discovery is made, and in the sense of our eternal emancipation morally from the old creation, to have divine assurance that in the new everything will be its converse, for there one can never meet with one iota of the things of man, or man’s enemy; all, all, is of God!

Are there not serious grounds for concluding that the great failure among us is that of not sufficiently bringing ourselves practically into relation with the wondrous truths we hold? What, among other things, is greatly needed is that the truth of the new creation should be a controlling power, not so much for testimony, blessed and important as that is, but, primarily within our own souls, in separating us from things down here. We cannot surely acquire too much of truth, but too frequently we are not in the current of what we have accepted. This accounts for its not so imparting to us of its tone and character as would be the normal effect of such truth if cultivated in its unction, and submitted to in its power. When Paul records his rapture into the third heaven, how beautifully does he take his new creation place as “a man in Christ {2 Cor. 12:1}!” In that supreme moment in his history he lost all his reckonings as to the old creation; even the question of whether in the body or out of the body, he could only refer to God; but his place in the new creation could not be more clearly asserted.

With what remarkable vigor and pungency does he also write to the Galatians: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation” (Gal. 6:14, 15). In what a superb manner are the world, and the flesh, and its religiousness brushed out of the way, that the new creation may stand prominently forth in a supremely salient style!

If we now turn to John 20, we see Him who is also “the Amen, the faithful and true witness,” emphatically as “the beginning of the creation of God.” “Touch me not,” He says to the weeping Magdalene; the tears and the touch alike belong to the old creation, and have no place now. He knows no man after the flesh; His mother and his natural brethren disappear from the scene: all this He has died, and in His death parted company with all its associations; the favored home at Bethany even He visits no more!¹⁵ And everything was over too for His disciples at the moment; house-less, homeless, and orphans indeed!

But hark, “Go tell my brethren I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God!” Magnificent word for faith -- the new-born message of a risen Lord and Savior! The corn of wheat which had died is bursting forth its prolific fruit {John 12:24}, and this resurrection word on the first day of the week is as the shout of a king, a clarion note of victory, as the Conqueror enters triumphantly upon the new ground He has won, and into which it is His prerogative, as also His peculiar joy, to conduct His own along with Himself!

And if so, shall there not be new relations as well as new

conditions? Assuredly, and thus divine relationships are now revealed, and eternally established. They were brethren to one another before it is granted, but now, says He, “My brethren,” thus bringing them into relationship with Himself; and now also are they constituted children, whose Father is His Father, and whose God is His God! Following this, “Peace unto you”; and then He breathed on them, expressly and impressively identifying them with Himself, and they received in the Holy Ghost the power of His resurrection-life {John 20:22}, or life abundantly {John 10:10}, as had the Lord God in the first creation breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life, by which man became a living soul.

How beautiful the order of this as presenting the characteristic features of the new creation! “Touch Me not” closes every thought of the old thing. Then:

- (1) He is there in the dignity and majesty of a Conqueror -- “the beginning of the creation of God,” the new creation which He opens up for the first time in His own person, and into which, on this “opening day,” He carries them in spirit along with Himself!
- (2) New relationships are now formed for them, they are for the first time His brethren avowedly, and have His Father also as theirs!
- (3) He greets them with “Peace,” the very atmosphere of this new and blessed scene -- unbroken, unending peace!
- (4) The Holy Ghost is the power of His life imparted to them in resurrection for this new regime of blessing.

Thus did He send His disciples forth; the old creation had been abrogated in His death, the new is inaugurated in His resurrection, and they are to go forth as those who have been inducted of Himself into all its unique privileges, and are invested with all the dignity He imparts to it, to represent Him who had been refused in His own person here.

How far have we accounted this portion to be ours? How far have we realized that we are identified with Him who is “the beginning of the creation of God”? That He has in that character formed new and abiding relationships into which He has introduced us? That He has, in the precious and tender love of His heart, greeted us with “Peace” as we crossed the threshold of this new creation? And that Himself has given us of His risen life, in the power of the Holy Ghost, that we might go forth in all the wonderful elevation of spirit and tender grace of heart that belongs to His own character, “always bearing about in the body the dying [or death-process] of the Lord Jesus, that the life [or life-estate] also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies?”

May He deepen in our souls the recognition of all that necessarily follows from the fact, that in these days of defection and declension, we, through grace, have been eternally associated in the same life, the same scene, and the same character of blessing, with Him who, as first-born from among the dead, is “the beginning of the creation of God!”

R., *The Bible Treasury* 12:88-91.

15. {The writer presented the line of truth in John. Matt. 28 views Christ in connection with the Jewish remnant, and accounts for why they may lay hold of His feet.}

Chapter 4.3

Christ's Headship of the New Creation

{This chapter is an extract from {A. C. Ord?}, *Justification and Acceptance With God* . . . , pp. 38-43 (available from the publisher).}

. . . This question, which is of the utmost importance, may be thus stated: Is there not such a thing as a new creation, of which Christ as risen from the dead is the commencement and Head, and do we not, as united to Him, stand before God now as in it, and forming a part of it, and therefore no longer, as beheld by Him, in the old creation at all?

It is evident, if such is the case, that Christ must have taken our responsibilities and suffered for our sins, in order to bring us into this new position. This He did, as we have seen, upon the cross, where He exhausted all the wrath that was due both to us as fallen and guilty and to our sin, when He bore it in His own body on the tree, and God has given testimony to this in that He raised Him from the dead. Now if we are in Him before God as so risen, no consequences of the fall or of sin can follow or reach us there. They cannot pass beyond the grave of Christ or enter into the new creation. Moreover, this new creation, which commenced by the act of God in raising Christ from the dead, is entirely of God, proves Him to be altogether for us, (instead of against us,) displaying divine, almighty power on our behalf, which He could not have done, if anything remained against us in His sight. God has come into the scene in divine grace and in *creative, life-giving* power, to manifest Himself in this conclusive way on our behalf. He has Himself, with His own hand, broken our chains and set the prisoners free, and brought us into the daylight and the liberty of this new creation, which shall never pass away, and where, as we have said, sin or interruption of His favor and purposes of blessing shall never come.

Now it is undeniable that the word of God so speaks. "If any man be in Christ (it is) a new creation (*καινή κτίσις*): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). "We are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus* unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that *created him*: where . . . Christ is all and in all" (Col. 3:10, 11). But this shows how all is looked at by God. The old man -- all that we are by nature as connected with the first Adam -- has been set aside, and a new man introduced in a new creation, in which Christ is all; i.e., the whole of that which exists before God, and He is "in all." We learn from this expression that having received Christ as our life, our feelings and conduct are to flow from, and be regulated by the standard

of what Christ Himself is and nothing less, both in our intercourse with the world and with Christians, and even more, with God Himself. "For ye are dead," says the apostle, "and your life is hid with Christ *in God*. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:3, 4). Again, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4, 5). Can words more plainly and conclusively demonstrate that we are no more in our old condition, dead in sins, but seen in Christ, as quickened and taken out of the grave in and with Him, and even ascended likewise. Eph. 1 states in addition that we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings *in heavenly places in Christ*," and Eph. 6 that our conflict is "with wicked spirits in heavenly places." In the first man we were lost, condemned, dead in sins; now we are alive, risen, accepted, and blessed in the Second Man, and that, even where He is, in the place He has taken the presence of God. God created Adam and set him in paradise in innocence, and blessed him, making him head over the world which He put under Him; but he ruined his whole race and brought it under condemnation, and the curse upon the world which he governed and which was involved in his fall. This same blessed God has commenced another creation in another man, with whom and of whose life, acceptance and blessing, He has made us through grace partakers. Hence the use of the expressions, the first man and the second Man, the first Adam and the last Adam, as though there were but these two heads existing before God, the whole of mankind being looked at as existing in connection with one or the other. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22). In Adam's case the world he was to inherit was made first; in the case of Christ the new creation has begun in His being raised from the dead, and the deliverance of our bodies, and of the creation, will complete the glorious purpose of God. This may be inferred from the statement of the apostle "that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He will gather together in one (head up again *ανακεφαλαιωσασθαι*) all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in Him in whom we have obtained an inheritance"; and of this inheritance the Spirit who dwells in us, and by whom we are sealed is the earnest "until the redemption of the purchased possession"; that is, its recovery from the power of Satan (Eph. 1:14). This peculiarity, however, must be observed, that

the Church does not only come under this federal headship of the second Adam, the posterity sharing in the blessings of the head, as we are taught in Rom. 5, 1 Cor. 15, which blessing extends to Jews and Gentiles on the earth during the millennium; but that it stands in a far nearer and closer relationship to the Head of the new creation, viz., that of membership of the same body by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; for God has given Him to be Head (over all things) to the Church, which is His body, the “fullness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:1-16, 22, 23, &c.; cp. Col. 1:18). It is evident that the members of a man’s body are in much closer connection with him than he is by descent with his progenitor Adam; so this relationship to Christ is not a mere connection by communication or inheritance of life, but union in one body by the Holy Ghost since Pentecost; “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13); but this subject, deeply interesting as it is, cannot be pursued here.

It will be found that all the passages which speak of union with Christ, or of our sharing His life, are exclusively confined to the resurrection; there exist none which allow any thought of union before atonement for sin had been made or His life on earth offered up in sacrifice *for* us. Our Lord Himself, when speaking of His resurrection (John 14:18, 20), puts this life distinctly in connection with it as a yet future thing: “Because I live, ye shall live also,” and He breathes on His disciples to communicate it after He was risen (John 20:22). Scripture is everywhere explicit on this point, that there is no union with Christ before resurrection, and that life begins there; “When we were dead in sins (God) hath quickened us together with Christ” (Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:12, 13; 3:1, 4, &c.; Rom. 6, &c., &c.). Indeed the idea of union with Christ at incarnation, which is fundamentally destructive of the truth that Christ gave that life in which He died on earth for us, and which the holiness and justice of God alike render impossible, ere sin had been expiated, is chiefly held, as a definite doctrine, by the followers of Maurice on the one hand and of Pusey on the other; the former, in order to do away with the idea of guilt and the atonement which it required; the latter, in order to bring in the union with His humanity maintained during the absence of Christ, not by faith or in the power of the Holy Ghost, but by means of the sacraments. The words of our Lord Himself expressly deny any union with Himself during His lifetime: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, *it abideth alone*; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). He might have abode on the earth and have taken the glory of His kingdom, but He must, if He had done so, have stood “alone” like the solitary grain before it is put into the ground to die and to multiply itself. He could not have had others with Him or been united to any: He would have been “alone,” but in His resurrection He is the corn of wheat when it rises from the earth in the power of new life, bearing the full ear. But this is only, and as He tells us Himself, after, and in consequence of His death; “*if it die*, it brings forth much fruit.”

It follows from this that there could not be association with Christ in His legal obedience on earth, and that we do not begin to share anything with Him in the sight of God till He is risen, and that all participation with Him must be subsequent

to and founded on atonement, and not before it. Previous to His resurrection He came in love to share with man that which was the lot of man; after it He takes man (i.e., the believer) to share with Him His life, His home, His glory (John 13:8; 14:1; 17:22, 23). His death being, as we have seen, the title by which He does this.

This allusion to His resurrection, comparing Himself to the fruitful blade of wheat, when it springs fresh from the earth, corresponds with the figure used by the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 15:20: “Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept”; and, again, in 1 Cor. 15:23, “Christ the firstfruits”; only that he looks more onward to the final, than the immediate, results of Christ’s death and resurrection.

To confirm this, we have the remarkable type in the Old Testament of the wave-sheaf of firstfruits¹⁶ that was offered before the Lord, on the morning after the Sabbath, the day on which Christ arose from the dead. This was the firstfruits of the land, which God *had given them*, and is, therefore, connected with heaven and the heavenly things which Canaan represents, and was to be brought as an offering to God before they were allowed to enjoy any of the produce of its harvest. “Ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the self-same day that ye have brought an offering unto your God” (Lev. 23:14). Being brought unto the priest, the direction was, “He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you, on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it” (v. 11). This waving the sheaf, shows how God delights to have Christ thus presented before Him, as the risen Man; the One on whom, now that sin is put away, His eye can rest with eternal complacency, and that this is for us and our acceptance, is shown by the statement, “He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you.”

When our Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene on the morning of His resurrection, He said, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God” (John 20:17). For God must have His place and His portion first in this, just as the sheaf was first to be waved to be offered to God, before the harvest was even tasted by Israel, whilst the word “I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God” shows that they were accepted in Him as risen, that He had thus brought them into the same relationship and position before God and His

16. This ordinance occupied a place in the great annual feasts of the Lord, related in their order in Lev. 23, which makes its meaning more evident. That chapter describes the whole typical or ceremonial year in Israel, which was so ordained as to present essentially the ways of God on earth.

First came the Passover or feast of unleavened bread with which the year commenced, typical of the death of Christ as the foundation of all that followed -- of redemption and its effect in producing holiness (1 Cor. 5:7, 8). Then followed the offering of the firstfruits on the morrow after the Sabbath, and afterwards the Pentecostal oblation, which was fixed on the fiftieth day after the waving of the firstfruits, in order, as we know from Acts 2, to connect the descent of the Holy Ghost and the results of His presence in the Church with the acceptance of Christ in resurrection. The feasts which follow give us the restoration of Israel and the blessing of the Millennium, after the gathering in or completion of the Church, under the figure of the harvest, of which, as we have seen, Christ is the firstfruits.

Father as Himself. But mark by what offerings this one, so peculiar and unique in its nature, was accompanied: "And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf, a he-lamb without blemish of the first year, for a burnt-offering before the Lord; and the meat-offering thereof shall be two-tenth deals of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savor; and the drink-offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin" (Lev. 23:12, 13). So that we have in this risen Man, head of the new creation, in whom we are accepted, in all the sweet savor of His work accomplished on the cross (the burnt offering), and all that of His life on earth, looked at in its general, not its Judaical character (the meat offering), as well as that in which He now stands before God in heaven (the wave offering). Nothing is lost, all goes to make up our standing in the presence of God, or to form a part of that in which we are accepted. He carries into His present position, and thus makes available for us, every thought and feeling of a life consecrated to God here below, the value of His death in devoted self-sacrifice for God's glory, and that life in which He now lives to God and enjoys the unclouded sunshine of His presence, all is combined to make up our acceptance; hence it is said, "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10); for such is His present title as risen. And again, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love . . . To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:4, 5, 6). "For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:3, 4). These passages, moreover, show us, that we are partakers in the title, life, acceptance, enjoyment, and future glory of this risen Man, and the apostle dates this, as we have seen, not from His life on earth, but from the grave of Christ, "when we were dead in sins, he quickened us together with Christ." Thus it is that God has given us an eternal place and portion before Himself in and with Christ, to whom He has united us; thus it is that being part and parcel of Christ as the risen Man, Head of His body, the Church, all our interests, destinies, and joys are bound up in Him, yea, are even identified with His, His life being, in order to our partaking in all this, as well as we being *in Him*, as the apostle says, "Christ *in you the hope of glory*" (Col. 1:27). But all these blessed truths, and others of a collateral nature, which flow from our being one with Christ, on which the apostle so enlarges in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, can only be indicated here, and left to the reader to pursue.

Chapter 4.4

Liberty

Liberty

The Christian was called to liberty, the holy liberty of the new nature, but yet liberty. It is no longer a law which constrains, or rather vainly seeks to constrain, a {old} nature whose will is contrary to it, to satisfy the obligations which accompany the relationships, in which by the will of God we find ourselves -- a law imposed, forbidding evil to a {old} nature that loves evil, and commanding the love of God and of one's neighbor, to a {old} nature whose spring is selfishness.

Had it been possible to take away Christ's moral liberty -- which was not possible -- it would have been by preventing Him from obeying the will of the Father. This was the food He ate (John 4). As a perfect Man, He lived by every word which came forth out of the mouth of God. He chose to die, to drink the bitter cup which the Father had given Him, rather than not obey Him, and glorify Him in drinking it. Christianity is the liberty of a new nature that loves to obey, and to do the will of God. It is true that the flesh, if not kept in subjection, can use this liberty to satisfy its own desires, just as it used the law, which had been given to convict of sin, to work out righteousness. But the true liberty of the new man -- Christ our life -- is the liberty of a holy will, acquired through the deliverance of the heart from the power of sin -- liberty to serve others in love. All the law is fulfilled in one word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The Christian can do still more -- he can give himself for others; or, at the least, following the direction of the Spirit, he fulfils the law in love. But if they devoured one another in selfishness, contending about circumcision and the law, "take heed," says the apostle, "that ye be not consumed one of another."

The apostle here establishes the principles of holiness, of the Christian walk, and brings in the Holy Ghost in place of the law. In the preceding part of the epistle he had set forth Christian justification by faith, in contrast with works of law. He here shows that God produces holiness; instead of exacting it, as did the law with regard to human righteousness, from the nature which loves sin, He produces it in the human heart, as wrought by the Spirit. When Christ had ascended up on high, and was set down on the right hand of God, having accomplished a perfect redemption for those who should believe on Him, He sent down the Holy Spirit to dwell in all such. They were already children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and, because they were such, God gave them the Spirit of His Son. Born of God, cleansed by the blood of Christ, accepted in the Beloved, God seals them as His own by the gift of the Spirit until the day of redemption, that is, of glory. Having the new life, Christ as their life, they are bound to walk as Christ walked, and to manifest the life of Christ down here in their mortal flesh.

This life, produced in us by the operation of the Holy Ghost through the word, is led by the Spirit which is given to believers; its rule is also in the word. Its fruits are the fruits of the Spirit.

The Christian walk is the manifestation of this new life, of Christ our life, in the midst of the world. If we follow this path -- Christ Himself -- if we walk in His steps, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. It is thus sin is avoided, not by taking the law to compel man to do what he does not like; the law has no power to compel the flesh to obey, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be {Rom. 8:7}. The new life loves to obey, loves holiness, and Christ is its strength and wisdom by the Holy Ghost. The flesh is indeed there; it lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusts against the flesh, to prevent man from walking as he would. But if we walk in the Spirit, we are not under the law; we are not as the man in Rom. 7, where, impelled by the new nature, the will desires to do good, but, a captive to sin, he finds no way of doing what he desires; for the law gives neither strength nor life. Under law, even if life is there, there is no strength: man is the captive of sin.

But sealed by the Holy Spirit, the believer is free, he can perform the good he loves. If Christ is thus in him, the body is dead, the old man is crucified with Christ. The Spirit is life, and that Spirit, as a divine and mighty Person, works in him to bring forth good fruits. The flesh and the Spirit are in their nature opposed the one to the other; but if we are faithful in seeking grace, the power of the Spirit, Christ, by His Spirit in us, enables us to hold the flesh for dead, and to walk in the footsteps of Christ, bringing forth the fruits that suit Him.

There is not really any difficulty in distinguishing the fruits of the Spirit from the fruits of the flesh: the apostle names them, those at least which are characteristic of their respective actions. Of the sad fruits of the flesh, he positively declares that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God: but the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, &c. Against such there is no law; God cannot condemn the fruit of His own Spirit. Remark, that the first of these fruits are love, joy, peace. The Spirit will surely produce those practical fruits which manifest the life of Christ in the sight of men, but the inward fruits, the fruits Godward, come first, the condition of soul needful for producing the others. Many converted persons seek for the practical fruits in order to assure themselves that they are born of the Spirit and accepted of God. But peace, love, joy are the first-fruits of the presence of the Spirit; the others follow. In order to know what is in the heart of God, we need to see the fruit of His heart, the gift of Jesus.

If I believe in Him, and through Him in the love of God, sealed of God by the Spirit, I have the sense of His love -- love shown in the death of Jesus is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit, which is given to those who are washed from their sins through faith in His blood. By that Spirit we have the consciousness of our position before God, and love, joy, peace are in the soul. The fruits which follow are, moreover, the proof to others that my certainty and assurance are not false, that I am not deceived. But for myself, it is what God has done which is

the proof of what is in the heart of God, and through faith I set to my seal that God is true. Then, sealed by the gift of the Spirit, I rejoice in His goodness, and the fruits of the new life manifest to others that this life is there.

Moreover, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." They have not got to die: Christ died for us, and He who died being our life, we hold ourselves for dead, crucified with Him, as though we ourselves had died upon the cross, since it was for us He suffered. Possessing another life, I do not own the flesh as "I," but as sin which dwelleth in me, which I hold to be crucified. The faithful Christian realizes this continually. God declares us to be dead with Christ: He looks upon us thus (Col. 3:3). Faith, accepting God's declaration with thankfulness, holds the flesh, the old man, to be dead (Rom. 7), and through the Spirit, if he is faithful, he applies the cross in a practical way to the flesh, so that it may not act (2 Cor. 4); besides this, God in His government sends that which is needful to test the Christian, and to effect this.

The apostle adds the exhortation, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." The law nourishes rather than destroys vain glory, for the law makes us think of self. When rightly applied, it is most useful for convincing of sin, not for producing righteousness.

Thus the operation of the law with regard to justification and holiness has been fully examined, and set in a clear light. It does not produce righteousness, but exacts it. It cannot be linked with Christ as a means of justification: "if righteousness is by the law, Christ is dead in vain." Man ought surely to have kept the commandments of God, but that is not, the real question. Man has not kept them, therefore upon that ground he is lost: Christ, on the other hand, brings salvation because we are guilty.

Then, as to holiness: it is not God's way to seek to produce holiness in the flesh through the law, for the flesh is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be. God gives a new life in Christ, and the Holy Spirit, to produce fruits which are acceptable to Him; and against these fruits there is certainly no divine law. God cannot condemn the fruits of His own Spirit. It is the new creature, the new life, with its fruits by the Spirit, which are acceptable to God; it is this new creature which seeks to please Him.

Strengthened by the Spirit, and instructed by Him according to the wisdom of God set forth in the word, let us seek to walk in the footsteps of Christ, that perfect example of the life of God in a Man which has been given to us.

The Bible Treasury 13:331, 332

The New Creation and the Ministry

2 Cor. 5:14 to end; 6; 7:1

by W. F. B.

One can only say that such a scripture as this, and such a record of the devotedness and self-surrender of the ministry of those days, makes us look very small, if, on the other hand, it makes us great, by the place in which it sets us; but it is always that way; it is the small people that are great, and the great people that are small, and if there be any attempt at being great in ourselves, we only prove ourselves to be small. God cannot allow man to boast, and we travel much nearer to man in that form than we are,

perhaps, aware of.

We have before us here, in the opening part, "the love of Christ constraineth us," &c., and "henceforth know we no man after the flesh," &c. Now in what way are we accustomed to look at mankind? We might put it very near home in this way. We are influenced by the different relationships we are in in this world, and we are accustomed to make differences between one man and another in approaching them. The apostle says, "know no man after the flesh," therefore all that we really know as servants of Christ, is, a man in Christ; or, a man out of Christ; just a soul to be saved.

The world at large before the Christian that is in his true place, can only be looked at as composed of those associated with Christ, or just simply souls to be saved. To recognize no one after the flesh, to ignore that ground altogether, puts a weapon in our hand; it puts us in this attitude towards each: is he a saved soul, or a lost soul? has he peace, or not? and that alone is the ground of action towards him. As to ourselves, the conscience is just the thing to be kept, if you have got peace in your soul; on the ground of that peace, if you keep a good conscience, you will be in the right place. It is want of keeping a good conscience that has put so many Christians in a wrong place, but if you keep a good conscience, you will be found in the true place, along with those who are keeping the truth, and walking in truth.

Therefore the apostle is careful to put it before us -- "know no man after the flesh" -- a different order, so to speak. And what is the order? Where all things are of God; God the source of everything -- a new creation. God was in Christ, reconciling to Himself, and then, in advance, is committed unto them the word of this reconciliation -- Christ having been made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Then comes in the character of the ministry, the manner and way of the bearers of it; a wonderful thing this ministry; that is what makes us *small*, the contrast with what we know ourselves to be; we came so very far behind practically. It was a wonderful ministry in those days, and the result of entire separation to God.

At the end of the chapter we have two things brought out in a very marked way -- the conditional and the unconditional. All that we have and are in Christ is unconditional; all strength, and support, and enjoyment here, conditional. God revealed Himself unconditionally, when He brought His people out of Egypt, as Jehovah. He was then a deliverer-God. He came down to *deliver* them; there could be no condition in that. But to Abraham He said, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect," &c.; there is the condition. Nevertheless, it is association with God as the Almighty God, so there is no lack of power. How so? Because God has not changed. A wonderful thing to think that we are in the place where we want for nothing, because in the place of power, *knowing* that the *power* is there, whether we realize it, or not. Why, then, are we always wanting something, morally, or secularly, or religiously, or what not? God says, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect; I am the Almighty God": and so to us; "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and *I will* receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

May the Lord, in His infinite grace, keep us so conscious of the place He has brought us into unconditionally, that we may walk worthy of it, and thus enjoy, in their fullest extent, all the conditional blessings that belong to it.

W. F. B., *Words of Faith* 3:133-135.

Chapter 4.5

The Old Man and The New Man

The Old Man

It is well to have an understanding of what the old man and the new man is. It should be noted that the NIV misleads souls on these matters.

For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin (Rom. 6:6, NIV).

Our old man has been crucified with [him], that the body of sin ¹⁷ might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin (Rom. 6:6, JND);

since you have taken off your old self with its practices (Col. 3:9, NIV).

having put off the old man with his deeds (Col. 3:9, JND).

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires (Eph. 4:22, NIV).

[namely] your having put off according to the former conversation the old man which corrupts itself according to the deceitful lusts (Eph. 4:22, JND).

The NIV's "old self" is not the same as the "old man." The words "old self" do not properly point to something *generic*. F. G. Patterson observed:

The terms "old man" and "new man" are very definitely used in scripture. I judge that neither term can be used of an individual *as such*. {NIV says, self} That is, an individual could not say, "I am the old man;" nor, "I am the new." The terms are generic and comprehensive, embracing -- the first -- all that we were "in Adam;" and the second -- all that believers are "in Christ." Nor do I find that scripture will allow us to say that we have the "old man" in us -- while it teaches most fully, that we have "the flesh" in us to the end; if it works, we read "with the flesh (we serve) the law of sin" (Rom. 7:25). ¹⁸

The old man is not a nature, though it involves the old nature; the old man is characterized as having a nature that is opposed to God, and this nature stamps its character on the activities of the

old man. It is fallen Adam as my position and state before God. In Col. 3:9 we see that the old man commits deeds and in Eph. 4:2 that he corrupts himself. The Christian can joyfully recognize that the old man was crucified -- with Christ. God has dealt with the old man on the cross by death. The Christian is thus viewed as having put off the old man. The sinful nature is not said to be put off, nor does Col. 2:11 indicate that. Observe that a person is held responsible because it is *the person* who commits the deeds and corrupts himself. So I, the responsible I, as seen in the Adam standing, am gone before God in the crucifixion of Christ; but I, as seen in Christ, stand before God in Christ's acceptance (Eph. 1:6).

I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, *I*, but Christ lives in me; but [in] that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the [faith] of the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me (Gal. 2:20).

So, there is the "I" of identity, ¹⁹ the "I" of responsibility, that is no longer connected with fallen Adam, in God's sight; the old man is judicially removed from before God. The new "I" is: "but Christ lives in me." He is my new life. "When the Christ is manifested who [is] our life . . ." (Col. 3:4). The new "I" that stands before God is Christ.

. . . (Gal. 2:20) . . . (Rom. 8:5, 9). The importance of this change is very great, for it shows that my personality is no longer identified in the sight of God with my former sinful self, or the sin that exists in my fallen nature, and with which I have daily to contend, but with the life of Christ and the Spirit which he has given, and which dwells in *me*, as well as with the person of Christ who appears *for me* at the right hand of God, from whom both proceed, for God has bestowed on us the life and Spirit of Christ to correspond to the position which He has brought us into in Christ, in order to render complete His divine operation on our behalf, and that we may be able to enter into the position acquired for us by Christ through the partaking thus of His Spirit who dwells in us, and is our life. Thus the apostle says, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (for it is at once the life of Christ and [the indwelling of] the Holy Ghost) hath made me free from the law of sin and death" {Rom. 8:2}. And again, "Christ liveth in me," and "To me to live is Christ." ²⁰

When we say that the old man is crucified, and thus judicially

17. "The body of sin" refers to sin in us as a whole, as a totality:

He takes the totality and system of sin in a man, as a body which is nullified by death; its will is judged and no longer masters us. (*Synopsis* 4:110, Stow Hill ed.).

18. *A Chosen Vessel*, p. 51.

19. Cp. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:439.

20. *Justification and Acceptance with God*, p. 50. (Present Truth Publishers ed., 1994). The whole chapter from which this is extracted will help the reader much.

gone before God, we need to carefully note that the flesh is still in us (Gal. 5:17; 1 John 1:8).

The New Man

Here again the NIV spoils the truth.

and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator (Col. 3:10, NIV).

and having put on the new, renewed into full knowledge according to the image of him that has created him (Col. 3:10, JND).

To be made new in the attitude of your minds; And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:23, 24, NIV).

And being renewed in the spirit of your mind; and [your] having put on the new man, which according to God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:23, 24, JND) [“Lit. ‘righteousness and holiness of the truth:’ see v. 21.].

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that according to God was created in righteousness and holiness of truth (W. Kelly).

J. N. Darby wrote:

The new man is created, it is a new creation, and a creation after the model of that which is the character of God, righteousness and holiness of truth.²¹

But in this epistle to the Colossians we find that there is a new nature, an intrinsic change, not of the flesh indeed, but of the man. For we are viewed, not merely as quickened *by* the Son, but as dead and risen with Christ, the Man who had died, so as to have passed out of -- put off -- the old standing of a child of Adam, and into a risen one with Christ -- put on the new man. This is at once a standing and a state before God, a source of tastes, of sentiments, of desires, of arguments, and of moral capacities, which are in connection with the very nature of God, who has caused it to spring up in the heart. We are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us. But this source is a life, which needs that the Holy Ghost should reveal to it the objects that are suited to it, and that awaken these tastes and feelings, which satisfy them and cause them to grow. It needs that the Spirit of God should act in it to give it strength; but it is a real life, a nature which has its tastes attached to its very existence . . .²²

Here we will consider an extended quotation from F. G. Patterson:

We now come to the New Testament, where we find a gradual unfolding of God’s ways as to the “new man”; indeed, we may say a new kind of man altogether from the first man. I would just draw attention to some of the salient points which are found there in the three great epistles, which, taken together, would give us the completeness of God’s thoughts, and His purposes in the new creation in Christ. I refer to Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians.

The first of these epistles unfolds in detail, the moral closing up of the history of the first man [cp. 1 Cor. 15:45-47], as fallen, under every advantage, and after every trial

from God: whether without law, as being proved lawless; or under law, as a law breaker, and this, subsequent to the possession of privileges and advantages, which were before the special dealings of God took place in a separate people. The end of the trial and time of testing was, when Christ came and was refused. “All (now) had sinned,” in looking back, and “come short of the glory of God” -- the measure now, and standard by which all would be judged. Man had been set up in perfection as a creature, and had fallen; could he now meet the burning rays of God’s glory? On this, as on all other grounds, all was now over, with the old man for ever.

God must now either end that man, whose will was set up against Him, by judgment in righteousness: or reveal Himself in sovereign grace through righteousness, in virtue of the work of Christ. I do not here, of course, enter upon this work of the cross, and the death, and resurrection of Christ; only looking at it, as the means, whereby God would close morally for faith the history of man in righteousness, and begin His new creation in His Son -- as head of a new race.

The section of the epistle in which God first shows how the race was all under judgment, and guilty before Him, ends in Rom. 3:19. We then find, immediately following, in Rom. 3:20, &c., how the righteousness of God is now manifested *for* the sinner, in God’s raising up His Son from death and setting Him on high; and not *against* him, as standing in his own responsibility. And this, too, “by faith in Jesus Christ,” personally; and “by faith in his blood,” as the means by which the righteousness of God was vindicated against sin. He thus stands in perfect justification from all his **guilt**.

But his **state** as a sinner in the first Adam is not thus ended. When we pass that section which deals in all details with his guilt, and which ends at Rom. 5:11, we are introduced to the manner, in which our whole state is dealt with, and closed in the death of Christ. We read in Rom. 6:6, “Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” There is nothing in the Romans about the “new man” in any wise. But there is the crucifixion of “our old man” fully set forth, in order that the body, or totality, of sin might be set aside. The nearest approach to anything positive on this head is found in the expression of Rom. 7:22, “I delight in the law of God after the *inner man*,” but it goes no further. While fully closing up the questions of our guilt and state, it goes no further, but while showing *Christ* risen, the believer is not said to be risen with Him. For this, we must have the next step, in the Epistle to the Colossians.

There is in Romans a new will shown as either struggling against the old -- the flesh, in Romans 7; or else, when the soul is set free, walking in “newness of spirit,” and “newness of life.” Romans gives us therefore, the crucifixion of “our old man” with Christ.

Now Colossians stands between Romans and Ephesians in doctrine. In the former, man is seen as alive in sins; the heart is going out after all its lusts unhinderedly. What then, must be done? He must be brought down into death -- the death of Christ -- to have his history closed: “Knowing this, that our old man is co-crucified with him.”

In Ephesians, we have man “dead in trespasses sins,” and consequently another kind of dealing must come in. Unlike the Romans, where he must be brought down into

21. *Synopsis* 4:320.

22. *Synopsis* 4:31.

death, because alive in sins, life must come in positively to quicken a dead soul in that condition, and to raise him up out of it; and all must be a new creation in Christ Jesus, who is in heavenly places.

Colossians, therefore, as we might suppose, would take in both sides -- dead in sins, and alive in them. This it does, looking back on our Romans condition, and looking forward to our Ephesians condition in Christ Jesus. Therefore we read, "In the which (sins, &c.) ye walked when ye *lived* in them" (Col. 3:7). And we also read, "And you, being *dead* in your sins," &c. (Col. 2:13). The saint therefore, is looked upon as "dead with Christ" from the elements of the world, as well as dead to sin, and dead to the law; and also risen with Christ, and though not sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, he is seeking those things "above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God [Col. 3:1]." He is, therefore, down here on earth.

This being so, he has not reached his new place with God in Colossians, though he is suited to the place as in life, and as risen with Christ. He has a new status, but not a new place [i.e., not viewed in it in Colossians]. We would not therefore find, here in the epistle, the "new man" spoken of as in Ephesians. Indeed it is remarkable, that when it is apparently spoken of in Col. 3:10, it falls far short of the full thoughts of Eph. 4:24; different words being used in the Greek original; and the word man (ἄνθρωπος) being omitted altogether (Col. 3:10).

We have, therefore, a different word for "new," used in Col. 3:10, as compared with Eph. 4:24. In Colossians it is νέος; in Ephesians καινός; ²³ the latter signifying what I may term familiarly by the graphic expression 'brand new!' a kind of man never seen or heard of before; ²⁴ while the former would be entirely new, but does not imply a new kind or genus, as the latter would.

We find, however, that the knitting up of both scriptures, Eph. 4:24 and Col. 3:10 is done by the Spirit of God in remarkable wisdom, by the use of these two words, being found in the construction of the verbs, "renewed" in Eph. 4:23, and Col. 3:10; that in Ephesians being compounded with the "new" of Colossians; and that in Colossians with the "new" of Ephesians. ²⁵ Wondrously wise are the scriptures of our God!

We may also here notice what is still the more striking and instructive, namely, that the word "putting off" is quite different in each epistle; in fact, there is no affinity at all between the words in Greek. In Colossians we have a word which signifies "passing out from under," or, "being divested of" something; as a garment. In Ephesians we have not this, but its being absolutely "laid aside," or "laid down." I might take off my garment in one action; and I may also, by another action, lay it aside when I have taken it off. We shall presently understand the reason why it should be thus in each epistle, coupled with what we have seen already.

There is an illustration of the use of these two words in the LXX {Septuagint Greek translation of Lev. 16:23, where Aaron, having finished the work of the great day of atonement, clothed in the white linen garments, first "*puts off*" those garments, and then leaves them in the tabernacle of the congregation. I would also refer the English reader to Acts 7:58, where the verb of Eph. 4:24, and translated "putting off" -- which should be, more correctly, "laying aside" -- is used by Stephen's murderers, who "laid down" their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul; and also to Heb. 12:1, where the same word is translated "lay aside," as to "every weight," &c.

In fact, while Colossians gives us the *subjective* side of the "new man" (what is practical life in which the saint lives here while walking on earth), Ephesians gives us the *objective* side of the "new man," as showing us what he is on high. Colossians being rather Christ in us.

In Romans, therefore, we find "our old man crucified": in Colossians the "old man parted with," and the subjective side of the "new man." While in Ephesians we have the old man wholly "laid aside," where we are seen as all that we are in Christ -- the objective presentation of the full 'brand-new' man: an absolutely new creation in Christ.

We may read Eph.4:21-23, thus: "If so be ye have heard him, and in him have been instructed, as is truth in Jesus (namely) your having laid aside, according to the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the lusts of deceit. But be made new [that is, absolutely new] in the spirit of your mind. And your having been invested with the new man [that is, the brand-new thing] which is after God, [or according to God] having been created in righteousness [not innocence] and holiness of the truth."

This "holiness of the truth," stands in contrast with the "lusts of deceit" of verse 22. The deceit of the serpent having produced the lusts of the heart at the beginning; and righteousness being the basis of God's new creation, he is formed -- created -- in it, and in holiness (absolute separation from evil) of the truth, which has begotten him.

As to the passage in Colossians corresponding and filling up on the practical side, we may read: "Your having been invested with the new" (νέος), he does not write "man" (ἄνθρωπος) -- this word only being used of the full absolute thing in Eph. 4:24 -- "which is continuously being made new toward perfect knowledge, according to the image of the Creator of him."

Now remark again, that in Colossians we have *Christ* as the example of all for the new (man). Your life is hid with him in God (Col. 3:3). The characters of Christ as the elect of God, presented as forming and practiced (Col. 3:12 and 13). The *word* of Christ is to dwell in him richly (Col. 3:16). In fact, as verse 11 states, "Christ is all, and in all." While in Ephesians it is "*God*," and the nature of God is presented as the standard of all. The "new man" there is created after God (Eph. 4:24). He is to be an imitator of God (Eph. 5:1). To walk in *love* (which Christ showed fully) and walk as children of *light* -- God's two essential characteristics, what He is (Eph. 5:2 and 8).

Again, we have more: we have in Colossians the "*image* of him that created him." In Ephesians we have rather "*likeness*" to God Himself pressed (κατὰ θεόν).

Here, therefore, we come back to these words as at the first, "likeness" and "image;" the new man of Ephesians

23. See also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 13:235; 23:356; also *The Bible Treasury* 6:206.

24. It is not Adam innocent, nor Adam fallen, and righteousness under law, but a positively new creation.

25. It has been noted that the καινός of Eph. 4:24 and the νέος of Col. 3:10, are characteristic of each epistle. In Ephesians it is a new creation in *contrast* with an old; in Colossians it is a practical new life in which we live; though the care is taken to show that it is a new thing entirely, formed of God.

being morally like God -- seen in his true place as in Christ in heaven; and as objectively presented to us there in Him. Therefore, when we come into the practical life -- the subjective side, in Col. 3 we have "image," because there he walks on earth at the present, but is morally to represent God, who was fully represented in Christ Himself, and who is "all."

Then again, as to the exhortation of each epistle connected with the "new man." We find in Col. 3:9, "Lie not one to another." There it is the practical life. But in Eph. 4:25 we have, "Wherefore having laid aside lying, speak truth" to each other. Here, with the old man who has been laid aside, goes the thing itself -- lying. Not merely is the exhortation, as in Colossians, to refuse the practice of it; but the thing is looked upon as gone here, and the exhortation takes the positive side, exhorting to speak the truth, &c., as in the other parts of the context in the epistle. There alone, too, have we the conflict of the saint in its true and only measure. Satan is again on the scene in a special way, to oppose this man of a new creation, as at the first he did in the old. On this I do not enter here.²⁶

It is recommended to the reader that he consult the *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 27:82-86 concerning these things; 16:151 concerning the false notion of dying to sin; and 16:152, 27:86, 283, and 34:457 concerning the word mortify.

26. *A Chosen Vessel* (Chapter 6, "The New Man"), pp. 59-68.

Chapter 4.6

The Rule of Life for the Christian

The Rule of the New Creation

But far be it from me to boast save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom [the] world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For [in Christ Jesus] neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision; but new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 6:14-16).

The rule for the Christian is the new creation. Those who seek to put the Christian under the “moral law” treat the Christian as no more than a millennial saint, at best. Such undermine the truth of the new creation.

Well did JND write:

First of all, I look for the rule of the Christian life -- the rule of the life which the Christian has received from Christ, which Christ *is* in him. If the Christian relationship is that in which I am, the measure and form of my relationship, my rule of life, must be that of Christ in me, of Christ's life here below, and of the relationship in which the possession of that life puts me.²⁷

The relationship of the life of Christ in me puts me in His place before God! Let us never forget that Christ's place before God is our place! We are taken into God's favor in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6).

... I have an entirely new status before God in resurrection, in virtue of this work of Christ. The risen Christ is the pattern and character of my acceptance, as He is the cause of it. As He is, so am I in the world.²⁸

New Creation Responsibility

The whole question of our responsibility, as living in the life of man before God, is settled by Christ's judicially bearing the consequences before God, and by the death of the life in which we stood as sinners. But then Christ is now in a new life. He is risen, and we are alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me. I am quickened together with Christ, and raised up together. God has quickened us together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses. They are buried in His grave, and I am alive anew and without them.

But more than this. There is a divine righteousness in

which Christ stands before God, as risen; that is, in which I stand in the power of a new life as risen with Him. I am made the righteousness of God in Him. As He is, so am I in this world. This is in the reality of a life in which we live, which is Christ: and of a divine righteousness in which we stand before God, which is Christ. “Not I, but Christ liveth in me.” It is a real, living, certain position before God, in which I through grace and Christ are one, though all flows from, and, thank God, is dependent on Him. God has given us eternal life, and that life is in His Son. “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life”: but then it is perfect righteousness already before God.

More than this, I am a child, a son. Such is my relationship with God. I have eternal life. I am in a known blessed fixed relationship with God, where grace has placed me through the working of the same power in which Christ was raised from the dead, and set at God's right hand. I am not only in it, but it is my relationship with God, and there is none but this. The old one is passed; the new one, founded on divine righteousness, flows from my being really born of God, made partaker of the divine nature. I cannot be in any other. It is my being, my existence, before God -- the life and relationship in which He has placed me, and in which I live from Him. The old one is gone in Christ's grave.

What is now my responsibility? To make all efforts to obtain eternal life by my conduct? I have it. To make out righteousness? I am the righteousness of God in Christ: He is my righteousness. To seek to win God's favor? He has loved me so as to give His Son for me, and accepted me in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6). To win a position with God? He has made me His child and son. “Now are we the sons of God.” What can I seek other, or more, than to say, “as he is, so am I in this world”? Here my soul is at peace -- a precious thing! At peace with my God and Father, in known relationship with Him. Christ is gone to His Father and my Father, His God and my God. Blessed thought! What a place of peace and love, according to the very nature of God, and the revelation of Him by the Son, it sets me in.

Here then I enter into the true kind of responsibility, in contrast with the hopeless and sin -- convincing one into which I got by the fall; a responsibility which was really according to a lost position, that I might find out my ruin and condemnation. My responsibility now is a responsibility flowing from the position in which I am; which belongs in peace to it, not one by which it is to be attained -- a responsibility such as all our responsibilities are according to God, that of walking according to the position in which I am already. He that says he abides in Christ ought to walk as He walked. A child of God, and such for ever, ought to walk as a child of God, “as dear children.”

27. *Collected Writings* 10:172.

28. *Collected Writings* 7:282.

My responsibility is that of a Christian. I am to walk as one, because I am one, not that I may be one. The fact that I am a child for ever is not a reason for not walking like one. It is only the baseness of a morally ruined being, that he could suppose that he was not to be consistent with the relationship he was in because it was an unchangeable one. As we are in our Christian position in virtue of a new life, such a thought cannot at bottom be that of a Christian. This is the reasoning of the apostle in Rom. 6 -- not that I ought not, but that I cannot, if dead, live to what I am dead to.

My responsibility then is not as a man in the first Adam, but as a Christian in the Last. On the first ground I am wholly lost already; it is vain to talk of responsibility, unless to convince of sin. On the second, because I am saved, and a child of God in the family, I am become responsible for walking as such, like the example of the Firstborn of many brethren. It is not connected with the possibility of losing my position more than of my gaining one. It flows from the position I am in. I am to walk like a child of God since I am one. It is a responsibility of peace and joy -- what James calls "the perfect law of liberty," because my new nature finds its delight in what God wills and commands, and in obeying Him. It finds delight in Him, but therefore in obeying Him, and also in what He wills. The nature I have received is that divine nature which expresses itself in the commands given to me; only there is also authority in them. But the commands are morally the expression of the nature which I have, and which delights in them, and finds the comfort of perfect light and guidance in them. And here is the immense and total difference of the commands of the law and Christ's commands. The law says, "Do this and live." Christ's commands are the expression of the life which He had, and the guide of that which I have. The life was the light of men. The perfect expression of the will and nature of God in man, which His words and commands expressed; and now we can say, "Which thing is true in him and in you," because He is our life in the power of the Holy Ghost. Christ was the real expression of divine life in man; that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us.

Hence it was the light of men. It was in the place, condition, and state of men, and hence obedient also dependent. Thus was it brought out in His temptation. This life is ours, since His exaltation on high, when He had presented a perfect righteousness to the Father. In that I have a perfect peace and perfect favor, and now the only thing I have to do is to glorify Him, "that the life of Jesus may be manifested in my mortal body." I can say, "I abide in him" -- placed with the Father in His perfectness before Him -- a place of joy and peace, and witness of eternal love. I ought then so to walk as He walked. Christian responsibility is the responsibility of being a Christian; that is, of walking because we are in Christ, as Christ walked, through Christ dwelling in us.

Our place before God is Christ -- our part to exhibit Christ before men. This, while the flesh is still in us, and the world around us, needs the daily cross: "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal body." Our responsibility is not to attain unto life, but to manifest it, in spite of hindrance, yea, through hindrances, and in the midst of the world. Two things have to be noticed here. First, the manifestation of the divine life, in which, through the Holy Ghost, we are united to Christ, has to be carried on in the midst of temptation, and in spite of the existence of

the old nature, the flesh, in us, by which all that is in the world can become a temptation to us. Communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, and the manifestation of the divine life, can only have place so far as the flesh is practically held -- as we have the title to hold it -- for dead, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal body.

Here is the daily exercise of the life we have got, in which we learn what we are practically; and the faithfulness, graciousness, and tenderness of God are daily experienced, and to be felt by us; in which we have our senses exercised to discern good and evil, the contrast between God and the flesh is deeply learned, what is mere nature discerned through what is spiritual while the effect of all is, that one is emptied of self, and Christ acquires, in a certain sense, an exclusive place, and becomes all in all. The soul is satisfied with Him, and hence in lowliness and singleness of eye can discern what is flesh, and either avoid it, or content itself without the false support its efforts or objects give to the natural heart, which leans on them.²⁹ ♦

There are two distinct aspects of the church, however, presented to us in Ephesians 1 and 2 -- the body of Christ is in heaven, and the habitation of God by the Spirit on earth. This second character of the church is a deeply important one. The church of God, being formed by the Holy Ghost on the earth, necessarily involves the responsibility of the church to manifest upon the earth the glory of Him that set her thus. Responsibility never changes God's grace. But while the church remains upon the earth, she is responsible for the glory of her absent Head down here -- not as under law, of course; but the church is responsible to represent the glory of Him who has redeemed it, and put it here. It is to be a light in the midst of darkness -- "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world"; "showing forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." And, as Paul says in 2 Cor. 3, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men." -- The word is "epistle," and not "epistles," of Christ. It is one body -- one transcript of Christ. The church was set as Christ's epistle of commendation to all men, that in it men might read and see the power of redemption, and the character of Him who is out of sight, through the Holy Ghost dwelling in it, and forming it to be the visible witness of its invisible Head. Jesus says, in John 17, "that they all may be one." And to what end? "That the world may believe [not yet "know" -- that is the fruit of the glory] that thou hast sent me." This should have been the effect of this oneness in reference to the present time. When the church is in manifested glory with Christ, and as Christ, the world must of necessity know that the Father sent the Son; and not only so, but will know that the Father has loved us as He loved Jesus, seeing us in the same glory as Jesus. It must, therefore, be previous to that time, that the world should see the church as one, in order to believe -- should see the church in this place of responsibility as this epistle of Christ. Its responsibility is, that the life of the Head in heaven should be manifested on the earth in power. Thus we see what a responsible place it is to be under grace, for it is through our being under such free grace as we are, that our proper responsibility comes in. When we come on this

ground of a responsible body on the earth, we find the Lord, of course, taking cognizance of the actings of the church under this responsibility.³⁰ ◆

30. *Collected Writings* 5:275, 276. See also “The Rule of Life: What Is It?” *Collected Writings* 10:169; also 7:282.

