

*Life and Propitiation:
An Examination of
Certain “New Doctrines”*

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 4:9-10).

W. J. Lowe

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Preface to the 2003 Edition

This edition of *Life and Propitiation* is printed from the 1885 printing by G. Morrish, London, written in answer to F. W. Grant's paper, *Life and the Spirit*.

A few years ago, F. W. Grant's paper, *Life in Christ, and Sealing with the Spirit*, was reprinted. The paper in the reader's hand is one of a number of answers to that paper by F. W. Grant, and comments also on F. W. Grant's erroneous doctrine that propitiation is by substitution, which it certainly is not.

The main offense of F. W. Grant's teaching concerning life and the Spirit is not the matter of when the seal of the Spirit occurs now, but of his teaching that Old Testament saints had life *in* the Son and were *in* the Son. That places OT saints in a position they were not in -- and could not be in until the grain of wheat had fallen into the ground, died, and rose again (John 12:24; 20:22). It was *then* that the life of the risen stalk flowed in the grains that formed one plant with Himself as risen. It is the resurrection-life of the risen Man, the Son, that is in the grains that form one plant in Him. Saints who have eternal life in the Son, and are in the Son, are *in Him* in connection with His risen manhood -- else we would be *in deity*. So, it follows from F. W. Grant's doctrine of OT saints having life in the Son, and being in the Son, that they were not in Him in connection with His risen humanity; if they were *in Him*, then they must have been *in deity* -- for at that time the Son had not taken humanity into His Person, and had not died, and had not arisen from the dead. *He abode alone* (John 12:24) until so risen from the dead. No one was in the Son until He was risen, and when risen He brought the born-again disciples into a new connection with Himself (John 20:22) on the very day He arose as Head of a new creation -- a new creation begun with His very rising in resurrection power. He is the beginning of this new creation (Rev. 3:14).

Consistent with his false doctrine, F. W. Grant taught that when the Lord so breathed on the disciples and said, "Receive [the] Holy Spirit" (John 20:22), nothing happened. He had to deny the communication of something that he believed OT saints already had. So, according to him, what the Lord did was only an act pointing to Pentecost -- the coming of the Spirit to form the church! One might as well say that when God "breathed into his nostrils {Adam}" the breath of life, nothing happened. The risen Son "breathed into [them]" (John 20:22). In one case man was brought into the first creation; in John 20 they were brought into the new creation. The risen Son breathed into them the Spirit

as power of life in the Son. Pentecost is the Spirit's personal presence as come to form the body united to the head in heaven. In John we have the blessed truth of being *one plant* with the risen Son (John 12:24) and in Paul (as is better known) we have the truth of being *one body* united to the Head in heaven. Each figure is suited in bringing before us these respective truths. Thus, in John we have *oneness* (see John 17 for its display) and in Paul we have *union*. In John we have the *character of the life* (in the Son) and in Paul we have *the sphere where we have it* (in Christ).

It is deeply to be regretted that such departures from the truths recovered in the 1800s should occur; but in view of the history of Christianity it is not surprising, though departure from anything God has been pleased to give ought to profoundly humble us before Him -- especially if we have a special responsibility in connection with such recovered truth. The greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility, and the more serious the departure from it.

The publisher trusts that there will be some who will profit from reading this book and also be able to help others in their understanding of the matters brought before us in this book.

* * * * *

Material in braces { } has been added. In some cases this is for Scripture references -- to facilitate making a Scripture index. In other cases, pages references in the first edition have been inserted to correspond to this printing. Any added footnotes are in braces. Also, some references to the writings of J. N. Darby have been inserted in braces. The reader may rest assured that the text has not been tampered with.

Present Truth Publishers.

Preface

The somewhat incorrect impression (without my knowledge) and the circulation of a private letter of mine ¹ which grew out of previous correspondence, and which by itself and unexplained is calculated to lead to misapprehension, imposes on me the obligation to publish, in another form, what I have long been deeply exercised about before the Lord, being chiefly distressed at the unsuspecting or careless indifference, and still more at the favor, with which this system of doctrine has been received in many places. For the author of it I feel unfeigned grief, yet praying that in God's mercy he may be delivered from the snare into which he has fallen. Personal affection for him, reciprocal too (I say it with thankfulness to God), hindered me for long from saying anything at all; I desired rather to wait in hope that the Lord would graciously open his eyes, and lead him to listen to the oft repeated exhortations of his brethren to withhold or withdraw the publication of views which he well knows are a fruitful cause of sorrow and division. But warning and entreaty, on the part of many, have been expended upon him in vain. Nothing stays his avowed determination to stand by his tract; and he seeks to shelter himself from the righteous application of Rom. 16:17 by throwing the onus of division upon others. The Lord is the judge of all this, and the facts are more or less before the saints. With great reluctance and anguish of heart I venture now to print upon this matter; for it is evident that as long as the writings remain unwithdrawn, the cause of the trouble remains, and it becomes a duty to the saints, for the Lords sake, to set forth their nature, in as far as He in grace may enable one so to do.

I do not call in question the sincerity of the author, or doubt his being fully convinced that his views are based on the scripture, to which he himself appeals. I believe he is unconscious of the nature of the system he has elaborated, but which has to be examined calmly in the Lord's presence. I have no pretension to enter into all its details, desiring to confine myself to that part of the doctrines which stands as title to this paper, though other points which it

1. Mr. Grant's published statement makes it appear that this is the only letter I wrote, which is far from being correct. My first letter was in June last {1884}; the second, end of September, both containing earnest and affectionate entreaty to pause and weigh these things in the presence of God. Others acted similarly. When at length the larger tract appeared, I wrote again, after a considerable interval, on December 23rd, and in another tone; for I felt the time for mere entreaty was passed. This letter was printed, as stated above.

is difficult to avoid are occasionally alluded to; for in fact, the system hangs together. This is even the author's boast. He rejoices in its "consistency," as he often expresses it and this very thing has betrayed him further, I have no doubt, than a few years back he would have dared to go. But he cannot expect his brethren to follow him without first inquiring, in the presence of God, whither he is leading them. Surely faithfulness to the Lord imposes this on each one of His saints. It is for these I write, beseeching those of my brethren who have read these publications to put the question to their own consciences in His presence: Do these writings minister Christ to the soul, feeding it with what is divine, and as such often necessarily unexplained, though revealed in grace and presented by God to the simplicity of faith? Or do they, by seeking to explain what God has not explained and render in this way divine mysteries intelligible to the human mind, lead the soul gradually to a place and standing where the rock which was under its feet is exchanged for a quicksand, and where also, as an inevitable result, the direct authority of the word of God upon the soul is weakened and even annulled?

I must ask the reader's kind indulgence as to the long notes which encumber part of this tract; I have endeavored to keep the text as much to the point as I could, and so thought it more convenient to put into notes, matter which, though not without collateral interest, would in the text have led to digressions more embarrassing than helpful.

Quotations are generally from the Authorised Version, unless there seemed special advantage (as in the epistles) in taking them from the New Translation {of J. N. Darby} for exactness' sake.

I desire to express here the deep obligation under which I am to those brethren who have kindly assisted me in the correction of these pages.

W.J.L.

Part 1: Introductory

It is the privilege of the Christian to be occupied with what is good and directly for edification (Phil. 4:8, 9; Rom 14:19). But when we find that new doctrines have grown up in our midst and are freely taught, and that a place is claimed for them on the ground that we are to “forbear one another in love”; when it is distinctly admitted that these doctrines are different from those we have hitherto accepted as the truth, drawn immediately from the word itself; when the truth, which we have through God’s grace been taught, is impugned as “an unwritten creed, usurping to itself the authority that belongs only to the word of God,” in order that divers new doctrines may take the place of this so-called “unwritten creed” -- it surely becomes us to test these doctrines in obedience to the exhortation, “Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.” The duty of examining them is the more incumbent on us, as (being avowedly based upon much of what through grace we all hold in common), they are insisted on and taught as a more correct expression of the truth by their author, who professes to find countenance for part, at all events, of his peculiar views in writings we little expected to support them. But are we to “forbear in love” with what may be found to lead us to developments which go *beyond* scripture?

These doctrines are set forth in *Help and Food: for the household of faith*, a periodical published in America, and more particularly in a tract entitled *Life in Christ, and Sealing with the Spirit*, by F. W. GRANT. It is with this tract (which grew, as the author states, out of a very much shorter one on the same subject) that the following pages are specially occupied.

At the outset of our inquiry we are met by the fact, that we have to do with a carefully elaborated system *reasoned* out of the word of God. We have not in the tract an orderly exposition of scripture, but “texts” are *brought forward*² (it is our author’s own expression), culled from many different parts of it, which treat of different subjects, in order to support statements authoritatively laid down.

The opening pages illustrate this. A passage is quoted, some word or words in it are emphasized; another passage, stated to be “similar,” is brought to bear upon it;³ a conclusion is drawn as a necessary consequence, and thus doctrines

2. “Surely it is in vain to bring forward texts, if these are not decisive” (p. 26).

3. There is a glaring example of this, on p. 11. The author is speaking of “community of life and
(continued...) ”

are “reached” (p. 35) and we are led on step by step by the force of logic to what “it is not surely possible therefore to deny” (p.12); and this last, on examination, is found to be nowhere stated in scripture -- to be, on the contrary, in whole or in part, a misrepresentation of its teaching. (See for details p. 28 {21 below}). I add here some other examples of our author’s method.

On page 24 an “actual fact” is arrived at by a gratuitous assumption as to the Old Testament saints, a purely imaginary application to them, when no longer on this earth, of what is stated about other saints after Christ had come, and by a second gratuitous statement as to eternal life which necessarily separates the possession of it from the consciousness of possessing it -- a characteristic of this system. All this is set down as “the doctrine which scripture teaches,” and in which “there is no difficulty at all” (p. 23). When we search the scriptures, however, nothing of this is to be found “written.”

Take again the reasoning on Rom. 8:9 (pp. 24-28), where our author, laboring to define the sense of “in the flesh,” reduces the thought to a fixed form, whether *standing* or *state* be treated of, calling to his aid in the process passages from the Gospel of John which treat of an entirely different subject, in order to prove the meaning that should be attached to an expression which John *does not use*. The reader is embarrassed with a question put in such a way

3. (...continued)

nature,” and brings in John 15 as to which he himself, three pages further on, quotes a passage from the “Synopsis,” which explains that

the subject here is not that relationship with Christ in heaven by the Holy Ghost, which cannot be broken; but of that link which even then was formed here below, which might be *vital* and eternal, or which might not. Fruit would be the proof.

Mr. G. underlines the word “*vital*,” being so full of his theory, I suppose, as to shut his eyes to the “*might not*” which follows; but can he expect his readers to do the same? Will such an expedient lead us to accept the introduction of John 15 into a subject to which it does not belong? He closes the paragraph by stating that the Lord

can *even* say, *comparing* Himself and His people: “As the living Father hath sent me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me”;

(the italics are mine) and that without a hint as to the contrast between us and Him implied in the word “eateth.” (Similar reasoning on John 17:21, on the previous page, is worse still, in this respect.) The scriptures may be thus made to prove anything.

Community of life and nature,

he says (p. 11),

realized in dependence, and manifested in community of word and works, this is what the terms we have been looking at imply;

and at the end of the next paragraph:

Life it is, we are assured every way, of which such language speaks.

as to beg the whole matter at issue: “May one have this [that is, eternal] life, and still the wrath of God abide?” (p. 26). He would lead his reader to infer that of course one cannot. But what light has he got? The point of the tract which Mr. Grant is reviewing, and the *real* point at issue, is, May a man have life and yet, for some reason or other, still have *the sense in his soul* of dreading the wrath of God? We all know that such an experience is as common as possible, and God has given His truth to deliver from it (1 John 4:17-19). Of course I in no way would justify such a state of soul, or imply for an instant that a soul should be encouraged to remain in it, by the assurance that it *has* life. There is such a thing as deliverance, blessed be God; and when that is known, the soul enjoys its true Christian position. But there are to be met with every day, as our author of course admits, quickened souls who are not delivered. As this has been often explained at length, I have no need to dwell upon it. But to return. He concludes his case against the extract he is reviewing by invoking to his aid 1 Cor. 3:1-3, where the expression “fleshly” is employed as to the *walk* (“Are ye not *carnal* [fleshly], and *walk*, as men?); and, without so much as hinting at this important difference in the application of the term, reasons from it as to its meaning when employed in Rom. 7:14, as to the condition of an undelivered soul under law, when the subject in hand is the fact and result of the Spirit indwelling the believer (Rom. 8:9, compared with 7:4⁴). And lastly, he sums up his arguments by an “inevitable consequence,” that “in the flesh,” means “a sinner in his sins.” This henceforth becomes the stereotyped systematic value of the expression we are expected to receive. That it represents a part of the truth I do not question. But I would ask the reader if he be content to accept this hard and fast definition, in exchange for the forms of living truth we find in the word of God? The blessed and delicate distinctions of the living word are rudely handled, even trodden under foot, in building up the doctrines of our author and in justifying his conclusions, and that too at the expense of “suggesting” questions as to truths hitherto simply and freely enjoyed in communion with God.

One is happy to agree with the statement (p. 31),⁵ that “the truth as to what

4. I do not enter into any argument as to the truth referred to. The tract reviewed by our author (“On Sealing with the Holy Spirit,” and its sequel, “Deliverance from the Law of Sin” (London: G. Morrish {by J. N. Darby}) is the best answer to his theories in this respect. I merely refer to it above, to show the characteristic reasoning, and the partial way in which he presents the points he discusses. The tract *abounds* with this. Notice as an instance the curious expression (p. 57) which professes to resume the quotation following it: “Much more than this is contended for: namely, that one must be justified by the *assurance of one’s own justification*” (sic). Does the article reviewed say this? Let any candid reader compare carefully the passages.

5. The reference to the Galatian saints (p. 30) is singularly unfortunate. They were not anxious,
(continued...)

we are does not, thank God, depend upon our apprehension of it.” But why is it not added that there can neither be possession, nor spiritual enjoyment of it, until the truth itself is *believed*? Deliverance {Rom. 7} can only come from the truth being believed, brought home in power to the soul by the Spirit of God. “The words that I speak unto you,” says the Lord, “they are spirit and they are life.” Theological disquisitions as to ways and times and means may have a certain book interest; but the undelivered soul wants something else, and finds in the living word of God what suits its varying condition, streams flowing fresh from Christ, the fountain of life. Stereotyped forms will not satisfy it. But what are we to expect from one who in the face of Rom. 4:6-7, can write:

Forgiveness is, in a certain sense, the very opposite of justification; and, then proceeds to present Propitiation as less than Substitution (p. 50) -- the exact opposite of the truth, if Lev. 16 is to teach us, anything? Will this sort of theology help a soul groping in darkness, out into the light and joy which bursts upon it, when it hears and believes that

David declares the blessedness of the man to whom God *reckons righteousness* without works, [saying]: Blessed are they whose lawlessnesses *have been forgiven*, and whose sins have been covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not at all reckon sin?

And when a soul is in the light, does the subtle distinction sought to be drawn help us to understand better what forgiveness, or justification, is? I venture to say, in presence of Rom. 5:1-10, that both get obscured in the soul; and not only so, but that the point of the blessing in vv. 10 and 11 is lost.

No one questions the statement, or rather what I suppose the author means by it (for, as a statement, it is most unsatisfactory), that

faith in forgiveness was never made the condition of forgiveness, but sprang out of the certification of the forgiveness itself (p. 41).

5. (...continued)

undelivered souls, unable as yet to believe or appropriate to themselves the fact of their sonship. It is not the fact of their having the Spirit that was in doubt, but that their piety, if I may so say -- the means they sought of bringing to perfection what had been “begun in the Spirit,” -- *practically* denied their possession of it, and this the apostle sought to enforce upon their consciences. As expressed in the tract on “Sealing,” quoted by Mr. Grant (p. 55),

They had in their minds given up Christianity,

-- that is, in its essence and distinguishing character. But the apostle appeals to them as to those who well *knew* that they had received the Spirit at the beginning: “This only I wish to learn of you, Have ye received the Spirit on the principle of works of law, or of the report of faith? Are ye so senseless? Having begun in Spirit, are ye going to be made perfect in flesh?” (Gal. 3:2-3).

Of course, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It is so written. Faith does not come by feeling; nor is it ever a reason for God's acting, as if by it we merited something from Him. We do not get life *because* we believe, we get it, *in believing*: "He that believes has it." So far we are agreed. But one asks, Why does the writer regularly, persistently, leave out the "*blessedness*" which accrues to the one forgiven, and which scripture as regularly associates with forgiveness, as he himself is obliged to admit on p. 58 of his tract? ⁶ Why, in referring to the Lord's *first* word to the woman in Simon the Pharisee's house, does he entirely omit the *second* word? The point before us is, that the divine word which declares forgiveness is the ground of the believing soul's *assured enjoyment* of it. The Lord first says to the woman, "Thy sins are *forgiven*," -- and then He says, "*Thy faith* hath saved thee, go in peace." So in the case of the paralytic man: the Lord does not merely say, "Son be of *good cheer*, thy sins are forgiven thee" (which of itself implies however the point we insist on), but at the same time He grants to him the healing of his body, associating it in the closest way with the governmental forgiveness of which it was outwardly the expression:

That *ye* may *know* that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (then he saith to the paralytic), Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house (Matt. 9:2-7;

and so it is in Mark and Luke). It was the outward effect of the Lord's power on the man in healing him, that provoked the acknowledgment of it from the eyewitnesses: they "glorified God, who had given such power unto men." Our author not only divorces this connection, but so leaves the second part in the shade, that it practically disappears.

The above passages quoted by him *partially*, as I have shown, are made to do service in giving additional proof that "scripture at large," as well as Acts 2:38, teaches the appropriation of forgiveness *to*, not *by*, the believer (pp. 40, 42); not that "appropriation *by*" is, denied, but it is detached from the other, and is to be practically attained by a process of reasoning or by aid of ministry (pp. 35, 42). This is stated plausibly and asserted to be the "plain" teaching of scripture. And no doubt it is when one half of every passage quoted to prove it is omitted! Was there then no appropriation of forgiveness *by* the psalmist, when his roaring all the day long under God's heavy hand upon him was exchanged for the light and inward peace and joy, expressed in vv. 6, 7:

For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when *thou* mayest be *found*; surely in the floods of great waters it shall not come nigh to him.

6. But he does not like to leave it so, and labors hard to establish his system in spite of it, as we shall see presently.

Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah (Psa. 32)?

Did Joshua the high priest appropriate nothing when he was clothed with the new garments, and the high priest's mitre was put upon his head? Was nothing appropriated *by* Isaiah after the confession of his uncleanness "was wrung out of him," as our author states, when he hears the Lord's voice say, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" and, in the joy of deliverance, without a doubt or question, answers: "Here am I, send me"? And, in Acts 2, was there no appropriation of forgiveness *by* those who *gladly received his word* and were baptized, and who "received their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people"?

Every passage we look at only renders more unacceptable the system we are presented with, and which, for the satisfaction of appreciating certain theological distinctions, involves our giving up the blessed reality of the effect produced on the soul by the word of God, "which liveth and abideth for ever." We are asked to be content to know that God's word only appropriates His blessings *to* us; and then to be taught (p. 42) to appropriate to ourselves what God has appropriated to us, *because* "the *gifts* and calling of God are without repentance." This process of reasoning intervenes between us and the full sense of enjoyed forgiveness we seek for. The teacher has to help us over the interval somehow or other; for we are not to expect to find directly stated in the scripture such a thing as forgiveness being appropriated by the soul! It had become "a possibility" to those "guilty and convicted men" who in baptism, on the day of Pentecost, were "seeking" for a good conscience! So we are told.

Forgiveness becomes a *possibility* (we must not speak of justification yet) (p. 43).

Is this sober dealing with holy scripture?

But does not every expression which the Lord reads from the book of the prophet Esaias in the synagogue, entirely disprove this system? What is the meaning of deliverance to a captive? What is sight to a blind man? What the acceptable year of the Lord? Do we not find linked together in the closest possible way the glad tidings presented to the poor in the power of the Spirit's unction, and the effect produced in the soul that hears and who in hearing receives *sight*, the power to enjoy the light, and finds *deliverance*, the state in which to enjoy the Lord's favor. The appropriation *to*, and the appropriation *by*, go together. Can our author deny it? But what then becomes of his theory? Apparently he would avoid the difficulty by saying, in the postscript at the end of his tract, (or rather, making scripture say) that "having Christ you have all."

But so also said M. Scherer, when he turned to infidelity over thirty years ago.⁷

Our author complains that “experiences are brought in to supplement Christ in a really legal way.” I would ask the reader, in presence of the passages adduced, whether it is God, or “legal” man, that gives to experiences a place, which this system entirely ignores? Of course it is easy to run to extremes and exaggerate anything, our own experiences perhaps most easily of all, (not because God has so written His word as to put the two sides of appropriation inseparably together, but) because we are selfish and like to think about ourselves. But “to the law and to the testimony”: what does the scripture say? Mr. Grant, as we have seen, in seeking to establish his doctrine, leaves out one half of the scriptures he quotes. The point for us is to notice *how God presents the truth* in His word; what things He *links together*, and what things He keeps separate; for that is of vital importance for us to-day. He is wiser than we are, and knows how to adapt His truth to our weakness and dullness of hearing. And he has chosen to make “appropriation *to*” and “appropriation *by*” (to use the expressions of the tract) inseparable. One turns from the human copy to the divine model with a sense of inexpressible relief.

But this is not all. We find here “questions” raised without number, so that at last the poor reader is in a maze of uncertainty as to what he thought he already possessed, on the authority of the word read in simplicity. This is a characteristic of every theological system.

There is however another trait which is even worse still. We are in the presence of sustained reasoning such as that by which the Roman Catholic proves that Mary is the mother of God: she was the mother of Jesus Christ, and He is God; who can deny it? Who then can resist the evident conclusion? The author, to use an expression of his own, has “thought out” his system; and he delights in its “consistency,” and is strengthened in it by the force of contrast with the “inconsistencies” (p. 63) he finds, or thinks he finds, in others. When the system is found fairly to break down, he takes refuge in not knowing what the statements he reviews mean (p. 62). But the difficulty is of his own making, and is the result of his “putting together” things that have to be kept separate; for surely nothing is so varying as divers {different} states of soul, which is the matter treated of in this part of his tract. Pre-occupied with his theory, he habitually mis-states his premises and leaves out what in each case would disprove it altogether. It is at such a cost that “all falls readily into place and harmonizes with the general doctrine” (p. 50).

7. “Tout l’ évangile se concentre en Jésus-Christ . . . si l’on retranche le dogme de l’ inspiration, il reste Jésus-Christ . . . c’est le commencement et la fin, le centre et le tout.”

I give another example here from pp. 40, 41, already referred to. This, though merely a type (upon which, as such, we must be careful not to build doctrine, blessedly as it may confirm and often develop as to detail doctrine that is stated elsewhere in scripture), yet, in this particular instance, as presented by the Holy Ghost, clearly contradicts what it is quoted to establish. I refer to the peculiar case of the sin-offering in which no blood was shed, it being of fine flour (Lev. 5:11-13). Mr. Grant represents it thus:

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

Reading the above, one of course expects to find nothing in this offering which corresponds to the “sacrifice”; for it is, he says, “accepted as a sacrifice would have been”; and again, just above, remission of sins, “under the law was universally connected (save in only one case that I know) with *sacrifice*,”⁸ (p. 40). But when we look at the passage, what do we find? The scripture adds what, as usual, our author omits, and does not even hint at:

Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it,

8. This fact, by the way, contradicts the “argument” which we find in the tract-eight pages further on, where the author endeavors to show that the Spirit was given upon faith in Christ, repentance, and baptism, and that, in this connection, “the word of God absolutely omits altogether” faith in the *work* of Christ. Upon what then, we would ask, is REPENTANCE based? And what was the meaning of being baptized *for the* REMISSION OF SINS? Was this merely the appropriation of the blessing *to* those who “submitted to the authority of Christ”? The Lord says, it is “in his *blood*” (Matt. 26:28). Is not that His *work*? And so Eph. 1:7, intimately connected with the v. 13 which follows: “having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” Notice the way the apostles speak of the work among the Gentiles, -- so differently to this tract: “Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted *repentance unto life*” (Acts 11:18). Was not this a work *in* the soul producing a complete change in it, in connection with what it had been and had done? It is in these terms that the Spirit of God expresses what took place in the house of Cornelius, when Peter, having recounted the Lord’s death and resurrection, declared on the testimony of “all the prophets,” that “through his name whosoever believes in him should receive remission of sins”? Is the work of Christ absolutely omitted altogether? Was it not as from Isa. 53, that Philip, as the scripture says, “preached *Jesus*”? Had our author *merely* wished to guard us against making a Savior of *the cross*, instead of Him that hung upon it, we think he might have done so in fewer words and more to the point. We should have had no controversy with him then upon this matter.

even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, *according to the offerings made by fire unto the Lord*: it is a sin-offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him . . .” (vv. 12, 13).

Is it not clear that what made “the atonement,” was not the mere presentation of fine flour, as the tract implies, but the burning of the memorial of it upon the altar, “*according to the offerings made by fire unto the Lord*”? That is, it corresponded to the burning of the fat in the ordinary sin-offering. (Compare Lev. 4:10, 19, 26, and especially vv. 31, 35.) Does not this, from the fact of there being no blood shed, serve to direct special attention to that which our poor hearts so readily forget, -- and without which no blood-shedding could avail to accomplish redemption, -- the fire of judgment consuming that which was most excellent in the sacrifice? In type, the fire on the altar of burnt-offering tested and proved the absolute perfection and devotedness of Him who gave Himself for us. From thence the sacrifices went up in sweet savor which showed how God was glorified in respect of sin, and, at the same time, indicated the measure according to which He accepted the person of the offerer. In this way the fat of the sin-offering established the connection between this offering and the burnt-offering, which was cut into its various pieces and wholly burned as a sweet savor upon the altar. Only that in the case of the sin-offering, the person was defiled and communion with God interrupted; whereas in the other offerings, the worshiper’s communion was expressed in his approaching God’s altar. This important distinction had to be maintained. The sin-offering was peremptory; but the fat of it is treated as the fat of the peace-offering, and in Lev. 4:31 is stated to be burned “for a sweet savor unto the Lord.” In this particular case, the exceptional absence of blood-shedding brings into relief on the one hand the spotless humanity of Christ, apart from the anointing of the Spirit (for there was to be no oil, nor frankincense); and, on the other hand, His being tested by the fire of judgment as the sinbearer, -- which manifested His holiness and spotless perfection as nothing else did. ⁹ The

9. I add in note a word as to these sacrifices of Lev. 4, 5. It must be remembered that the relationship of the people of Israel with God was already established through the blood of the passover lamb; it was maintained through the great sacrifice of the day of atonement (Lev. 16), the typical basis of communion with God, though the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest; and the provision for defilement by the way was the red heifer (Num. 19). So that what we have in these chapters is rather the restoration of communion which has been interrupted. There are however principles of truth which have their application, though complex from the nature of the case; for now the way into the holiest is opened through the blood of Christ, who “suffered without the gate”; and all sacrifices coalesce in the one great antitype.

Sin is looked at in three ways: first, as an offence against God in Lev. 4; 2nd, as defilement (Lev. 5:1-13); 3rd, as a trespass, able to be estimated as such, and demanding restitution (Lev.

(continued...)

9. (...continued)

5:14-26). The answer to these respectively, after confession is made and the sacrifice offered, is *forgiveness*, *holiness*, and *righteousness*: these are seen in the three parts of Psa. 51:1-6, 7-13, and 14 to the end. In the *first* case the importance of the sacrifice is commensurate with the gravity of the evil, measured not by the wrong done against the commandments of the Lord, but by the relative position and responsibility of the person offending; in the *second*, it is measured by the capacity of the person; in the *third*, it is invariable whether the trespass is in the holy things, against one of the Lord's commandments, or against a neighbor. It is as to the second class, where defilement and holiness are in question, that we have as a matter of fact our greatest difficulty. We are slow in having our senses exercised to discern both good and evil; we do not readily admit that defilement is "*sin*." This then is the point on which the passage insists. There are three cases of impurity: first, indifference as to the presence of God when a witness is "sworn," adjured in God's name to declare the truth; secondly, the defiling contact with uncleanness, the dead body of an unclean animal or the uncleanness of man; thirdly, careless speaking with an oath;-- all which things are to be estimated not according to expediency or our imperfect thoughts, but in view of the fact of the presence of God in the midst of His people -- the holiness which His presence supposes and demands. It is a question of personal defilement; and the person so failing is "guilty," even though ignorant of what has occurred (v. 2), and in any case when he does know of it. The first sacrifice (Lev. 5:1-6) gives the general principle: it is the same as in the ordinary case of offence against the commandments of God by one of the people, in the end of Lev. 4. But it is not said here, "he shall be forgiven," as in vv 10, 13. It is no doubt implied, but I apprehend that is not the point in evidence here, as it was in Lev. 4. (I do not speak of the special case of sin of the chief priest.) The point here is *holiness*: the defilement unfitted him for God's presence, and atonement is made for him [to purify him] *from* his sin. The other two cases present the way in which God graciously comes down to the level of our weakness and slowness of apprehension, while bringing into relief further truth for the conscience of the sinner. The second case presents the double character of the sacrifice in the two young pigeons: first, the *sin*-offering for the *guilt* incurred, then the *burnt*-offering for his *personal acceptance*. The third case, where the offering was of even less value, was in fact a meat-offering, without the usual accompaniment of oil and frankincense; thus insisting on the spotless, perfect humanity of Christ, tested by the fire of judgment on the altar, from which the sacrifices by fire went up to God in sweet savor, though that is not specifically *stated* of this, nor indeed generally of the fat of the sin-offerings, except as noted above. The man confessed his sin (v. 5), and the memorial of the fine flour was burnt on the altar upon the offerings made by fire, to make atonement *for* him, *for* his sin. Now, it seems to me, that in as far as the personal appropriation of the Lord's death by the sinner goes, this is what distinguished the faith of the poor thief on the cross: the fear of God in his heart leading to the condemnation of himself because of his sins; and then his justification of the Lord who had come down in grace to where he was in his vileness, and was suffering under the same judgment: "we indeed justly," he says, "for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss." Upon such ground, and with such assurance in his soul, he could put himself into the Lord's hands and say, "Lord, remember me." Had not the dying thief "grasped the meaning of the cross"? Not of course in its extent; -- who has? But was the state of his soul "poor" in the sense which our author implies (p. 40)? His faith puts us to shame! Note that the thief says not a word about BLOOD: it is not the point with him; his soul was occupied with the perfect One, who was *suffering* beside him under judgment, and whom he calls "Lord," when He is condemned by man, and rejected by the Jews. And, thinking of Christ, and not of himself, his faith went on beyond the death which awaited him, even to the day of the Lord's future manifested glory, when

(continued...)

sin-offering was “most holy”; it was eaten by the priest who offered it, so that the question of sin was thus removed from the person of the sinner, and the sweet savor of the sacrifice transferred to him as the measure of personal acceptance. The mere fact of a life given, apart from the bearing of sin at the time it was given, could not satisfy the demands of divine righteousness in respect of sin. So we find the scripture insisting upon the blessed Lord’s suffering and not merely *dying* for sin. God grant to us to enter more into the untold depths of Christ’s being forsaken of Him!

Christ also has once *suffered* for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God . . . who his own self *bare our sins in his own body* on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18).

Only by leaving out the essential feature of the passage can it be made to show that the sinner may find a Savior in Christ without having “grasped the meaning of His cross”; that there can be forgiveness “apart from the apprehension of the *ground* of forgiveness.” We have seen, on the contrary, that if there is a passage which, more than another, brings into relief the deep meaning of the cross, in its perfect adaptation to the sinner’s state and need, (the blessed Lord’s being tested under judgment, suffering “under the same judgment” (Luke 23:40), while drinking the bitter cup for sin), it is this peculiar case of the bloodless sin-offering. It shows the absolute necessity of apprehending His *work* in its true moral character, in order that we may not stop short at the fact of His life being given; which in our negligent short-sightedness we are in danger of doing. Thank God, our blessing does not depend upon our apprehension of it; but to divorce it from the inward work of the Spirit in the soul, and which supposes some measure of apprehension at any rate, is disastrous: it is incipient ROMANISM.

This tract habitually replaces direct scripture statements by reasoning such as, on examination, is found to be defective, exaggerated, or false. It is in this way that a passage is made to yield a “simple, obvious,” (?) sense, “implied” by a parallel drawn from an expression found elsewhere (p. 25). It is not surprising that “questions supposed settled” by such a system, “return upon us” (p. 26). Seeking to define where God does not define, results in raising questions which are little else than strife about words, to no profit (2 Tim. 2:14).

9. (...continued)

he confidently expected to be with Him, and says, “Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.” One would fain dwell on this, and the Lord’s answer to the faith of one of the vilest of men; but we must forbear, merely drawing attention to the characteristic differences between the Gospels of Luke and John in their respective accounts of the crucifixion. It is John that speaks of “*blood*.” (See John 19:34, 35, compared with 1 John 5:6-8.)

There is a sad example on p. 46, where our author, to settle a “question” raised by himself, introduces us to a nice theological distinction. He says,

It is *we*, not our, faith, that are sealed, and this is a great practical difference.

But let me ask who is the “*we*” here? Is it not *believers*, according to Mr. G. himself? If there were no faith, there would be no seal on those indicated by the “*we*.” But the author’s sophistry is for the purpose of disconnecting the seal of the Spirit from faith in the *work* of Christ; which, he tells us, two pages further on, “the word of God absolutely omits altogether” in this connection! And it leads him into a fresh difficulty, which he has to get out of by another theological invention. He says, the seal “can only be the witness of the perfection of the one in whom He (the Spirit) thus can dwell.” This of course needs explanation, so he adds -- “Christ’s personal perfection, ours *in Him*’ {sic}. But how was it that when the Holy Ghost fell on the disciples on the day of Pentecost, He took the form of *tongues of fire* rather than that of a *dove*? Does not this testify to the presence of sin in us (1 John 1:8), in contrast to Christ’s personal perfection? This is confirmed by the fact that in the feast of firstfruits -- the Mosaic “Pentecost,” the two wave loaves were “baken *with leaven*,” and a he-goat had to be offered at the same time, as a *sin-offering*, which was not the case when the wave sheaf was presented, seven weeks before (Lev. 23:9-21). There is in us what needs constant self-judgment in the power of the Spirit. But this is all omitted, not to say denied, in the theory before us.

Thus it is that the mysteries of life and truth are reduced to certain stereotyped forms, the beauty of which depends upon the likeness to the original, just as flowers in wax or porcelain are admired according as they resemble the living models from which they are copied. But because they are copied, what really constitutes the value of the living flower, to one who is able to estimate it and who cares for it as divine, is lost. He has the external form which enchanted the eye of the superficial observer, and this too no more subject to change or decay, as the living one; but he has no longer any means of seeking out the hidden treasures which, in every detail, reveal the glory and perfect wisdom of the Creator. The way in which God has blessedly adapted the manifestation of His glory to the varying forms of our weakness and needs remains unobserved, unknown.

This is the case with all human systems. They suit the cravings of man’s *mind*, but necessarily leave the heart and conscience unaffected, and consequently open to any and every form of worldliness. It is in vain to insist upon holiness -- learning the truth so as to enjoy it holily (pp. 35, 53) -- if the means of doing so is practically severed from the source which alone is life-giving. What reason is there in a system that “the salt” should “lose its savor”? It is easy to modify or recast dogmas. This requires no exercise of heart

in the presence of God, as to whether the state of soul corresponds with the doctrine presented, or as to whether the doctrines themselves live in the soul in the power of the Spirit of God. The *form* of godliness may be to a certain extent preserved, but the reality of it, in its inward hidden power, is lost. The effect can only be to deaden more and more true spiritual affections, while fostering the imagination of an intellectual mind, which degrades itself by feeding upon the things it has created. And the nearer the system comes to the divine model, the more it resembles the things it professes to present, -- the more the heart is beguiled into admiring the cleverness of the workman who has elaborated and thought it out, and the more also the vigilant enemy of souls finds his work made easy of palming off human workmanship as a substitute for divine. It is the very principle of idolatry in its root and source; the degrading effect of it is a mere question of time. GOD has been exchanged for MAN as an object before the soul; and the life of the word is lost in forms which flatter the mind because they are its creature, but which from the necessity of the case are lifeless, and, while using scripture as servile support, carry the adept beyond the action of the word they profess to illustrate. This is so, even supposing what never is the case, namely that the system, so far as it goes, represents exactly what it pretends to treat of.

We speak not of one particular system or another now, but of the principles involved. Surely such considerations ought to make us beware of reducing scripture to systematic forms, and allowing our minds to reason upon what no *man* knows, but only the *Spirit of God* (1 Cor. 2:11). True exposition of scripture leads us to see the divine perfection and unfathomable depths of the living word, while helping us to reach the treasures contained in it. It applies the truth directly to the soul, developing the appreciation of it for its own sake, and cultivates in the soul the sense of having to do directly with GOD, as to its reception and formative power. The systematizer, on the other hand, culls out of scripture what suits his theory; and, absorbed and blinded by it, presents it as a true representation of mysteries, which the human mind cannot grasp, though, in the simplicity in which scripture reveals them, they are the delight and food of faith. But the mind that reasons satisfies itself and its disciples with forms of truth made easy through being detached from the mysteries of life from which they spring, mysteries which escape the attention of the reasoner, or are explained away.

The reader will judge from the examples given -- and almost every page in the tract might furnish others -- whether our remarks are applicable or not to the system which is before us. Its author thinks he has the word of God for his guide; and that he is subject to it. It is not difficult for us to accept fully his assertion in this respect; but the more we examine the writings, the more we recognize in them the work of the clever artist who seeks to reproduce the

works of God in nature. No doubt he would fain present a true and faithful copy even to minor details, which would escape a less careful observer; but not less is the result human and lifeless; and that is the very thing we have to dread in the things of God. The result we are presented with is not scripture, though professedly built upon it, -- but replaces it, and sets it aside.

From what we have seen already of the tract before us, it is readily perceived that the doctrines concern especially the subjective side of the truth. In treating of this, however, it is impossible to avoid speaking of the objective side. And here we are struck by a characteristic of the system, already noticed in part. Our author, when dealing with what is objective, mixes up history and doctrine, which scripture invariably keeps distinct, revealing on the one hand God's purposes of grace toward us in Christ, and on the other, showing how they were practically brought to man so as to be entered into by him, received in more or less power and intelligence, and so enjoyed, -- or else again, were misapprehended, rejected, forfeited and lost. But when dealing with scriptures which treat directly of the application of the truth to the soul, he invariably leaves out the effect produced by it, the point on which scripture regularly insists in the passages themselves.¹⁰

One would have thought that the admission on page 58, to which we have referred already, would have made the author pause in his self-imposed labor; for his system receives a rude shock in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. But he is unable to resist the satisfaction of having fixed formulas which embrace and explain everything, even "the difficulties which beset souls"; and so he tones down the truth to suit every possible state of ignorance and darkness, instead of leaving the word of God in its own blessed simplicity and living power, to meet souls where they are and bring them out of their darkness. Referring to the example of Abraham's faith, he puts in italics the word "therefore," in v. 22, and then asks the question, "But *when* was it that in fact all this took place?" He continues thus:

When he was about a hundred years old." But that is in Gen. 17, and it is *in Gen. 15, at least fourteen years before*, that "he believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness." But what had intervened? Why, that account of Hagar and Ishmael which shows that not yet had Abraham's faith acquired the strength which afterwards was so manifest! Yet God pronounced as to the germ as if it were the fully developed thing. He imputed it to him for righteousness on account of what He foresaw it would be. And this is the example the apostle gives us. All is a piece, then, with regard to justification . . . &c., &c. (p. 59).

10. Other examples of the abode will be found in his reasoning on the Acts (pp. 36-52), and in the statements on p. 72, which I need not take up in detail. See, however, p. 39 {28 below}.

This is an ingenious theory, no doubt, woven with the help of the historical element of the reasoning, with which the writer regularly furnishes us; the "fourteen years" (of which, by the way, the *apostle* says nothing) could not be overlooked! No one questions that God graciously led on Abraham in the knowledge of Himself, in the wonderful path of separation in which sovereign grace had placed him. If any one likes to call this the "development" of his faith, I have no objection. But is the apostle speaking of *this* in Rom. 4? The subject is altogether different. Does the scripture say that God counted Abraham's "germ" of faith for righteousness "on account of what He saw it would be," as our author says? There is not a hint of such a thing. And as *doctrine* it is very bad; for it would make justification in fact depend on the *amount* of our faith. If it is small -- only a "germ" -- God, who "foresees its future strength," recognizes it, and calls "*in this way*" (the author says) "the things that *be not* as though they were." For that is what is positively stated in the tract before us! Did he not see that, on his own showing, this would be the assertion that in Gen. 15 Abraham had *no* faith at all? But that is where we get to, when we reason upon scripture. Had he called to mind the Lord's word to the disciples in Luke 17:6, he would have felt, I trust, that his theory as to the germ of faith is a complete misrepresentation of scripture truth. And I would ask again, Was a serpent-bitten, dying Israelite healed, in looking at the serpent on the pole, *because* God "foresaw" that his faith would afterwards gather strength? What becomes of scripture with this system? And besides, how does the author know that Abraham's faith was stronger in ch. 17 than it was in ch. 15? Scripture does not say so.

But there is worse still behind. The author's "*therefore*," added on to his historical development, so falsifies the whole passage, that the very point of it is lost; and we are occupied with *man* all through and not with GOD. It is the essence and the evil of his system. I do not speak merely of the strange application of v. 17 of the chapter, unaccountable in one occupying Mr. Grant's position, and serious too, when we remember that it is holy scripture which is in question (for I suppose no sober-minded Christian ever thought before of applying the statement about God's "reckoning things that be not as though they were" to Abraham's "germ" of faith); but, in occupying the mind of the reader with this development, the direct teaching of the chapter is lost to view. The apostle does not say one word about it. He shows how God in the fulness of His grace meets man in a state of utter moral ruin, basing all blessing for man upon what He is in Himself. There are three chief points in it. First, the principle of justification is established fully by the divine word in Gen. 15:6, "Abraham *believed* GOD." It is no question of the amount of faith, "germ" or "development"; it was GOD, the living God, that he *believed*. He received His word, and God accounted to him this *faith* as *righteousness*. David, in Psa. 32,

describes the blessedness of the man so justified. He is utterly defiled and incapable of remedying his position, and has no claim on God; but God meets him in his ruin, the "God who justifies the ungodly." Secondly, it is a matter of *promise* simply, the fulfilment of which depends upon the GOD that made it, not upon the works of law, and necessarily excludes the theory of development as a ground for reckoning faith as righteousness; for it is quoted directly by the apostle in v. 17, from Gen. 15:5, the very moment at which Abraham's faith is reckoned for righteousness. As to detail, *our* faith is not called forth by a promise, like Abraham's, but by the already accomplished manifestation of God's power in raising Jesus our Lord from among the dead. But the faith spoken of is faith in *God's promise*, at the time the promise was made, the faith our author calls the "germ." Here again then his theory is disproved, Thirdly, the apostle brings out the true character of the promise made; shown in figure to Abraham, and through him to us, -- when God's time was come to give him the son, already spoken of in ch. 15. The occasion, in Gen. 17, of Abraham's felt incapacity, when nature both as to himself and Sarah had practically negatived all hope in death, was the suited moment for God to reveal Himself to Abraham as the "Almighty God," and to make known His creative and quickening power, and reveal what it was to have to do directly with Him who "quickens the dead and calls those things which be not as though they were." (Cp. Heb. 11:11, 12.) At that time Abraham found strength in *faith* (there is not a word about its "development"); giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that what HE had promised HE was able also to perform; wherefore also it was imputed to him as righteousness. The "wherefore" has nothing to do with the *history*, as Mr. Grant would have us believe, but serves to bring into evidence the kind of faith in question -- the way in which Abraham turned from himself to GOD and counted upon Him, even the God who raises the dead. (Cp. John 5:21, 24.) All this is set aside by the theory. Justification too has been plunged into the author's petrifying spring; and all is "of a piece"! Indeed it is, alas, and on the next page (p. 60), the "peace with God," of Rom. 5, shares the same fate. Are we to receive all this, and "forbear with it in love"?

We find the truth so separated from the effect produced by it, that its subjective power is practically invalidated. We are left for the reception of it to certain specious processes of reasoning, and to the help of the teacher who is to steer us through them; but the *direct* teaching of the word of God on the matter is kept out of sight. Is it not a warning as to the effect of making up a system? It is surely no small matter to mingle what scripture keeps apart, and separate what scripture puts together. But when we come to the details, we are confronted with a tissue of reasoning wholly untrustworthy, made up of detached morsels of scripture so explained as to form an apparently consistent whole.

It is against this we would especially protest; for false and bad as the conclusions arrived at are, they fall into the shade, comparatively, when weighed with the spiritual damage a soul receives that unsuspectingly follows in the author's wake, and thus learns to *reason*, instead of simply abiding in the doctrine we have received from the beginning.

Still the effect of the system as presented is no less than a practical upsetting of the subjective truths of Christianity. In the more *naïf* and less studied tract, put out as a sort of feeler, and the predecessor of the larger one before us, the author ignored entirely the starting-point of Christianity, Christ's present place as a Man in glory, the Spirit being sent in consequence (John 7:39; 16). This was pointed out to him; and in the present tract he has supplied the serious omission, for it was the very point he was treating. He states now the *fact*, but in such a way (as we shall have to notice further down, p. 110 {p. 75 below}) as to becloud and destroy practically another truth, unless his quotations from the *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible* on page 18 be meant to correct what is stated on page 6,

But if life be only now in Christ, since it is *only as risen* AND ASCENDED,
He is made Lord and Christ, yet "in the Son" it was ever, &c.

(The italics and small capitals are my own.) In any case the distinction between being quickened by the Son, and being quickened together *with* Christ, when GOD is looked at as the Quickener, is obliterated. We only find as to quickening, one undeviating form: he says (p. 13),

As to quickening now being other than this, if quickening be giving *life*, I read,
"He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son (*sic*) hath NOT life" (1 John 5:12). So the quickening together with Christ is *directly* out of being "dead in sins."

Notice the little word "so" here; thoroughly characteristic of the tract.

All this demands further examination, and in detail. But I notice, in passing, how the author has made a vital truth of scripture fit in humanly, while leaving his system just what it was, and insisting again upon his perversion of the meaning of John 14:20 (p. 14), as if the commencement of John 13 had been erased from his Bible.¹¹ The delicate distinctions of scripture disappear in this

11. This verse is not the same as v. 10, nor to be confounded with it. In v. 10, Philip was taught by the Lord how that in Himself, the Father was to be known. His words and works were the Father's words and works. But in vv. 19, 20, the Lord is speaking distinctly of His absence from the world, which would "see him no more"; and He adds for His disciples: "ye see me," that is, spiritually, and "because I live ye shall live also. *At that day* ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." -- "*That day*," as all the passage shows, is the day of *His absence*,

(continued...)

tract. We find “born again,” “quickening,” “eternal life,” used by the author interchangeably in an undefined way; and he argues from one to the other as if they were all synonymous terms, so that the reader is enveloped in a maze of uncertainty, not knowing where he is being led, except that he is painfully conscious that, under this leadership, he is wandering away from holy scripture.

In considering more particularly that part of these “new doctrines” which refers to life and propitiation, we shall find fresh confirmations of what we have already remarked as to the *systematic* conclusions reached, and the characteristic processes by which they are arrived at.

11. (...continued)

and of the consequent presence of the Holy Ghost upon earth (vv. 15-18); “I am in my Father” then refers here to the Lord’s going back to the Father, and, as a consequence, “ye in me” denotes our position in Him, in the place to which He was then going. The whole of these chapters 13-17 are based upon His going to God (see John 13:1-3). Mr. G. admits, on p. 11, that the Lord does not add in v. 20, when speaking of Himself, “and the Father in me”; and we add that He does not say in vv. 10, 11, when speaking of what the disciples should have seen in Him, “ye in me, and I in you.” How then can the author, despite the most positive statements of scripture, such as John 12:25, confuse the whole passage, explaining v. 20 as the “future knowledge of a *present* thing”? What is constantly stated to be previously necessary was not yet accomplished. The “corn of wheat” {John 12:24} had *not yet* “fallen into the ground”; it still *abode* {“}ALONE.”

Part 2: Life in the Son

The doctrine of the tract is clearly and fairly stated on pp. 12 and 13:

It is not surely possible, therefore, to deny that life from the beginning was in the Son. The hour then was in which He was quickening (the reference is to John 5:21, 25-27), before ever He had finished the work which was in His hand to do. And the everlasting life He was ever, “the Word of life,” as John says (1 John 1:1.) Some would make a distinction, as it would seem, between the “Word” and the “Son”; but it was the same blessed Person who was at the same time both Son and Word of God. *Now*, because He is Christ also, life is necessarily “in Christ.” And the saints of old, who were one and all of them quickened by the Son, with the life in Him, have it now in Christ, *not by any new communication*, but simply by the fact of what, through His work accomplished, He in whom their life is has become. Other quickening, other spiritual life than this, can no man show.” (The italics are the author’s.)

Possibly, we say! But is that to be our question? We desire *not* to know *what man can show*, but what GOD SAYS in His word. Does the *scripture* say that the Old Testament saints had “life *in the Son*”? Does it anywhere hint at such a thing? Why does our author not confess as to this, what he hastens to say as to another point affecting his doctrine as to the Spirit indwelling: “Scripture is silent as to this”? But he goes on to say (p. 23):

With the doctrine which scripture teaches, there is no difficulty at all. Of course they could not be in Christ before Christ had come, but they were in the Son as having life in Him.

Were they? we ask. Who told the author so? How does he know it? Does the SCRIPTURE teach this, as he would have us believe? He knows it does not. Abraham was God’s chosen servant, in whom His elective grace, and the corresponding walk of faith, was made known, and to whom God gave unconditional promises which were repeated in the new covenant made with his seed according to the flesh. The Lord refers to his being “in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 8:11; cp. Luke 13:28); to the fact of his “living,” as “all live unto” God, and to his having part in the resurrection (Luke 20:37, 38; &c.). He speaks of him at length in John 8; but does he say a word as to what his “life” was, or as to what it is? Does the apostle say a word about it, when, in Gal. 3, he says, “they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham,” and quotes

from Hab. 2: ¹² “The just shall live by faith”? Does he do so in any other passage? The scripture says *nothing* which can warrant the assumption of the tract.

But more. The revelation made to Abraham determined the relationship into which God brought him with Himself: “I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect” (Gen. 17:1). And this, wonderful and blessed as it was, is expressly distinguished from that which was afterwards made to Moses, and which formed the basis of God’s dealings with Israel. Moses asks what Gods name was, in order to meet the inquiries of the children of Israel when he should tell them,

The *God of your fathers* hath sent me unto you.

And God said to Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you (Ex. 3:13, 14).

Again, in Ex. 6:2, 3, we read:

God spake unto Moses and said, I am JEHOVAH; and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of GOD ALMIGHTY, but by my name JEHOVAH *was I not known to them.*

Are all these distinct statements of the scriptures to be ignored, in order to make way for one systematic form of “life,” as if it had nothing to do with the God who gives it, and were not characterized by communion with Himself as to the revelation of Himself He thought fit to make?

But how then is such a conclusion arrived at, so as to be laid down authoritatively, and thus be made the basis of all that is reared upon it? We are told that life was “in the Son” ever, “because He was the Son ever” (p. 6). True, the scripture says, “In him was life.” But is it there speaking of its *communication* (John 1:4)? We plainly answer, “No.” It is a statement as to Christ Himself -- abstractedly what He was -- as having life divinely and eternally in Himself, and as such, light which is not received at all (v. 5). And more than this, is there in the passage a hint of explanation as to what the life of the Old Testament saints was? But this is a small matter for one who can readily leave out “dispensation” and “divine purpose,” if he can only get an “actual fact” to suit his system. The “fact” is, that life was “in the Son,” *because* the Son is the Word! This is the first logical step. We have not to go far for the second. The “Son quickens”; so says John 5:21. So of course He

12. Heb. 10:35-39 shows how the whole passage referred to a future day in connection with the Lord. But I speak here of the principle involved in the divine statement, in v. 4, as the apostle quotes it in Gal. 3:11.

quickeneth *in time past*, and with the same life! -- But the passage says nothing about time at all. It speaks of the way in which the glory of the Son is shown forth, as being equal with the Father,

As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

Our difficulties are speedily calmed however, for we are told “that in all divine acts the Father, Son, and Spirit unite” (p. 13). But does it not say,

The hour *is coming*, and *now is* when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live? {John 5:25}.

Are *we* at liberty to give a retrospective effect to a passage which *the Lord* applies to a time which was then *future*, though having a present application in connection with His acting while on earth; but yet waiting on the accomplishment of redemption, as the *ground* on which life *could be communicated?* (Cp. John 6:51, 66; 12:24, 25.) Is this, we would ask, a point too insignificant to be taken notice of? Is there no importance in the truth of mediatorship as to the life communicated? for the Lord adds,

As the Father has life in Himself, so hath he *given* to the Son to have life in Himself {John 5:26}.

Here He speaks of Himself as the Son of God incarnate, receiving everything from the Father, and as Son communicating life by His word to “the dead.” All this is confounded with the word “in him was life,” of John 1:4; and the summary conclusion stated, after quoting the above passages (p. 12), is this:

It is *not surely possible*, THEREFORE, to deny that life from the beginning was IN THE SON. The hour then was in *which He was quickening* . . . And the saints of old who were one and all of them *quickeneth* by the Son *with the life* IN HIM, have it now in Christ, &c.

(italics, &c., mine). Such is the system before us. Such the way in which the word of God is torn to pieces and made up into theological statements such as please an imaginative reasoning mind, bent on forming theories out of scripture.

Take the phrase “life from the beginning was in the Son.” If it be read alone, as a fact true of Him, of course He was “that eternal life which was with the Father.” But this, as all the reasoning which follows shows, is not what our author means. Every word has another sense. “Life” is the “life *communicated*” by the One who “quickeneth”; “from the beginning” applies to those who lived before Christ came to this earth; and “in the Son,” consequently, means the way in which they had the life -- what their spiritual life was. The tract does not distinguish between “*by*” and “*in*” the Son; notwithstanding the importance of the difference. Had it done so, the conclusion arrived at would necessarily have fallen through, at all events in so far as regards the second part of the argument. It is all a piece of human reasoning, every detail of which do violence to what

is written in the scriptures.

Burt further we would ask, Have *angels* spiritual life? The blessed Lord says that

they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from among the dead, neither marry nor are given, in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels . . . (Luke 20:35, 36).

Have *they* too, then, “life in Son,” of whom it is said that He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they? For the tract says,

other spiritual life than this can no man show.

Let its author answer the question. With him we are on ground where all the beautiful and delicate distinctions of the living word are crushed with a barbarous hand, to make way for the hard stereotyped forms he would present us with. Is this the holy ground of the presence of God, which demands that our shoes should be taken off? We have no longer scripture, in its substance and form, but *human reasoning*.

Yet see the importance the blessed Lord Himself attaches to the *form* in which the truth is presented. He says,

I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say and *what I should speak*, and I know that his commandment is life eternal; whatsoever therefore I speak, even *as the Father said unto me so I speak* (John 12:49, 50).

And again,

I have given unto them *the words* which thou gavest me (John 17:8).

It is not merely the revelation of the truth; but the very words chosen of the Father in which the divine communications were to be made. So the apostle, in 1 Cor. 2:14, insists not only upon the “*things* of God” revealed by the Spirit, but upon the *words* taught by the Holy Spirit, which was the only proper form for communicating the divine things. Are we prepared, then, to give up the form, and allow our poor reason to define for us what God in His holy word has not thought fit to define? Or shall we cling to the divine forms of the truth, and learn humbly, as led by the Spirit of God, what are the things revealed which through grace belong to us, and are the source and food of faith?

But once on the slippery path of systematizing, such considerations as these are readily disposed of. It is boldly asked (p.13),

If life before Christ’s being upon earth were not “in the Son,” how then?

Ought not the very question to have arrested the author, and shown him how he has been allowing his mind to work on divine things? The mystery of life is encountered with a “*how then?*” as if it were within the competency of human

intelligence to declare it, or as if it had become the duty of a mere creature to decide what it is, and what it is not. *Must* we then venture where God draws the veil, and intrude with carnal inquisitiveness where the seraphim hide their faces? Is *this* faith, and dependence upon God? Have we forgotten that it was death to a Kohathite to touch one of the holy vessels he carried, or even to go in to see them being covered? What is to become of our consciences, if the first principles of that which suits the presence of God are practically expunged from our spiritual apprehension? No doubt it is inconvenient for the *system* to leave such things unexplained. But if the theory vanishes when brought to the light of the scripture, the need for it disappears also. For truth lives in the scriptures: “the word of God liveth and abideth for ever.” And the heart that delights in the things that angels desire to look into, which are now reported to us by them that have preached the gospel to us with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, finds its joy in no way curtailed because there are points yet reserved unexplained, and which belong to Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will. He has shown how the faith of the Old Testament saints cannot be satisfied with a recompense short of what is heavenly;

wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city {Heb. 11:6}.

But He has also said that He has

provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect (Heb. 11; 1 Pet. 1).

The Lord said that John the Baptist was the greatest of those born of women, but He added, “He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

Were the theories before us merely a disquisition as to the peculiar portion of the Old Testament saints, we might well leave it as not a fit subject for this kind of discussion. It is not so however. They are introduced as a needed illustration; for the statements about them form an integral part of a system which really sets scripture aside. This is the serious part of the matter. It behoves us then to inquire, What is “life in the Son”? How does *the scripture* present it? We look in vain for this in the tract; which can reason upon what it “implies” (p. 13), but does not tell us what *it is*. On the contrary, we are struck as to this point by meeting in the tract with as complete a silence, as we notice in the scriptures with reference to what the tract asserts with unbounded confidence! The point of view in this tract, and in the scriptures, is so different, that we feel instinctively we must give up either one or the other. We cannot have both. It is true that 1 John 5:11 is quoted on p. 9: “God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is *in His Son*.” But the passage from the Gospel, which directly explains what this life is *as communicated*, and the fact that it is *here* communicated, after the Lord is in the glory as the One who had glorified the

Father “on the earth,” and finished the work which the Father had given Him to do, is omitted entirely. The blessed Lord says (John 17:1-5):

Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh that he should *give eternal life* to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. *I have glorified* thee on the earth: *I have finished* the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, *glorify thou me*, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Now here we have a clear and simple definition, passing wonderful as are the truths contained in it. The Lord is speaking of *giving*, communicating *eternal life* to those who had it not, and in this connection defines it to be the *knowledge* of God, “the only true God,” *the Father* whom He was addressing, and the knowledge of Himself, Jesus Christ, whom the Father had sent. It was personal knowledge, as the Lord Himself had shown” (John 14:9) in answer to Philip’s request, “Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us”;

Jesus saith unto him, *Have I been so long time with you*, and yet hast thou not *known* me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.

And again, as to His mission distinctively, (a truth the disciples themselves did not grasp at the time, as shown in the following vv. 29-31), the Lord says (John 16:28),

I came forth *from the Father*, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father.

This was the truth the Lord had come down to make known, and which forms the basis of Christianity. He speaks to the disciples as being brought into the relationship it implied, and which His going back to the Father would make good unto them.

At *that day* ye shall ask *in my name*, and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have *believed* that I *came out from GOD* (vv. 26, 27).

And this is the truth with which this Gospel opens. It is the revelation of the *Incarnate WORD* who declares *GOD* to us, and declares Him as the *FATHER*. In the first five verses we have that which is absolutely true of Him, without its being a question of the light being *received* on earth (indeed the contrary is stated in v. 5), beyond the fact of the indication of the scene in which the light was to shine, the scene of the joy of His heart in divine counsels, before ever man was created; as we find it in Prov. 8:27-31, where the account of the creation does not go beyond the work of the third day. “In him was life; and the

life was the light of men: and the light shineth in darkness.” It is that which characterizes it, the sphere of its manifestation; and with the added fact, “the darkness comprehended it *not*.” Then, from v. 6 and onward, we have the history. The light was to come into this world; and a man, John, was sent from God to bear witness to it, and prepare human hearts to receive it; for when it comes into the world, it sheds light upon every man, not on Jews only, and manifests everything as God sees it. The world knew Him not; His own received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them gave He power, or the right, to become children of God, even to them that believe *in His name*. Such are “born of God.” This is the blessed, wondrous truth. Sonship is made by God, in grace, inseparable from the reception of the incarnate WORD, come into the world from God. “The Word” (in whom was life, and the life the light of men) -- “was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of an only-begotten with a Father)” ; No man hath seen God at anytime; the only-begotten Son, which is *in the bosom of the Father*, he hath declared him” (John 1:14, 18).

The epistle of John insists upon the same truth:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of life; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life *which was with the FATHER*, and was manifested unto us . . .

The result, is declared by the apostle, in the following verse, in such terms as forbid a retrospective effect, for it is the consequence of the *manifestation* of the “eternal life” as stated,

That which *we have seen and heard* declare *we* unto you, that ye also may have fellowship *with us*: and truly *our* fellowship is *with the Father*, and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:1-3).

The light is come -- the full knowledge of God; and when that is given, it is as the *Father* that He reveals Himself, by the Son; and in such a way, that we may *know* Him and *have communion* with the Father and the Son. In the following chapter we find that “little children” -- the earliest stage of spiritual life produced by this revelation in the power of the Spirit of God -- are characterized by *the knowledge of the Father* (v. 13); and again (v. 23),

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father, but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

It is the characteristic of Christianity as here presented; and with the knowledge of the relationship imparted, we find at the same time the revelation of the love of which the blessed Lord Himself, -- as the Word made flesh, Son of man and Son of God, “the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father,” --

was the object. Into that same love He introduces us, as well as into the relationship, and insists too upon the reciprocal personal *knowledge* which accompanies it:

I know those that are mine, and am known of those that are mine, as the Father knows me and I know the Father” (John 10:14, 15, New Trans. {of J. N. Darby}).

The life was seen, “manifested” in Him, when He was “dwelling among” us, in this world. I have no intention of saying the disciples saw it intelligently; but I speak of the way in which He is presented, in the written word, by the Holy Spirit of God. He was the eternal life, as is stated. But it is only when His work was accomplished that He could call the disciples “my brethren,” and speak of them as being in the relationship in which He was, and into which His death and resurrection had brought them.

It was in view of the extent of the blessed results of His death, as Son of man, beyond all that His title of Son of David implied, that He said when the Greeks came up:

The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified: verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but IF IT DIE, IT *bringeth forth much fruit* (John 12:23, 24).

Apart from His death, He abode absolutely alone. Only in resurrection could He address the disciples as actually in the relationship He had come to reveal.

Then, for the first time (John 20:17), He speaks of the relationship as existing, as far as they were personally concerned, and that too in connection with the place in glory He was about to fill; and also, as He soon shows them (John 20:22), in connection with the coming of the Holy Ghost, as He had before explained (John 14-16). For it is the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer which *characterizes* the life given, in its manifestation in this world.

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 (John 7:38-39).

And we find that after the Lord had sent them the message by Mary: “I *ascend* to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God,” -- when He first presented Himself in their midst, He says, “Peace be unto you: as the *Father* hath sent me” (again the very essence of *Christianity*), “even so send I you; and when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye [the] Holy Ghost . . .” 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,¹³ 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 16:7).

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 19:33-35).

The communication of this life is based upon the death of Jesus looked at as having already taken place. For we read,

This is he who *came* by water and blood, Jesus the Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness, for the Spirit is the truth. For they that bear witness are three: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. For this is the witness of God which he has witnessed concerning his Son. He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself; he that does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness which God has witnessed concerning his Son. And this is the witness, that God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that has the Son has life; he that has not the Son of God has not life. These things have I written to you that ye may know that ye have eternal life who

13. The expression of the tract (p. 72), “must look forward to *Pentecost*,” is misleading unless explained, but corresponds to the habitual materializing of the truth which we have so often noticed already. 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?

believe on the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:6-13, New Trans.)

We find, then, in the Gospel of John, the manifestation in love of the eternal life, and as light too (the light in which we walk); the life is so presented that, redemption being accomplished, it may be communicated to us: He that believeth on the Son *hath* it (John 3:36). As expressed by another, it is “the life which constitutes Christianity.” In the Epistle {of John}, the practical effect is shown us in the believer. It is stated to be the knowledge of the Father, and its immediate effect is communion with the Father and with the Son.

The Revelation of Eternal Life, Where and How Presented: Earthly and Heavenly Things

It will be well now to examine what is said about this life previously. And here we may remark, that we soon find that as a *present possession* for us from God, and as far as any development of it goes, it is a doctrine peculiar to John; for it is scarcely more than mentioned in Paul’s writings, and that only in a general way. In Rom. 6:23, the whole chapter would convey the thought that it especially (I do not say exclusively) applies to its future manifestation in the saints in glory, as in v. 22 preceding, and in Rom. 5:21, “*unto* eternal life,” -- which comes just after what is stated in v. 17, “they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall *reign in life* by one Jesus Christ.” Compare, too, 2 Tim. 1:1 with Titus 1:2: “*in hope* of eternal life.” 1 Tim. 1:16 is perhaps the nearest approach to what we find in John: “believe on him to life eternal.” It is like Rom. 6:23, and in both cases the complete thing which will be fully manifested in glory. Jude 21 is evidently future. In the first three Gospels, where the expression “eternal life” is used, but not often, it refers likewise to the future, though not always precisely in the same sense.

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, which we shall look at presently (p. 46, below {p. 32 below}).

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,¹⁴ 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: “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.¹⁵ 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 18:30, positively state: “*in the world to come*.” (See below, p. 53 {p. 37 below}.) 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” {i.e., the millennium}) *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

14. 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 {John 4}.

15. But being addressed to a sinful creature, it could only bring the sentence of death to him (Rom. 7:10).

He sits upon His throne of glory (v. 31). Compare this with the passage, peculiar to Matthew (19:28), referring to the scene the Lord calls “the regeneration.”

In the Gospel of John then, for the first time in scripture, we find the revelation of eternal life; first of all, in its essence, life in the Word that was in the beginning, was with God, and was God; and then in John 3 for the first time, its communication to men as a *present* blessing from God; and mark it, as *following* the cross: “Even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him [thus lifted up] should not perish, but have eternal life.” In this way the Lord introduces it, applying it to the state of sin in which He finds us individually: “*as* Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness”; that is, for a dying sinner who, in the object to which his attention is directed, sees the expression of the righteous judgment of God, under which his sins had justly brought him. Here the Lord uses the “*must*,”-- “even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” Righteousness has to be satisfied in view of man’s state and responsibility, according to the requirements of God’s nature; that is, not only to remove what is defiled and unclean, subject to condemnation, but to put man where God will have him according to His own counsels in grace and glory. The “*must*” is met in the cross, as in Rom. 3:24; and “*eternal life*” is based upon accomplished redemption. This is the first side of the truth. Then follows v. 16, where there is no “*must*,” no kind of obligation, but God *gives*,¹⁶ according to what He is, from the fulness of His own heart, accomplishing thus His counsels of love which were in Christ before ever the world was (2 Tim. 1:1, 9; Titus 1:2; cp. Eph 1:4, 5). “God so *loved* the world that he *gave* his *only-begotten* SON, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” We see here, not merely deliverance from the state in which man is found as a sinner before God (the penalty of death having been enforced too by the law), but there is the full blessing according to God’s purpose and nature, “*eternal life*,” life in the SON (1 John 5:10-12). These two sides of the truth are presented in 1 John 5: 9, 10, as the *manifestation* of the love of God, and hence too, “*life*” is put there *before* the “*propitiation*,” it being *there* a question of God’s love and purpose in giving His Son, and not the order of its communication to man; but both are through “*His Son*.” In the gospel they are

16. The full expression of this we find in Rom. 5:8; 8:32: God gives Him in *death*. But in John it is more the personal truth that is before us, GOD *giving His only begotten* SON. In John 6, the Lord enters into further detail, and we find in vv. 32, 33, the *Father’s* gift, “the true bread from heaven: for the bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven and *giveth life* unto the world”; and in John 6:51, the *Son’s* gift of Himself in death: “and the bread that I will give is *my flesh*, which I will give *for the life* of the world.”

brought out by the Lord, in connection with what He was personally as Son of man and Son of God, meeting man in his ruined state; and that, after intimating His going up to heaven, where no man had ascended but He who had come down from it, the Son of man who was there even then, in His own divine nature. The Lord calls these “*heavenly things*.”

All this was wholly new to Nicodemus, who, though no doubt, as a Jew, looking forward with hope to the Messiah’s kingdom, did not even lay hold of the moral import of the *earthly* things of the new covenant, according to the prophets; much less of the way in which the Lord presented them. The water and the Spirit of Ezek. 36, were little else practically than a dead letter to him. Indeed, to understand them, a man must be led of the Spirit who gave them, for “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God”; and in this way, a teacher of the letter of the scriptures might be further off from the truth than a poor ignorant woman living in sin, but who knew that Messiah was coming (John 4). But when the scriptures are applied to the heart and conscience by the Spirit, they are not merely found to be life-giving, but the soul is by faith brought into a relationship with God which is determined by the position in which Christ is personally and dispensationally, and by the way in which He is presented in the scriptures so applied by the Spirit. This is the secret of their true interpretation, as the Lord shows His disciples in Luke 24:27, 44. The Lord in His first word to Nicodemus, gathers up in one single sentence, prophecies which not merely foretold the coming day of promised blessing, but which, by referring to what was personal to Christ, gave such a value to the “old things,” as sufficed to open the door for the revelation of the fuller truth He was about to make known, and which was distinctively “heavenly “ in its scope and character. In doing this, He brought Nicodemus into the immediate presence of God, in view of “God’s kingdom,” where He was free to act towards man in accordance with His own nature. “Except a man be *born* again,” He says, “he cannot see the *kingdom of God*.” For the Lord presented the truth here, not from the point of view of man’s need, blessedly as this was met by it, but in view of GOD and what was suited to Him. Besides, {in John’s gospel} the Jews are already looked at as a rejected people {John 1:10, 11}, and the blessing goes beyond them. It will be helpful to refer now briefly to some Old Testament scriptures.

The “kingdom of God” had been celebrated as a moral principle in Israel, in connection with His dwelling in the midst of His redeemed people; their faith laid hold of it, in the song of Moses, sung at the Red Sea after the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians (see Ex. 15:18; and cp. 1 Sam. 8:7, &c., &c.). We find it both as His direct government, and also by the instrumentality of the “chosen king” (see Deut. 17:14, 15). The one chosen by the people was -- as is always the case with man tested in responsibility -- a failure; and he was set

aside in favor of David, the man chosen by the Lord “out of the people” (Psa. 89), the “man after his own heart,” and figure of Him that was to come. David’s desire to build a house for the mighty One of Jacob (Psa. 132) was the opportunity God took for announcing the “age to come” of promised blessing. A comparison, for instance, of 1 Chron. 17:14, with the parallel passage, 2 Sam. 7:16, will make this evident. In 2 Sam. it is said, “*thy* kingdom,” that is, *David’s*; but in 1 Chron., it is distinctly “*my* kingdom,” that is, God’s: “I will settle him [that is, Messiah, David’s seed] in *my* house, and in *my* kingdom for ever; and *his* [not “*thy*” as in 2 Sam.] throne shall be established for evermore.”¹⁷ (As to the “house” and the “kingdom,” cp. Ex. 15:2, 13, 18).

“Birth,” in the Old Testament, is presented in two ways. It is predicated of Christ, as coming into this world (Psa. 2; Isa. 9:6, 7, &c.). Secondly it is spoken of Israel nationally in looking forward to the day when “the kingdom shall be Jehovah’s,” as in Psa. 22:28-31:

A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord, for a generation: they shall come and shall declare his righteousness unto a *people* that *shall be born*, that he hath done this,

-- a wonderful verse indeed as to the moral order of a soul’s apprehension of the truth. So in Isa. 54:1, 13, 14, 17. So again, the remarkable passage in Isa. 56, where the consecutive verses 7 and 8 set forth blessedly the personal relationship with Christ, which we have referred to: first, the birth of the “man child” (Rev. 12) *before* the pains came; and secondly, the birth of the new Israel “in one day,” “*as soon as Zion travailed*.” It is in the time of Jacob’s trouble “as of a woman in travail,” that “he shall be saved out of it” and “they shall serve the Lord their God and David their king, *whom I will raise up unto them*” (Jer. 30:4-9). In the next chapter we find, “For I am a father unto Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn” (Jer. 31:9). But the Lord had said this too of Israel in Egypt, when about to deliver them (Ex. 4:22), when also for the first time, we find the expression “*my people*” (Ex. 3:7). So in the song of Moses, we read, “Do ye thus requite Jehovah, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?” (Deut. 32:6).

It would seem that the prophet Hosea brings these two things together (cp.

17. The more the two whole passages are attentively compared, the more evident will it be that the one in 1 Chron. applies directly to Christ. For example, the verse which contemplates the failure of David’s Son [that is really, Solomon] is omitted there. Psa. 89 makes this the more striking, as vv. 30-32, which likewise refer to the same point are in the plural; “If his *children* forsake my law . . . I will visit *their* transgression,” &c. (Cp. 2 Sam. 7:14.)

Hos. 1, 2, with 11:9); and here it is that we find perhaps the nearest approach to the relationship of “son” individually (Hos. 1:10):

In the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

But as “*said to them*,” it is more the moral character which attaches to those who are made the objects of God’s *mercy*, and it is applied definitely to Israel nationally. And so the apostle evidently quotes it, in Rom. 9, putting it *after* the quotation of Hos. 2:23, where we read,

I will say to Lo-ammi, My people, and they shall say, Thou art my God.

When it is *God* that speaks to them, He says “*my people*,” not “*my sons*.” The vision of the resurrection of the dry bones, in Ezek. 37, would confirm this. It is not, as in Gen. 2, God building a woman out of one bone, but the bones coming together *as they had been*, “bone to his bone,” and then the flesh and sinews coming over them, and being covered by the skin as had been before, and lastly, the breath of God coming into them, that they might live. It is the new Israel, raised up from the dust of the earth (Dan. 12). They enter into the blessings of Messiah’s kingdom upon the earth, as purified men with changed hearts (Ezek. 36), in whose minds God’s laws are written (Jer. 31: Heb. 8, 10). Theirs is

the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the service, and the promises (Rom. 9:4).

But the expression “Son of God,” is not always used in the same sense of child-relationship. For it is elsewhere, as in Job (1:6; 38:7, &c.), applied to angels. They too are of God’s creation. And as to birth itself, we find in the first chapter of Luke what should make us very reticent in using systematic expressions to describe it. We read as to John the Baptist the wonderful statement (v. 15), “He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost *even from his mother’s womb*.” Again, it is said that at the voice of Mary’s salutation the babe leaped for joy in the womb, and his mother was filled with the Holy Ghost. But of the Lord it is said (Luke 1:35),

The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Such is the different way in which the Spirit speaks of Jesus, and of him to whom Jesus bears testimony, in the same Gospel (Luke 7:28):

For I say unto you, Among those born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

John the Baptist belonged to another dispensation, and closed it.

The direct personal association with Christ, and more especially so in connection with His death and resurrection ¹⁸ (an intimation of which we may find too in such passages as Isa. 26:19, 49:1-8, and again in Psa. 17:15, as compared with Psa. 16:10, 11), brings us however on to ground which, when the blessed Lord Himself is *manifested*, takes a new character in connection with what He is ¹⁹ If He is merely the promised Messiah, then the blessings introduced are those which were announced beforehand in the Old Testament “earthly things.” But if He is the Son of the Father, come forth from *Him* into the world, then the blessings assume the character which we have already seen to be distinctively *Christianity*, in contrast with Judaism, now set aside because of Christ’s rejection. And, as the Lord shows in the Gospel of John, we can only really enter into these, when the Son of man is in His proper place, according to Psa. 8, that is, in heaven, whence He came. The Son of Man must “ascend up where He was before” (John 6:62; compare with this the beginning of ch. 14); so that what are made ours in Him are, consequently, “heavenly

18. As in Psa. 22; see above, p. 48 {p. 34 below}.

19. The extent of this change, and the knowledge of it, are of course matters of divine revelation, which it is not for us to reason upon; nor need we seek by human effort to harmonize different scriptures, to deduce from them what is not distinctly revealed. Our wisdom is rather to notice the differences belonging to divers parts of the written word, so as to see in what connections the revelations are made. The fact of the change referred to, becomes then all the more evident. A beautiful instance of it, which indeed characterizes Matthew, is seen in ch. 3 of his Gospel. Jesus, the true “Son of Abraham” (Matt. 1:1), in whom, as the “promised seed,” all the promised blessing was centered -- every way contrasting with those who boasted in the natural relationship, and were reproached for it by John (Matt. 3:9) -- the “mightier One,” whom John had announced as “coming after him,” places Himself in the midst of those who had received John’s testimony, and who had avowed themselves before God to be guilty sinners. He came to John to be baptized of him; and when John remonstrated, insisted on its being becoming, “thus to fulfil all righteousness.” He identified Himself by this act with the remnant whom God had called, whose hearts were being prepared to receive the full message of salvation and remission of sins, to which their baptism led them to look forward. Great as was the personal humiliation for Him who was spotlessly perfect, He makes no sort of effort to justify Himself in the eyes of men. God takes this into His own hand: the Spirit descends like a dove, and lights upon Him; and the voice *from heaven* proclaims, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” He had come in grace into the midst of the believing remnant; but henceforth they find themselves grouped round Him, in whom for the first time God (as Father, Son, and Spirit) had revealed Himself. This alone put them on a new footing before God: What it was, they had to learn; but it was Christ in their midst that characterized them thenceforward. So, in the sermon on the mount, the Lord laid down principles beyond what are found in the new covenant, and which, when developed in connection with Christ’s present place in glory, form the substance of Christianity practically. He spoke of the character of His disciples as measured by what He was Himself (raising them up to His own level), and blessed in the kingdom of the heavens which is “theirs.” He spoke of doing the will of His Father in heaven, as being the condition of entering into it; and of the righteousness of God and the Father’s perfection being the occupation of our hearts, and the model of our ways.

things,” and no longer for Israel merely, but for *man*, as such.

This opens up to us indeed new blessing in the Old Testament scriptures²⁰ in connection with what is personal to Christ. I do not now speak of His essential Sonship, and the revelation of the Father -- for that is not in the Old Testament; but of the salvation of which Peter speaks, as having formed the subject of inquiry and diligent search of the prophets,

who prophesied of the grace that should come to us, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of *Christ* which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; unto whom it was revealed, that *not unto themselves*, but *unto us* they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into (1 Pet. 1:9-12).

Similarly, we find that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the apostle, while developing what properly belongs to God's earthly people under the new covenant, presents, too, what is distinctively "Christian," and belongs to this dispensation *only*, because the Son of Man, in whom all is made good, is now actually crowned with glory and honor, in heaven; and by faith we see Him there, though we still wait to see all things put under Him. But He is there for us, "entered in once into the holy place, "by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption; and He now appears there, for us, in the presence of God. This gives a new character to "the world to come," as the Jew understood it. For us, it is no longer the day of Messiah's manifested glory upon earth that forms our characteristic hope (however blessed for our souls to look forward to this, too, in communion with Him), but we find in *Himself* what is infinitely more blessed, a personal object for our hearts, as well as a positive present portion in the place in which He is; while looking forward to the day of His

20. As an instance of the application to us of what is said of Christ in the Old Testament, we may mention Rom. 8:33, 34, where the words quoted from Isa. 50:7-9, are shown to be true of us as "God's elect." The wonderful adaptation of 1 Chron. 17:13, to the true christian position, as it is stated in 2 Cor. 6:18, is another example of it. In this remarkable verse we find, not merely the kind of care that God takes of His own, who are separated from the world in holiness and cast upon Him, but also the actual relationship with Himself, as "Father," into which His grace has brought us, flowing from the way in which He has revealed Himself in the Son. As born into the world, He declares the decree, "Jehovah has said to me: Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee" (Psa. 2:7). In this Psalm, and in 1 Chron. 17, it is His humanity, not His eternal sonship. But his relationship with God is made known *by Him*. This is the important truth for us to lay hold of. (See the preceding note.) And when this is essential sonship, and not merely His humanity as born into the world (Luke 1:35), then God is fully revealed, as "the Father." (But our having part in this position supposes, however, the Lord's death for us.) So we find in 2 Cor. 6:18, that He who was known to Abraham as "Almighty," and to Israel as "Jehovah," reveals Himself to us in Christ as "Father."

appearing the second time to accomplish God's "salvation" in "bringing many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2:10; 9:28). This in no way excludes the blessing promised to the earthly people under the new covenant, the blood of which has been shed (Matt. 26:28); but our peculiar hope is heavenly, not earthly, as Peter says too (1 Pet. 1:4), writing to believers amongst the Jews. We enter into God's eternal rest, not Canaan; and the blessings of the "world to come" are, for *us*, in heaven itself. We are "partakers of "the *heavenly* calling" {Heb. 3:1}; and, to find out our blessings, now transferred from earth to heaven, we are exhorted to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of or confession, Christ Jesus." It is in HIM that we find it all; and now, in the place in which He is.

The peculiar value to be attached to the "new birth," or rather what it ushers into, depends then upon the way in which Christ is to be personally known. When, after being manifested as the Son upon earth, and having been raised from the dead, He is glorified in heaven, then the life of faith is "eternal life," as we find it indeed in the Epistle of John. There is no other way of knowing Christ now, but as so dead and risen.

This is He that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood, and it is the Spirit that bears witness, for the Spirit is the truth {1 John 5:6}.

It is the love *the Father* has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God. The revelation of *the Father* constitutes Christianity; and so the Lord, in John 20, says "I *go up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.*" His redeeming work was then accomplished; and from that moment it is true, that "we are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). To them that receive Christ, believing in His name, is given the right to be children of God. Such are "born of God" (John 1:12, 13).

Here we may remark another thing; that in His answers to Nicodemus, the Lord says nothing about the blessings promised under the new covenant; but insists upon the moral and spiritual character of the new birth, as contrasted with the natural one:

that which is born of the flesh *is flesh*, and that which is born of the Spirit *is Spirit*.

The kingdom is *God's*, and it is only by the new birth that it can be seen. A man must be born anew. But there is more: the Lord says that to enter into it, a man must be born of *water* and of the *Spirit*. Now this, Nicodemus, as a teacher of Israel, was bound to have gathered from the spiritual sense of the Old Testament scriptures as a moral principle, apart from the earthly blessings promised. We find two lines of truth, that in Ezekiel, and that in Isaiah. Both refer to the future day of promised blessing when "the sure mercies of David" will be realized for Israel.

In Ezekiel, the water is presented as *purifying*, and the work of the Spirit as giving power to hear and to do God's ordinances and commandments (Ezek. 11:18, 19; 36:25-29). In Isaiah, the water is *fertilizing* and *life-giving*, and the Spirit is given in connection with the blessings flowing from the *Redeemer's work*.²¹ Let my reader notice this; for it is of the deepest importance as to principle.

Thus saith the Lord that made thee and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel. Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his *Redeemer* the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God (Isa. 44:2-6).

And compare this with Isa. 59:20, 21, where, after describing the hopeless condition of the people, and the efficaciousness of the Savior's work alone for their deliverance, the Spirit adds:

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him; and the Redeemer shall come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression²² in Jacob, saith the Lord, As for me this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: *My Spirit* that is upon thee, and *my words* which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.

In this passage the "water" of Isa. 44:3, is replaced by "my words"; thus showing what the "water" signifies. The appropriateness of this appears more vividly, when we consider that between the two comes the wonderful ch. 55,

21. This alone would go far to set aside the doctrine of Mr. G.'s tract as to the seal of the Spirit. And in the type (Lev. 14:17), the oil is put upon the blood of the trespass offering.

22. Is not this *repentance*? What becomes then of the doctrine of the tract, as to the appropriation by the soul of the truth presented to it? (See above, pp. 7-10 {7-9 above}.) It is the repentant people, into whose midst the Savior comes; as we find actually accomplished in Matt. 3 (see above, p. 51, note {p. 36 note}). Again it is those who were pricked in their heart, on hearing Peter's address, who are exhorted to repent and be baptized *in the name of Jesus Christ* for the *remission of sins*, when they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38). They are sealed, in connection with His redeeming work. It is to the *Redeemer* that the Spirit bears witness. It is the *Redeemer* whom these repentant ones become personally acquainted, with. And again, I would ask, Is there no "appropriation by," in the "wine" and "milk" of Isa. 55? Or can we drink milk, and not know it; and drink wine, and feel no effect from it? And what is the meaning of a soul *delighting* itself in fatness?

which explains in detail the figure as it is employed in this prophet.

One would fain linger over these precious passages, so full of rich instruction, did our present purpose permit. While commending, therefore, the whole ch. 55 to my reader's careful attention, especially vv. 3 and 6-9 (where we have a beautiful statement of repentance in its double character, -- as to past evil, and as to the actual thoughts of the Lord which are to replace our thoughts), I will confine myself to quoting Isa. 55:10, 11:

For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall *my word* be that goeth forth *out of my mouth* (cp. Deut. 8:3): it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto *I sent it*.

Here, then, "the waters" of Isa. 44:3, are distinctly stated to represent *the word* which, proceeding out of God's mouth, is to accomplish that whereunto *He* sends it. Joy and peace and fertility are the effect of it; and this is to "be to the Lord for a name, for an *everlasting sign* which shall not be cut off" (v. 13). The blessings stated are the immediate result of the word coming down from heaven, and being poured out upon the earth. It is *it* that is life-giving, and the result is "*everlasting*." But this, as a moral principle, goes beyond the limits of Israel, as we find in the next two chapters (Isa. 56 and 57):

Thus saith Jehovah, Keep ye judgment and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed: blessed is the man that doeth this and the son of man that layeth hold on it.

The blessing is extended to *man*, as such; it reaches the "son of the stranger," who should "join himself to the Lord," -- he who was disposed to say, The Lord has separated me from his people. Such are encouraged by the promise that the Lord would bring them to His holy mountain, and make them joyful in His house of prayer; for His house is to be called "a house of prayer for all nations." Peace is proclaimed to him that is afar off, as well as to him that is near (Isa. 57:19; and cp. Eph. 2:17).

I need hardly remind the reader that the present application, in the person of Christ, of the truths set forth in Isaiah, does not interfere with their dispensational accomplishment during His millennial reign, which is the more direct object of the prophecy -- "the sure mercies of David," that have their own value as such. But then we must remember that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Pet. 1:20); that is, as has been

explained, ²³ “it is a part of God’s mind,” and “must be understood by, and according to, the Spirit that uttered it.” This is confirmed by the use made of v. 3 of this very chapter by the Holy Ghost, in Acts 13:34, where it is referred directly to Christ personally, and to His resurrection from among the dead, in connection with Psa. 16:10, 11:

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell {sheol/hades}; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. ²⁴

As to the particular effect produced by the word, everything depends upon the word that produces it. This is illustrated in the parable of the sower, which introduces the kingdom practically. The Lord was rejected; He was no longer seeking fruit from Israel; but He brought in what was wholly of God, and absolutely perfect. This divine seed received into the heart was what could alone bring forth fruit for God. Matthew presents it dispensationally as “the word of the kingdom,” bringing into prominence the *Sower*, the “SON OF MAN.” Mark insists upon the work of the perfect servant, *sowing* THE WORD; Luke, upon the character of the *seed* sown, and received into the heart -- “the word OF GOD.”

To arrive, then, at a true estimate of the life, and of the fruit which God seeks from it, we must consider what the word is that is sown in the heart.

Now in the Gospel of John, the One who is the subject of the divine testimony is the Eternal Son of the Father. The Word is “the Word of LIFE” (1 John 1:1), stated to be that “eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us.” The revelation made, is of God as “the Father,” to be known in this relationship to the Son -- “His Father.” And He who makes the revelation is not a mere human prophet charged with words from Jehovah (Heb. 1:1), or even an angel sent from heaven to signify it, -- “but the Son of man who is in heaven” in the divine fulness of His person, and who has Himself come down from heaven, whither no man had ever gone up. ²⁵ This fact of His coming down from heaven gives the character of the revelation He was about to make to Nicodemus, and which He describes as “heavenly things” {John 3:12}.

The Lord was speaking of what He knew and had seen, and which

23. New Version {of J. N. Darby}; note *in loco*.

24. Have we not, in this passage, a positive indication of where the life, which is characterized by full and eternal joy, begins, -- namely, in the resurrection of Christ? Compare Rom. 1:4; John 20:22.

25. {No man but the Son went up by his own intrinsic power, but He only Who could say, “I ascend.”}

consequently went further than what the prophecies had spoken of. But there was a moral truth of which Nicodemus had to find he was ignorant. No education or improvement of the flesh could avail; God had shown it already to be fruitless in Israel (Isa. 1:2-6; 5:1-7):

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit; marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again {John 3:3}.

This met Nicodemus where he was, met his conscience and the state of his heart, his thoughts and affections, with truth that had already been indicated in the scriptures he professed to teach to others,

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God {John 3:5}.

The word purifies what it meets with in us, by the application of death to the flesh; for the "water" came from the side of a dead Christ, and he that saw it bare record (John 19:35). And by the word, the Spirit communicates a new, a holy, life, -- a nature which, as led of the Spirit, is capable of walking with God in holiness. For the Spirit is given in connection with the Redeemer's work. The Spirit will also be poured out upon those who will enter into the millennial blessing. But the nature of the life, and the affections and relationship with God, and the consequent responsibility which it expresses, depend upon the divine revelation made, -- the testimony borne to Christ personally and to God in Him. The millennial saints will know Him as "the MOST HIGH." The Christian knows Him as FATHER, so revealed in the SON.

Hence, we need hardly say, there is no such thing as two quickenings. ²⁶ A man cannot be quickened in one way, and afterwards in another. Believing, he has life, he is "born of God." Nor have we to seek to explain that which the Lord Himself states to be beyond human intelligence. "THOU *canst not tell*" may well seal our lips, and put an end to the working of our poor minds, -- while our hearts are filled to overflowing with adoring praise, as we are led on by the Spirit to find out in the Person of Christ, *what* is the "eternal life" which is communicated to us:

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; *so* is every one that is born of the Spirit {John 3:8}.

I do not deny the working of God in a man previous to its being manifested that he has passed from death unto life; nor do I attempt to call it by any name or

26. {This remark, that there are no two quickenings, was occasioned by a charge made by F. W. Grant that his opposers were teaching "double quickening."}

explain it. I believe this to be included in what the Lord says cannot be told.²⁷ The new birth is plainly stated in the chapter itself to be an absolute necessity. The same “must” attaches to it, as to the Lord’s own being “lifted up” upon the cross. The life given is also stated, over and over again, to be not after believing, but in believing. He that believes on the Son has it; and it is “eternal life,” life in the Son.

Again, it is the Son that quickens (John 5:21), “even as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them”; and the Lord states, that the time in which the dead heard the voice of the Son of God and lived, began *then* (v. 25), without a hint as to its having taken place before: “The hour *is coming and now is . . .*” This is a truth perfect in itself, which we have to keep distinct from the coincident truth which we find in Ephesians and Colossians, of God’s quickening us *together with Christ*, and which is presented in connection with a different line of truth from that in John; in no way opposed, I need not say, but *different*. And we have not to bring them together, and to try to form a consistent historical whole, by making one take precedence of the other in the ways of God with each individual soul, during this dispensation. All like efforts are systematizing, and are to be rejected as such. God has chosen to present to us different phases of the truth, in different parts of His holy word. We shall have presently to glance at the doctrine of the tract as to this other character of “quickening,” and so say no more about it here.

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. 14, 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;

27. It is interesting to note in this connection, that on the side of man, as dealing with his thoughts and conscience, the “water” (the word) comes first. But when it is the divine mystery of life, as flowing from God’s sovereign action on man, the Spirit is alone named -- “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit”; and the Spirit is alone in view when it says, “thou canst not tell.” Compare also 1 John 5, where again this delicate difference is shown in another way: Christ, as presented to man, comes by “water and blood”; but when the efficacious work of God in man’s soul is in question, it is “the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth”; and there the order is, “the Spirit, and the water, and the blood.” There is the same general difference between John 5 and 6: divine and sovereign quickening is the subject in ch. 5, and not the faith that appropriates. In ch. 6, it is man’s side, as laying hold by *faith*; and Christ is there the *object*, and His flesh *eaten*, and His blood *drunk*.

and then in vv. 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 ch. 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 ch. 7, He 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*²⁸ and truth." The glory seen in Him

28. 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

(continued...)

was “a glory as of an only begotten with a Father” (John 1:14); and in v. 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 love²⁹ 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 8:42: “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” (v. 11); 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,³⁰ in His laying down His life for the sheep (vv. 16, 17).

28. (...continued)

of which He is the object, as sent of the Father, may be in us, and He in us (John 17:26).

29. “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 v. 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 {of J. N. Darby}, “attached to” in John 20:2, “has affection for” in John 16:27. (Matt. 26:48, &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 v. 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.

30. 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

(continued...)

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 glory ³¹ 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 know ³² that thou hast sent me, and
hast loved them as thou hast loved me (John 17: 22, 23).

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.

30. (...continued)

blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (vv. 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 Son 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*.

31. Not what is personal to Him, of course, -- the "*my* glory" of v. 24. That is different.

32. 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*.

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* to the end . . . {John 13:1}.

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*³³ may be in them, and I in them {John 17:25}.

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 {1 John 3:1}.

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

33. 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 verse 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 is 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 {p. 292}.

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 p. 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 {p. 300}).

propitiation for our sins (1 John 3:1; 4:9, 10).³⁴

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.

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 7:7; 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 in³⁵ him (1 John 3:11-15).

34. 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. 1:3, 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. (Compare vv. 8, 9, 21, 22.) See also note on p. 65 {p. 45}.

35. I do 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

(continued...)

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). 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 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 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

35. (...continued)

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.

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.”³⁶ 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. (Compare John 8:34-36; 5:24, 25 and 11:25, 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

36. Not always using the same word for “loved,” however. The difference, already remarked between John 3:35 and v. 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 (cp. v. 1); 19:26; 21:7, 20.

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 10, 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 (pp. 26, 27 above {pp. 19, 20 above}) 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 (cp. 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 John 3:14-16. The revelation of divine righteousness is based upon the same fact in John 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 v. 10, is, “Because I go to my Father and ye see me no more.” The “must be” of ch. 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 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 {1 John 5:11, 12}.

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 {abodes} 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. ³⁷ 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

37. Remember that the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer *characterizes* the life that constitutes Christianity, redemption being accomplished (see above, p. 39 {above p. 28}). He is actually given to the one who believes, who “has life “ in believing (Gal. 4:4-6).

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 5:17, 19-21; as to 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.).

Mr. Grant’s Doctrine

We must now turn back to glance at the system which occupied us at the beginning of this paper and which separates between these things that God has indissolubly connected, divorcing the Lord’s work from His Person, as to the communication of eternal life and shepherd-care of His own -- and still more markedly so as to the seal of the Spirit, stating this to be in connection with faith in His *Person*, not His work. And it separates both these things necessarily from His present place in glory; for this is sought to be presented in connection with “*life in Christ*,” as distinguished from “*life in the Son*.”

We shall have to examine what the scripture says as to this; but before passing on to it, a few remarks as to the system will find their place here in connection with the scriptures which have passed before us.

According to Mr. Grant, life *from the beginning* was “in the Son,” speaking of its *communication*; for “‘in the Son’ means *life* in the Son,” and “to be in the Son was to be identified in life and nature with the Son” (p. 14); so that if the

words have any meaning at all, the Old Testament saints had the knowledge of the Father: for that is how the Lord explains the eternal life in John 17:3, attaching to it the personal knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom the Father *had sent*, -- another truth, by the way, entirely and necessarily ignored by the system. So that on every point it is a perversion of the scripture, even as to “*facts*,” -- on which its author likes to insist at the expense of dispensational truth (p. 24). But the moral harm done to unwary souls is deeper yet; for the truth they think they receive is separated from the divine word which conveys it, being deduced from reasoning, instead of being received in the connections in which God has given it.

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 Psalms,³⁸ 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* 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*” (p. 13);³⁹ 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*

38. 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 (cp. 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. (Cp. Isa. 43:21.)

39. This is sought to be commended by insisting upon Christ's actual place in glory as *characterizing* it. Whether scripture does so, we shall see when we look at this special truth. (See below, p. 110 {below, p. 74}.) 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. It is painfully instructive to see the efforts made to turn aside the force of every condemnatory passage, in order to maintain the unsound doctrine.

at all; ⁴⁰ 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" (p. 72)! It divorces the truth presented from the experience of it in the soul, reducing it to a lifeless heartless 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 relationships, 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." Mr. Grant's explanation of his faith, and the way he was justified, proves this (see above, p, 22 {above, p. 16}). Abraham is in view all through, and the germ and development of his faith. God is accessory, so to speak.

Justification too, *in the soul of the believer*, is separated from the life (all theoretical and imaginary as it is); at any rate it was so for Abraham. So that, in fact, the very truth so loudly proclaimed, and which we are expected to find "help" in, vanishes when we think we are grasping it. The basis and principle of the gospel, as stated in Rom. 1:3, 4, is set aside in its two parts, to say nothing of the "justification of *life*," in Rom. 5:18. The gospel is not about *us* (indeed there is no good news to tell in this respect), but concerning God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. And He was declared to be the SON OF GOD in power, according to the Spirit of holiness "by *resurrection of the dead*" {Rom. 1:4}. Now Mr. G.'s theory really contradicts this; for the believer's life was "in the Son" *before*, according to him. We do not mean to assert that Mr. G. denies the work of the cross as the basis of all divine life communicated to fallen man. But he makes the life, when faith was in a promise, to be the same thing as life by

40. The author of the tract we have been examining enforces this more boldly than ever in a recent short paper on the subject, which was sent me while this was going through the press. I reserve my remarks on it for an appendix.

faith in God's testimony to the death and resurrection of Christ, and to His personal glory as "the Son." The attempt to cover this by insisting on the life then given being *divine* is altogether beside the question. Was it "life IN THE SON"? -- The universal testimony of scripture answers, "No."

His system is palatable to the human mind, because it leaves out the deep exercises of heart the word of God produces, and tells us that God appropriates everything *to* us in Christ, and if we only knew it, we should enjoy it. One would have thought that the history of the deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt, with all the anguish and deep exercises of heart they went through, as portrayed in the scripture, should at least have taught Mr. Grant to be more cautious.

And as for repentance, what shall we say? The *word* is in his tract, and there is a definition on page 42 ("the taking true ground before God in the confession of sins"), which may mean a great deal or nothing at all just according to what "the true ground" is explained to be. According to his system, it is practically reduced to very little, on account of the way in which the living word is methodically separated from the effect produced by it in the soul. We lose the truth that "the goodness of God leads us to repentance" (Rom. 2:4). And the solemn warning to those who do not repent is rendered well nigh meaningless. Luke's Gospel, as well as John's, is deprived of its life and power.

One turns with relief from speculations which make everything visionary, to the realities of the living word of God, which shows us what is revealed, and what is not. Here we do find peace and joy, meted out to us in divine fulness, while the workings of our poor minds are put to shame.

The rest the Lord gives to the laboring and burdened soul is offered, be it remembered, on that holy ground where Jesus could praise His Father, Lord of heaven and earth, ⁴¹ that He had hid these things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them to babes; where the soul's supremest delight in learning the Father, as the *Son* is pleased to reveal Him, finds its term in the undisclosed glory of the Person of the Son; an impassable limit -- if limit that can be called which is of itself an eternal, boundless, holy, joy -- on hearing from Himself that "no one knows the Son but the Father." Does it not carry our souls on to what alone can satisfy us,

the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in its own time He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach

41. It is as accepting the place of rejection by Israel, a rejection consummated in the cross, and as having "all things delivered unto him by the Father," consequent upon this, that He takes this place of Revealer of the Father, with the blessings that attach to this revelation.

unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see; to whom be honour and might eternal! Amen (1 Tim. 6:14-16)?

We learn now the infinite grace which has brought us so near, brought us to where God reveals Himself in the Son according to His own nature, light and love, -- near enough to Him to learn that there is unapproachable light beyond.

There, only to adore
My soul its strength may find;
Its life, its joy, for evermore,
By sight nor sense defined.

But what puny thoughts are ours! We are utterly at fault, and have to confess our inability to understand, even in presence of the wonders of creation in the midst of which we live, so that we have to cover our faces, like Job, even at the tale of an infinitesimal part of them; and shall we allow ourselves to speculate upon the glory of the Person of the SON, the Creator of all, or upon the manifold wisdom and counsels of the FATHER, of whom every family in heaven and on earth is named? "We know in part." When the time comes for us to know as we are known, we shall find untold delight in what will be revealed then; just as in what will yet be still expressed in those blessed words: "No man knows . . . no man can see. . ." But at the present moment we are brought into the light of the personal knowledge of God (2 Pet. 1:3), by the One, who as Son of God and Son of man, could say to Nicodemus, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." Let us look to it, that in prying with carnal curiosity into what is unseen, we do not find ourselves deprived by the enemy of what is revealed. This is his double work with the saints now.

The Lord sends His disciples into the world, having confided the Father's word to them, -- this revelation, not of God's dispensations in His government of the world, but the revelation of the Father in grace, -- a revelation, not of God's counsels for the future in Christ, but which makes known the Father Himself, as having sent the Son, and putting us in relationship with God according to His nature, which will be the eternal blessing when there will no longer be any dispensation. Now this is what drew the world's hatred upon them.⁴² But of this "eternal life" we are practically deprived by a system which renders it nugatory in the soul;⁴³ and *necessarily* detaches it from what scripture shows to be inseparable from it, as it is revealed -- "communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." The "eternal life" is declared to us, the apostle says, that we may have this communion, and that so having it, "our

42. J.N.D.: *Voice to the Faithful*, vol. 19, p. 33.

43. The latest, boldest, saddest statement as to this, by the author of this system, may be seen in the appendix.

joy may be full.” Are we prepared thus to allow ourselves to be cheated by Satan out of our highest and most sanctifying blessings, -- the full present value of the *Name* in which the Father keeps us?

“HOLY FATHER, keep them in THY NAME, which thou hast given me, that they may be one as we.”

May the Lord preserve us, too, from losing sight of the fact, that when the revelation of *eternal life* is made to us in the Person of the SON, *then* is made known also the *presence of the Holy Ghost upon earth*, consequent upon accomplished redemption and upon the Lord’s taking His place as Son of man in glory; and this not merely as the power and source of knowledge, but as also characterizing the life communicated, as we have already seen. These again are things which God has put together, but which Mr. Grant’s system separates. “Little children,” that is, new born babes in Christ, are characterized as “*knowing* the Father,” have eternal life, and have also the Holy Ghost. We learn in them what *characterizes* CHRISTIANITY. It is said to them:

And ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things; I have not written to you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth . . . And the unction which ye have received from him abides in you, and ye have not need that anyone should teach you; but as the same unction teaches you as to all things, and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, ye shall abide in him (1 John 2:20, 21, 26, 27).

And we read in Gal. 4:6-9:

Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba! Father;

and a verse or two after, their condition is described by the apostle as having “*known* God, or rather being *known of* God.” The whole Gospel of John, from beginning to end, insists upon this blessed truth. He in whom the life is, and who is the life, is the One upon whom the Spirit descended and abode; and it is then made known to John that He it is who baptizes with the Holy Ghost; and he saw and bare record that He is the SON OF GOD (John 1:32-34).

He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God gives not the Spirit by measure (John 3:34).

We learn in His Person what the life is in its fulness, both as to the knowledge of the Father, as to its true spiritual character through the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost, and as to the complete separation from the world, and testimony against the world, which distinguishes it.

The SON OF MAN who gives to us the food which endures unto eternal life, is He whom the Father -- God -- hath sealed (John 6:27). And consequently, if in the earlier part of the Gospel we find the Lord insisting upon the character of what is born of the Spirit, we learn at the end that He sends

down *the Comforter* from the Father, as soon as He goes up to where He was before. These two things are thus kept together by the Lord, and given to us in the same gospel. When God gives the “eternal life,” He gives the knowledge of it: He sends His only begotten Son, and makes Himself known as FATHER, for the first time so revealed. And He sends down the Holy Ghost, that He may witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and that He may cry in us “Abba, Father!” This is Christianity.

I do not say that every soul apprehends this. Alas! there was no truth that sooner became a dead letter in Christendom. And how many Christians now-a-days, through the effect of theological traditions, really know nothing of it! But we have to do with the way in which scripture presents the truth, and not with the diluted or false doctrines to which imperfect or corrupt teaching has reduced it.

Had the Old Testament saints this? We all know they had not, as the passage in Gal. 4 distinctly states. Their life was not *this*, not in any sense what is called in John’s writings “eternal life,” nor had they the Holy Ghost who is given to those who have it. But we do find in Abraham’s history blessed instruction as to what the life of *faith* is, in separation from the world, and with a heavenly hope before the soul, because of having to do with God. Ought not this to lead us to think and speak more about *faith* in GOD, and guard us from indulging in theories as to what “life” is? The admission of a human “How THEN?” here, is but to accept, in another form, the tempter’s old question, “Yea hath God said: Ye shall not eat of *every* tree of the garden?”

Besides, would not all the Old Testament saints be members of the body of Christ, just as logically as they are said to have “life in the Son”? What is to hinder our putting a “how then” in here? The author of the system can perhaps explain this difficulty. But let us look it in the face. *Mr. Grant, not scripture*, states that they had life in the Son -- were identified with the Son in life and nature. He, not scripture, *reasons* that they who had life before in the Son, have it *now* in Christ, “because the Son is Christ.” But Christ is also the Head of the body. Step by step we are irresistibly led on; where are we to stop? Is there one single *scripture* which applies the possession of “eternal life” to those of whom it is not equally true that they are living stones of the church, and members of the body of Christ? Christ’s actual place in glory as Son of God and Son of man, in virtue of His death, is the foundation of both these things (Eph. 1). The Son of man, confessed to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, is “the rock” on which the church is built; and the stones of which it is built are such as so confess Him, having received the revelation from His *Father* in *heaven*. Peter was a specimen “stone.” The divine moral basis of it is given too in the same passage, -- laid in His suffering and death. And the hope before the soul of him

who denies himself and takes up his cross, to follow Christ, is the coming of the Son of man in the glory of *His Father* (Matt. 16:13-28). Again, the same wondrous truths come before us that we have already found to characterize the communication of the eternal life, in John 3:12-18, -- the glory of His Person, as Son of man and Son of God, the "Word made flesh," His death and the fact of His going up to where He was before.

Surely it is not for us to seek to define what the life of the Old Testament saints was, or what it will be, when scripture is silent on the point. God will make it known. "He is not ashamed to be called their God"; but He does not say "their Father." "Friend of God," and "friend of the Bridegroom," betoken surely places of unspeakable blessing; but the Lord had said, in speaking of the greatest of those born of women belonging to the bygone dispensation: "The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The Spirit will be poured out in the millennium, but it in no way follows that saints blessed upon earth then, will know THE FATHER. The Spirit will not then testify to the exalted Christ seated on the Father's throne, Son of man and Son of God in glory. God's millennial name is "the *Most High*," which carries with it quite a different relationship from that of FATHER. Christianity fills up the parenthetic interval between Christ's going up, and His coming forth; and is wholly heavenly in its source, its character, and its end. Human reasoning on these things results in depriving Christianity of its heavenly character: the "eternal life" now given is reduced from a distinctive truth to what is universal, applying just as much to those who, during the millennium, have an earthly portion, as to those who have a heavenly one. Christianity in its essence is undermined. When we keep like little children to what God has written, all becomes simple for faith.

The important thing then for us to learn is how "eternal life" as a present possession from God, is *spoken of in the scripture*. And when we come to examine it there, we are struck by the way in which *knowledge* is insisted on in the writings of John. But Mr. Grant states that saints had eternal life and did not know it, nor know what it was; and thus distinctly sets aside the *characteristic* of the life, as given in the word of God. The gospel which alone sets forth the eternal life, insists upon the personal knowledge of Jesus, in every chapter; and the epistle is written to those who believe on the name of the Son of God, "that they may know that they have eternal life." It would carry us far beyond our limits to go through the Gospel with this view, but while commending it to our readers' careful study, as a subject fraught with blessing, we would quote a few passages only.

This is the will of my *Father*, that everyone who sees the *Son* and believes on him, should have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:40, New Trans.).

I am the Good Shepherd; and I know those that are mine, and am known of those that are mine, as the *Father* knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep (John 10:14, 15, New Trans.).

Have I been so long time with .you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the *Father*, and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works sake (John 14:9-11).

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of *my Father*, I have made known unto you (John 15:15).

(Compare also John 16:13-15, 27; 17:3, 8, 25; 18:37; 19:35; 20:17-20, 29; 21:1, 14, 24). John's gospel was "written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

We know that the SON OF GOD *is come*, and hath given us an understanding that we may *know* him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

Thank God that it is so! Unspeakable blessing both for time and eternity! May He graciously arouse us to a deeper sense of it, and of what the new birth means; leading us on in a growing knowledge of Himself, in the holy intimacy of communion with him, to be "so occupied with Christ as to be forgetful of self." ⁴⁴

Having desired to confine my remarks to the way in which "*life in the Son*" is presented in scripture, in marked contrast with Mr. Grant's system, -- I have purposely avoided entering upon the question of sealing by the Spirit, and all the wonderful results to the believer of the presence of the Spirit, in, and with him; all of which has been developed in the "Operations of the Spirit of God," ⁴⁵ and in similar treatises by the same writer. For I am fully persuaded that the way in which Mr. Grant dissociates faith in the Lord's atoning work from the reception of the seal of the Spirit, is but an outcome of his doctrine as to "eternal life." They stand or fall together. And besides, I believe it to be upon principle disastrous to allow oneself to be drawn into the arena of controversy as to the way in which souls practically lay hold of the truth. This really belongs to the sphere of God's government in which we have nothing else to do than to admire

44. *Collected Writings of J.N.D.*, vol. 21, p. 181 {p. 124}. The reader would do well to read the whole article on "Born again."

45. {*Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, vol. 3}.

in detail the ways of grace of Him who is “wonderful in counsel, excellent in working.” (And see the whole passage, Isa. 28:23-29.) If our rapid examination of the truth presented in John’s writings does not suffice to convince the reader of the unscripturalness of Mr. G.’s theory as to life, no similar inquiry would hinder him from accepting his doctrine as to the Spirit’s seal. Mr. G. persuades himself he is keeping to scripture, when he is really setting it aside.

He appears to develop his system (p. 58), in great part, by building upon the difference between the *possession* of privileges, and the *knowledge* of such possession; a distinction which, of course, no Christian would question or deny the importance of insisting upon in its proper place, when meeting the ever varying states and conditions of souls. But the needs of souls are not met by seeking to explain them; and still less by a system formed in view of them. It is no comfort to a patient to hear his case exactly described by a doctor, if the latter has no remedy which can meet it. It may be a satisfaction to the man of science; but the patient is in no way helped, except to be more than ever occupied with himself, which is the greatest hindrance to real progress in spiritual things.

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 self-judgment, and inevitable worldliness is before me.

It has been sought by some one (signing himself J.J.S. {Sims}) recently, to uphold Mr. Grants 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." (See Appendix.) 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 (see Appendix B). 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 anytime" "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).

Part 3: In Christ

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.

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?

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 vessels 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 personal 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 of⁴⁶ 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,⁴⁷ become possible; 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* is the basis, and the *beginning* of it as far

46. A very strong expression. The Christian faith is thus characterized: the object of it is THE SON OF GOD. (Compare v. 16.)

47. 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 freewoman."

as we, whether Jews or Gentiles, are concerned: the “corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die,” {John 12:24} 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 (Gal. 2:20; 3:1; 5:11, 24; 6:12, 14). ⁴⁸

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, ⁴⁹ by which righteousness comes (Rom. 2:16, 21); and to

48. It is by no means confined to “substitutionary sacrifice,” as Mr. Grant seems to imply on page 19.

49. The difference between the third chapter of this Epistle and the fourth of Romans, may well be noted here (cp. p. 23 {p. 17}, above). 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
(continued...)

this the “hope” is attached (v. 5), -- the hope for which we wait through the Spirit, -- for “faith worketh by love.”

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*,”⁵⁰ “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”⁵¹ defines the new standing before God, where all distinction between Jew and Gentile disappears (Gal. 3:28).

49. (...continued)

relationship, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

50. 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 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.

51. 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.

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).

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. 5:12-8). 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, 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 {i.e., Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians}; 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).

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 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 (Rom. 5:18, 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 *offences* 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 *sins*; 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.

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 (Rom. 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” (Rom. 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 (Rom. 3:11).

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 Eph. 2:11 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 {Colossians and Ephesians} -- 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,"⁵² and our life is hid with Him in God, while we wait for the

52. 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

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 p. 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, (see above, p. 25 {above, p. 18}) 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

52. (...continued)

circumstances through which He brings him, is seen in 2 Cor. 4:10-12.

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.

The poverty of theological definitions becomes apparent here. For quickening, 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.

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 {Rom. 7}, 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.

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., pp. 296-313 {188-198}.

Part 4: Propitiation

We have had occasion to notice already (p. 6) the extraordinary passage in Mr. Grant's tract, in which forgiveness is linked with propitiation and separated from substitution, which latter as thus looked at, presents, in Mr. G.'s thoughts, a deeper aspect of Christ's work.

The passage runs thus:

Forgiveness is, in a certain sense, the very opposite of justification. Forgiveness is goodness and mercy acting; justification, *righteousness*. Forgiveness only preached, implies the work of Christ not yet in its full character revealed, -propitiation perhaps, but not substitution, thus not the depths into which Christ descended. Thus man's full need is not met, the question of nature is unsettled, dead with Christ, quickened with Christ, are things unknown. The doctrine of the two Adams and the place in Christ are all unknown (page 50).

The former part of this paragraph which sets aside the distinct statement of the apostle in Rom. 4:6, 7,⁵³ serves to bring into relief the subordinate place which propitiation has in this system as compared with substitution. Mr. Grant has MAN in his mind all through, the sinner in his need; and pre-occupied with this he leaves GOD out of the question, except as meeting man's full need. Propitiation, he would have us believe, is merely God's acceptance of the sinner, and hence may be simply governmental, like forgiveness I suppose, but in any case does not set forth the depths into which Christ descended for us, nor does it touch man's ruined state and nature, like substitution.

This "new doctrine" is set forth much more explicitly in an article in "Help and Food," 1884, pp. 241-255, which develops at length Lev. 16. I quote a few passages from it, which bear upon the subject before us:

The cross . . . is the expression also of demands of righteousness which required satisfaction in order to its [love's] showing forth: and this is what we mean by propitiation: it is the propitiation of otherwise withstanding righteousness, which now is turned to be on our side fully as God's love is. Propitiation is thus really the divine side of atonement; and he who accepts truly the one can make no difficulty as to the other: the expiation *is* the propitiation (*ibid.* pp. 248, 249).

53. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

The goat which is the Lord's lot, moreover, as explicitly speaks of substitution as it does of propitiation. The *goat* (the type of the sinner), is the very thing which does speak of that: no figure could more precisely convey the thought. Propitiation it proclaims to be *by* substitution; and for the people therefore for whom the substitution is, *and for no other* (p. 249).

Propitiation, I repeat, then, is by substitution and in no other way, and for the people alone for whom the substitution is (p. 251).

The above passages speak for themselves, and show the nature of the doctrine, and I may add that the article is thoroughly misleading as to the way in which "the church" is spoken of,⁵⁴ and is characterized by the fanciful reasoning which this system in general exhibits.

I would call the reader's attention to the statements I have quoted. Does the *scripture* speak of righteousness withstanding the manifestation of love but for the cross, and being now turned to be on our side? For it is God's "righteousness" we are speaking of, and not merely "justice," as Kelly's hymn says. Certainly Rom. 1:16, 17 knows no such idea, nor does Isaiah; and it would be hard to get it out of Rom. 2:5; for "righteous judgment" is another thing altogether. We read that God's wrath from heaven is revealed now (Rom. 1:18), but that is rather in contrast with the revelation of His righteousness, in the previous verse. This theological reasoning really falsifies the truth as to God's righteousness revealed in the gospel, which the apostle describes as "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes." It is of a piece with the explanation of forgiveness above, and comes from ignoring the way in which God has glorified Himself in the sacrifice of Christ, and founded upon it a scene of absolute perfection, the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness will dwell. All this side of the truth, Mr. Grant's system leaves out.

And what is the meaning of the goat being the type of the *sinner*? Is it then the sinner's blood that is taken into the holiest of all and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat? Are these the precise forms of truth found in God's holy word? Propitiation, we are told, is for the people alone for whom the substitution is. But the difficulty of meeting 1 John 2:2, which explicitly states the contrary, is sorely felt by Mr. Grant, who labors hard in two and a half pages of rationalistic inference to meet the insuperable difficulty in which his own system has plunged him. In doing so, he cuts at the root of the doctrine of election as set forth in Rom. 9, severing it from its divine source, and beclouds more than ever the

54. This results from confounding Lev. 4:13-21 with Lev. 16. In Lev. 4, it is the "*elders of the congregation*" that represent the whole people, and lay their hands on the head of the bullock (v. 15), whereas in Lev. 16, it is *Aaron* who represents the people, and lays his hands on the head of the goat when he confesses the sins of the people (v. 20) -- an important distinction which, as usual, Mr. G. ignores.

doctrine of justification by faith. The conclusion is so bold and bad, that it is difficult to believe a Christian could so fritter away the plain force of scripture words: he says,

Christ is not a substitute for the world, for substitution implies the actual bearing and bearing away of the sins of those who are represented in the Substitute, and the sins of the world are not so borne away. He is the Substitute of *His people*, but a people not numerically limited to just so many, but embracing all who respond to the invitations of His grace, though it were indeed the world for multitude (*ibid.* p. 254).

By this rationalistic “though it were,” the direct teaching of the scripture as to propitiation is cast to the winds. Mr. Grant’s system knows nothing of it; reducing it to the Godward side of atonement, that is, God’s acceptance of a sinner. It has only man in view, ignoring that in the Gospel of John we do not find remission of sins, except as committed to the disciples administratively; but we do find propitiation in its full meaning, in the very first chapter, in the “Lamb of God who taketh away the *sin* of the world.”

Remark, it is “*sin*” here, root and branch, not *sins* merely. And to this, John 17:4 answers, where the Lord says to the Father, I have *glorified Thee* on the earth. Substitution has to do with *sins*.

The fact is, that propitiation, as we find it in the scripture, is ignored, and substitution is forced to do duty for a part of it, eked out by an imaginary division of the subject, to one portion of which the term “propitiation” is applied. For scripture puts forgiveness with substitution. When it is speaking of propitiation, we read that Christ “tasted death for *every man*.” When substitution is the matter treated of, it is said, “He bare the sins of *many*.” Each has its proper place.

To set forth the truth on this matter, I cannot do better (I think) than subjoin almost entire, a letter which appeared in “Words of Faith” for 1884, pp. 223-4.

. . . I object altogether to the question, What benefit does the world get from propitiation? It puts everything on a false and low ground, as if the end and only object of God’s ways -- leaving out the claims of His glory and nature in that which angels desire to look into. I agree in general with what you say; but “the Lord’s lot” was not for the sins of the people as guilt, though God’s holy and righteous nature was met in respect of their sin. The blood was sprinkled first on and before the mercy-seat -- God’s throne, in the most holy place, where God dwelt -- and the altar of incense. The atonement was for the “holy place . . . that remaineth among them.” “That is for the people” (v. 15), is in contrast with Aaron and his house. But what was cleansed and hallowed was the holy place, and the altar no doubt, because of the tabernacle being among them. As meeting God’s nature and character, it was the basis of all. (Compare Heb. 9:23, 26, 27, 28).

The taking away the sin of the world was to have a new heaven and a new

earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, as the fruit of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Thank God, our sins are taken away too, but that is a different thing from putting away sin. It is deplorable to make putting away our sins, true and blessed as it is, the end of all. God has been glorified in Him (John 13) in such sort that man is in the glory of God.

In the scape-goat God's people were represented in their head -- the high priest -- and those only who as such were identified with him. In the other there was no such representation -- a most important principle. Though the people's uncleanness were the occasion of it, it was the Lord's lot, His dwelling-place which was in question, and transgressions not in question save as the means of its defilement, and the blood was under God's eye as the ground of all God's dealings till, and making the security of, the new heavens and the new earth. (See John 13:31, 32.)

Through the cross God Himself has been fully glorified, and in virtue of it Christ Himself has entered into the glory of God as man, though He had it before the world was. (See Phil. 2.) Man's sin was absolute, Satan's power over all the world, man's perfection absolute in Christ when absolutely tested, God's righteous judgment against sin displayed as nowhere else, and perfect love to the sinner, His majesty made good. "It became him" (Heb. 2). No doubt our sins were borne too, thank God, that we might have part in the results; but blessed as this is for us, it was really a secondary thing to the basis of the glory of God in the universe, and the bringing all into order according to what He is, fully displayed. So John 17:4, 5. But in John's Gospel there is not a word of the forgiveness of our sins, save as administered by the apostles.

Finally, the people were not represented in the blood on the mercy-seat and holy place; their sins gave occasion to its being done, but the cleansing was of God's dwelling-place, that that should be fit for Him, and what He was, perfectly glorified by Christ's death -- to be ever before him as eternal redemption.

The two goats made but one Christ, in different aspects. But propitiation alters the whole ground of God's dealings with man. It is the display of God's mercy maintaining God's righteousness, but opening the door to the sinner, the ground on which I preach the gospel, and can say to every sinner, The blood is on the mercy-seat, return to God and it will be His joy to receive you. It is not necessary for him to judge you if you so come, for His righteousness is fully glorified, and His love free. This may bring out the evil will in man, but it is then "ye will not come to me that ye might have life." There is death in substitution -- He bore our sins in His own body on the tree" -- died for our sins according to the scriptures: as I have said, the two goats are one Christ.

Conclusion

As stated in the preface, I have not undertaken to deal in detail with all the doctrines and questions raised in Mr. Grant's tract. Some of these have been mentioned cursorily, and I believe sufficient has been written to show those who care to inquire into the matter, what the nature of the system is, and what its tendency is. It is not without reason that its author has been captivated by its apparent consistency. But surely that fact alone should open the eyes of the reader as to the danger of it, when he is alive as to the way in which it is arrived at. There is no pleasure in mere criticism; but the examination of the word of God carries with it its own joy and refreshment for the soul; and, I trust, a better acquaintance with, and increased assurance in, the doctrines we have hitherto received without question.

It has been loudly asserted and often repeated, that Mr. Grant's tract does not touch fundamental truth. Every reader will form his own conclusion when he sees what the theories are. There is a certain difficulty in the matter, for on examination it is found that habitual expressions are not used in this tract in the accustomed sense. At times this is explained, but often the reader is surprised to find that he has gradually lost what he thought he held firm. There is not a truth of Christianity which is left intact by this system: all is modified, if not nullified, as far as its living power in the soul goes.

Is it faith that is spoken of? God owns an undeveloped "germ" because of the strength He foresees it will gather under His hand.

Is it justification? It is taken out of its proper scriptural connection, misinterpreted and misapplied, through mixing up Romans and Colossians. It is so far severed from faith, that the knowledge of it in the soul is rendered problematic: "the real sentence as to it was when Christ rose," His resurrection being the justification of all for whom He died; "we come under it when we believe," but whether we know it or not is another matter. And besides, as a result of the special doctrine as to "propitiation," God's sovereign elective grace is so presented as to cloud it, for Mr. Grant, reasoning upon the value of the substitutionary sacrifice, states that "you may say it is *sufficient* for the whole world. In itself it may be of value enough, but available it is not," and again, "You cannot say the work is done for all if it be not so." How different to the apostle's words in 1 Tim. 2:3-7! Could an evangelist, penetrated with this corrupt doctrine that the provision made in atonement is "sufficient for all the world" but "*not available*," go forth honestly and say, "*Whosoever* will, let him come"? What becomes of the words in Rom. 3:22: "righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ *towards all*"?

Is it peace with God in Rom. 5? This, Mr. G. would tell us, is the peace

Christ made on the cross; so that a soul may have it and not know it.

Is it forgiveness? This is half severed from righteousness, which is itself, by reasoning upon it, reduced to a human level. And forgiveness is only appropriated *to* the soul that is quickened, so that it is left to get the knowledge and enjoyment of it as best it may. And it is told that in a certain sense forgiveness is “the very opposite of justification.” This agrees with the way in which “repentance” is spoken of.

Is it substitution? It is all confused, so that the sinner’s blessing is set above God’s glory; propitiation in its full meaning is evaporated and gone.

Is it deliverance? A soul sealed with the Holy Ghost may yet be in bondage, and striving after holiness under the law; and this is sought to be proved from the *scripture*, as indeed all the rest.

Is it the seal of the Spirit? This is disconnected from faith in the *work* of Christ, and made to go with faith in His Person only, as risen and glorified.

Is it eternal life? It is universalized and lowered, and made to be merely eternal and divine, while bereft of the relationship which scripture presents as characterizing it, and consequently of the affections and responsibility which go with the relationship. Its communication to us is separated from Christ’s death⁵⁵ and from His place in glory, in spite of the most positive declarations of the word of God. And this is the mainspring of the doctrine; for the distinction between Christianity and Judaism is touched in the Person of Christ, and is really obliterated.

When we think of what is at stake, should it not open our eyes to the nature of this attack of the enemy of souls, doing now in another way, what he did with the Galatian saints, and that more vitally; for it is a question of the doctrine of life now, and not mere legality and formalism.

It is the double manifestation of God’s love as stated in 1 John 4:9, 10 that is attacked by this system -- LIFE and PROPITIATION. As to each of these truths, the distinctive doctrine of John, both in the Gospel and Epistle, is positively set aside and destroyed.

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 spiritually unable to detect the evil at work? I recall his words:

55. My reader will not, of course, suppose I am referring to the moral basis of it. Mr. Grant would surely insist upon the communication of “eternal life” to man having always been *founded upon* the Lord’s atoning work. That, however, is not the point in question with us at all, but the way in which scripture speaks of the life which is designated “eternal life,” and of the *time* and *manner* of its communication to us.

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 displayed.

But the doctrines, disastrous as they are, fall into a secondary place when compared with the habit of reasoning engendered by these writings. They are the high road to rationalism. If I have ventured to print on the subject, it is because I have the deep conviction that no one can lightly take them up and use them for "edification," without falling in a measure under their corrupting influence, and getting his spiritual sensibilities gradually paralyzed. The mind is fascinated by fanciful interpretations of scripture, which foster worldliness; and one learns to like it. But a really simple soul occupied with the Lord, and reading these writings, though unable perhaps to put the finger upon what is wrong, feels instinctively that it is not Christ which is ministered, and turns away from what savors not of things which be of *God*, but of things which are of *men*.

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 doctrine as to the Person of the blessed Lord. *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 foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" If the word of God become 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?

May the Lord arouse those who have been led astray to recognize His hand in the exposure He has already permitted to be made of these doctrines, and use the trial, painful as it is, as an incentive to lead them afresh to the living fountains of truth, so as to find new strength there in communion with God who gave them! And may He, in His own ways of grace, open the eyes of their author, that he too may see and own whither he has been led!

May the Lord make it an opportunity for deepening in our souls the blessed sense of the relationship in which His grace has set us, -- of all that is contained for a "little child" in the wonderful word "FATHER," that our hearts may be filled with "the love of the Father," and so grow in divine intelligence, and that we may know, in living power, the life of dependence upon God, manifested in obedience by Him who, as Son of the Father and Son of man, could say, "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always

those things that please him” (John 8:28, 29).

Appendix A

A considerable portion of this paper was already in type when I received a short answer of six pages by Mr. Grant to his correspondents, on the objections already made to his doctrine of "Eternal Life." It is with deep grief that I observe that, not only has all remonstrance failed to arouse him to a sense of the pernicious character of it, but he states it more boldly than ever, and seeks to shelter himself under the prestige of Mr. Darby's name. The same spirit of reasoning we have noticed all along, comes out here more strongly than ever, accompanied with such a barefaced perversion of Mr. D.'s writings as savors rather of mockery than of theological disquisition.

First of all, "eternal life" is defined to be "*divine* life"; the life in the fullest sense eternal, existing from eternity to eternity in God Himself. It is the communication of this life which makes all who receive it, not children of God by *adoption* merely, but children of God by *birth* -- by life and nature. Mr. G. emphasizes "divine," as explaining "eternal life." What does this mean? Why not keep to the simple definition of the word of God, in the passage (John 17:3) he quotes on page 3 of the answer referred to, as being one which "some oppose" to his doctrine? Evidently he feels that his system has received a mortal blow. But in what sense is "divine" to be understood? If it is *essence*, it is deity; and we have not that: Christ was "the life," but this cannot be said of us. If it be meant to infer that God is the Author or *Source* of life merely, the expression is also applicable to the breath of God, the soul which animated Adam's body, and which consequently is immortal. And so it might be applied to angels too; and in a lower sense to any life, for all is from God's hand: "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). If it be *nature* that is meant, then why not say so? But this would raise at once the question we have examined at length; and the whole system is proved to be fallacious. To give as a definition "It is *divine* life, eternal in a sense no other is," just says nothing at all. They are sounding words, that leave all in the mist of confusion, and are only calculated to prevent an unwary soul from laying hold of what the scripture says quite plainly, -- but which Mr. G. refuses to say.

There is not a word here (in this statement as to "eternal life") of the revelation of the Father, be it observed. And since the Old Testament saints had it, according to Mr. G., they had the life and nature by the "new birth," but without the knowledge of it, without the affections and responsibility implied in it, before the work of the cross, and without the formative power in the soul of Christ's being in the glory, and the Holy Spirit's feeding the saints with Him who is there, Son of man and Son of God!

The painful rationalistic “how then?” we have already had to notice, re-appears here in a grosser form than ever, directly contradicting the Lord’s own words as to John the Baptist, in Matt. 11:11: “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” Mr. Grant’s words are:

“Had they [the Old-Testament saints] this knowledge of the Father and Son, which is the New-Testament revelation?” The answer to this may be given without any difficulty or hesitation: they had not. Does this then settle the point in question? Surely it would be hasty to imagine this in view of consequences so serious as must follow. For if the Old Testament saints had not eternal life, new birth must have been with them a very different and an infinitely lower thing than it is with us. Nay, they could not have been, in the sense in which we are called so, children of God at all! *What* life had they then? and when did true eternal life begin to be in men? When Christ came, and faith received Him first? or when He rose from the dead, having accomplished His work? *Not* certainly, the latter, for it would exclude the people of whom the Lord affirms it to be true, in the very prayer in which these words [John 17:3] are found.

We have already examined the chief points. I suppose the author forgot that in the same prayer, the Lord says, “I have glorified thee on the earth, I have *finished* the work which thou gavest me to do,” and again, “I am no more in the world.” All through he ignores that it is founded on His going up to the Father, and that it is as Son of man in glory that power over all flesh is given to Him. (Compare Matt. 28:18.) There is not such a thought as asking what *scripture* says: a human mind is to decide what life is, as given of God; Mr. Grant will have it to be always the same, involving the same relationships.

The following paragraph, illustrating life without knowledge from the difference between a “babe” and a “man” (the babe being human, but not yet developed into a man), is just so much dust thrown into the reader’s eyes; though, for the author, it reduces the truth to “simplicity itself.” If it be meant to be applied historically, as to God’s dispensations, it is a direct contradiction of the truth set forth in the Epistle to the Galatians. If it be meant to apply it individually, it sets aside 1 John 2, where “little children” are distinguished as such by the *knowledge* of the Father. And the whole matter is thrown into inextricable confusion, by ignoring the scriptural use of the term “eternal life” in different senses, so that at last the reader is told:

Yet we still hope for it *as if* we had it not, although we have it, and know we have it.

And in this maze of uncertainty Mr. Grant leaves us, saying that “in the full reality of what it is, eternity alone can *declare* it to us.” But has not the Son already “declared God and the Father’s name” (John 1:18; 17:26)? And what

about the saint's portion NOW, which is the result of this declaration? Had the phrase been penned by one who wished to scoff at the Christian profession, he could hardly have done it better. Doubtless it is unintentional; but see where systematizing leads! The result is "eternal life," separated from the knowledge of the Father and the witness of the Spirit.

The attempted justification of these views by partial quotations from a writer whom Mr. Grant fearlessly criticizes in maintaining his doctrine, does not commend itself to an upright heart; the more so, when it is done at the expense of making him say the opposite of what he held, the contrary to what the passages themselves, taken in their connection, state distinctly enough. But the most gross perversion appears in this short paper of Mr. Grant's. And he positively underlines a phrase in the passage he quotes (which I underline also), and which contradicts his doctrine in the most positive way. How does he get over it? -- He dismisses it by saying, "It is surely plain that here it is the practical life which is in question." What kind of life, then, would Mr. G. have us receive? There is only one issue for him (and it is the essence of his system): it is a life without knowledge, "without affections, character, responsibility -- in a word, without faith," as indeed the quotation from Mr. Darby states.

I give the passage at considerable length:

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 -- gives 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 differences 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 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 hath sent." *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 leveling 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 sitting 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. 2:10, 20; 2 John 8. I suppose it will not be questioned that this work is through the efficacious operation of the Spirit of God.

Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, vol. 8:39-42 {25-27}.

Lastly, Mr. Grant concludes by another partial quotation out of the same volume. The passage treats of the difference between the life communicated, and the divine "Word incarnate, the Son of God, who came down from heaven," and shows that "union with the Person of God is not scriptural" (pp. 554-558). The article from which the quotation is taken, states, in the opening paragraphs of the Introduction (p. 526), the general truth -- founded upon the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus -- that all the redeemed will be conformed in resurrection to the image of the second Adam; but, subsequently, in speaking of the millennium, it distinguishes heavenly and earthly saints, as is expressly stated in the note (p. 555), and repeated in the text with a good deal of detail (pp. 556, 561, 562, &c.). So that to quote an isolated passage, in the way Mr. G. does, leading the reader to infer that it applies to the Old Testament saints about whom not a word is here said, is quite misleading. The passage that does speak of them maintains the very opposite of Mr. G.'s teaching. I do not wish to say that this is an intentional falsifying of the quotation; but it is at any rate gross carelessness, unpardonable, in so serious a matter, in one who takes the place which Mr. G. does of setting other people right. And besides, as quoted, the passage does not speak of life "in the Son," but of life *in Christ*, so that even in this way, it is the very opposite of Mr. Grant's theory; and two pages further on, it is stated that the millennial saints have life *from Christ*, always supposing His death and resurrection accomplished; and it is added:

though they have it from the risen Man, so that I doubt not they will be changed into likeness to Him, and though their forgiveness and their blessings are enjoyed through the blood of the Lamb, yet they do not sit together in heavenly

places.

Mr. G. leaves all this aside, and writes as follows:

But at page 554 of the same volume, he is still more explicit: And if it be said, "But were they not quickened with the life that was in Christ?" No doubt they were. . . He [Mr. N. {B. W. Newton}] holds now that there was the same life essentially in all of them [heavenly and earthly saints]. With this I fully agree.

It is the usual style of his quotations, and, when examined, condemns itself. It can only temporarily deceive those who do not take the trouble to verify references. But when he adds:

And this is all that has ever been contended for,

-- we are constrained with grief to record that the statement is untrue.

I may add that on page 563, of the same volume, he might have found a quotation of Mr. B.W.N., which is so like his own statements and inferences, in the passage I have quoted from his last six-page tract (see p. 129 {88}), that one can hardly believe they are not by the same pen. And it is Mr. N. that Mr. Darby is reviewing! From the same volume (pp. 173-4)⁵⁶ I quote the following:

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.

56. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 8:112, 113.

Appendix B

It has been thought well to add here a few words on the four revealed names of God which characterize the successive dispensations since He called out Abraham to walk with Him as a stranger upon the earth.

The first is the ALMIGHTY given to Abraham at the moment God was about to accomplish His word to His servant, after He had kept him waiting long enough for him to lose all hope of realizing the blessing according to nature. Humanly, hope was quenched in death; but against hope, he believed in hope, being fully persuaded that what God had promised He was able to perform. This revelation was the basis of God's dealings with the fathers.

The second name is JEHOVAH, revealed to Moses when God sent him to bring Israel out of Egypt into the land He promised to give them, as we read in Ex. 6:2, 3:

And God spoke to Moses, and said unto him I am JEHOVAH: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known unto them.

This name is explained at length in Ex. 3:13-15, when Moses asks the question as to the message he was to take from God to the people.

And Moses said unto God, Behold when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, JEHOVAH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

God is ever the same, the same to-day to accomplish, as He was when He made the promise. The promise is made according to His almighty power; the accomplishment is guaranteed by His unchanging faithfulness. The second revelation, consequently, casts the man of faith back upon God's revealed *word*; for He will carry out His word; He magnifies it above all His name (Psa. 138:2). It is the basis of faith, and the refuge of the soul, when man is tried under responsibility; for in connection with this name the law was given. It is God's covenant name of relationship with the people He has redeemed. (See Psa. 102; 135).

The third name is FATHER, revealed by the Son, and characterizes the

Christian dispensation.

The fourth name is MOST HIGH, according to which, as “possessor of heaven and earth,” God will be known during Messiah’s reign. The Lord is hidden in the heavens now, where by faith, we see Him, crowned with glory and honor, all power being given to Him in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18). But He will speedily come forth, and take His world-kingdom (Rev. 11:15), and then it will be known that He whose name alone is JEHOVAH “is the MOST HIGH over all the earth” (Psa. 83:18). The three names, Almighty, Jehovah, and Most High, characterize Psa. 91; the first verse showing that He who is about to reign is the God of Abraham, who will give effect to the unconditional promises made to His servant; and the second verse giving Messiah’s answer, as the perfectly obedient and dependant Man in the midst of Israel receiving the blessing, on Israel’s behalf, from the hands of Jehovah, Israel’s God. The Spirit of God in the renewed people expresses this to Messiah, in v. 9. The whole Psalm is introductory to Messiah’s reign, and is the real answer to Moses’ prayer, in Psa. 90. There was a beautiful figure of this in Melchisedec meeting Abraham, when he returned from the slaughter of the kings, and blessing him as priest of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth.

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