

"Life and the Spirit"

J A Trench.

Words of Faith 1884, p. 197-221.

"Life and the Spirit" has been sent me, and I am concerned about it chiefly for the author's sake. For though it tends to hinder unestablished souls in getting into their true christian place, God may use this, as He does every hindrance, only to deepen the exercise by which it becomes more real and firmly grasped when known. On the face of it, stated with an accustomed felicity of expression, the system will commend itself to some who care little for searching the word for themselves by its simplicity. You have only to take all the passages which speak of quickening, or life, or in Christ, and put them together as meaning the same thing. It saves all the trouble of examining the context in which these truths are brought in, and the modifications they have according to the scope of different books and vessels used in the communication of the truth, or the subject the Spirit of God may have in hand. It was the way we all began, I suppose, and only by degrees found out how we limited the truth, and contracted our own apprehension of it by the process.

But in attempting to direct serious attention to the way the truth and souls are affected, the difficulty presents itself, that divine truth cannot be judged of apart from our own apprehension of it by faith. "Why do ye not understand my speech? Because ye cannot hear my word" — is a paradox in human philosophy, but a principle of God of immense importance for our souls. We must know the *thing* in what is divine, to understand the way it is presented to us. Now, so many souls are not in their full christian place before God — and this is the worst of such a paper, it commends itself to such as expressing where they are themselves, tending to satisfy them short of God's place for them — that until they know it they will not be able to see the defect of the system. Yet, turning to the word which delivers from all our short-sighted reasoning, we have the truth, "and the truth shall make you free." But in seeking to test what is presented to us by this only standard, the first thing that strikes one is, how almost every term that is used in this paper is employed in some different sense from what it has in the word; and this is a difficulty in seeking to unravel the confusion of it, involving the necessity of examining the word for the scriptural sense of the terms.

At the outset, the author's way of stating the question before us is a little misleading. For, speaking generally, no one would object to say that "forgiveness of sins, justification, and acceptance in Christ *go with* new birth — with life" — and the Holy Ghost, too, if by "go with" were meant that they were characteristic blessings of the new world into which we are born. But we shall see that this is not at all what is meant. And so with the other aspects of the question, save indeed when as to Romans 7 it is asked, Is it a sinner seeking peace, or a saint fruitfulness? when one taught in the word must answer, as it appears to me, Neither. Nor as to the last question can there be any hesitation in answering, that the seal of the Spirit is *in the word*, connected with faith in the work, and not simply in the Person, of Christ.

We are not long, however, in being introduced to the divergence of the writer's use of expressions, and system therein expressed, from scripture; for on page 4, (which is really page 2 of the tract) he states "that all Christians are dead to sin and to the law." Now if he meant the Christian in his full place as such, or even in the mind of God, or as to the efficacy of the work of Christ that brings us into it, it would be true. But the tract makes it too plain, that this is not what he means; that he would

have you assume from the outset, without even a reference to the word, what is really the point to be proved - and that lies at the root of all the subsequent teaching.

In Romans 6: 2, "We who have died to sin" is not presented as the absolute fact of Christ's death and resurrection *for us*, as in chapter 4: 25 — true of us before we knew it — but in connection with, and, in a sense, the end of, an experimental process we have gone through to bring us to the reality of our identification with Christ in His death: "*know ye not* that so many of us as were baptised unto Jesus Christ were baptised unto his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death" — so as responsibly henceforth to take our place only as dead men upon earth. "*Knowing* [observe "knowing" again] that our old man has been crucified with him that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin." It is not of the abstract truth of our death (as though it were said) *in* His death before God, that the apostle is speaking; but he addresses himself to the full Christian intelligence of this become a fact for our own souls — of our death "*with Christ*" — and reasons from it to the practical consequences that flow from it. Now nothing could be more disastrous to souls than to maintain, as this paper does, that every quickened soul is dead to sin, freed from sin, and not under the law, with its necessary consequence that "sin shall not have dominion" over us. (Rom. 6: 2, 18, 22, and 14.) For it is attributing absolutely to everyone who has been born of God, what the apostle speaks of as the ground and fact of an actual deliverance from sin's power, which, if it exists without that deliverance, renders the deliverance hopeless, and shuts up the soul to the state of Romans 7: 14-24. This state is necessarily that of a quickened soul, but of one that is not dead to sin, for it is "carnal, sold under sin," is not freed from sin, for it is brought "into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members," and is still under the law of sin's dominion - consenting to the law, delighting in it, referring to it wholly as the rule of good for the soul, but proving it in effect to be only the power of evil. And this is simply "a saint seeking fruitfulness"! There is not a thought of fruitfulness according to God. It is the struggle to gain power over sin, with the law looked to as a source of strength in the struggle (not knowing that it is "the strength of sin,") and which must be given up as hopeless, and the bond of the soul with the law broken — deliverance from the first husband and sin found in all its reality — in order to any fruitfulness: "whereof, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. 7: 4.) Is not the experience of the close of the chapter diametrically opposed to the condition of fruitfulness as stated in verse 4 — to abiding in Christ? Could words depict more clearly one who is born of God indeed, or else there had been no struggle — (it takes two to fight) — but who, as to the condition of his soul — the state he is in (and this is what scripture is concerned with) — is "to the law," as still having authority over him, a state that verses 2 and 3 declare to be incompatible with being to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, so as to bring forth fruit unto God? Nay, is not the express object of chapter 7 to contrast these two states of a soul alike quickened in each as the basis of them, and to prove that both cannot exist together?

And this is all a question of knowledge, we are told, of progress in knowledge — I am free from sin if I only knew it, etc. — of knowledge by the word and subjection to the Spirit. As if there was no such thing as the conviction of need, of the work *wrought in the soul*, in order to any divine knowledge of the work *for* it. Yet the conviction of sins had to precede justification from them — not less surely the conviction of self in order to deliverance from self. But a truth so fundamental from the beginning of God's ways in grace with souls is lost sight of even as to the first, that is, our justification. And we are told (p. 7) that "all quickened are justified then, of course from the first moment of quickening." But this is again to use terms as scripture does not — as a student in his study, not thinking of the state of souls. The first five chapters of Romans to verse 11 of the last, develop this subject of justification. There is not the trace of such a statement that every quickened soul is justified; on the contrary, it is

referred to another thing. "Being justified freely by his grace, *through the redemption* that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation *through faith in his blood*, to declare his righteousness . . . that he might be just, and the justifier of him which *believeth in Jesus*." Resting thus immutably in divine righteousness on the ground of redemption and faith in His blood, God is the justifier of him who believes in Jesus, and we are reckoned righteous "if we believe on him that raised up our Lord Jesus from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and faith in His blood, form the ground of justification for the believer in Jesus; and faith in Him who raised Him from the dead carries peace in the divinely assured certainty of it to our souls. It might as well be said, that every quickened soul has peace with God, as to say he was justified, for these two things are thus connected in scripture. The system of the paper would require, therefore *knowing* that we are justified, etc. But justification from our sins is as real and actual a thing for the soul, as scripture treats it, as deliverance from sin, in *its* place, namely, *a revealed ground of relationship upon which the soul stands consciously with God as the fruit of redemption*, and worthless to us here if it were not so. Of course, every quickened soul was ever justified *before God*, and that before ever they were quickened, in the counsels of God. But it was not the revealed ground of relationship until Christianity; and then it is not by quickening we are brought into it, but by faith in Jesus known in the efficacy of His work, who shed His blood to lay the ground of it in righteousness, and in God who raised Him from the dead as the proof of His acceptance of the work that had so glorified Him; so that now a risen Saviour in the glory of God becomes the glorious proof to the believer that his sins, that brought Him to the cross, are gone for ever, and he has peace with God. I turn to the passages, however, upon which this justification by quickening is sought to be founded, only, alas! to find everything confounded.

We are first asked to identify "eternal life" with quickening as "ours from the first moment of it." (Page 5.) Of course it is in fact: there is not — there never was — any other outside the forfeited life of the fallen man save life as flowing from the Son of God, who, in His own Person, is "that eternal life that was with the Father." But I earnestly press, that it is not so that scripture speaks of eternal life. When the Son of God was manifested, that life was manifested, the Father gave Him to have it in Himself,* and He was a divine and sovereignly quickening source of life in the glory of His Person, as thus manifested on earth. The hour was come that the dead should hear His voice, and live — and live of the life He gave, even eternal life, now recognised as such, because manifested in Him. (1 John 1: 2.) But to identify this with being born of God, through His word, by the Spirit, as Nicodemus ought to have known of it from Old Testament scriptures (page 10); and these, again, with being quickened together with Christ, as in Ephesians and Colossians, is a sad way of handling scripture. We are told that eternal life "was the possession of every one born of God from the beginning of the world." "Scripture is surely clear;" but we have not one text given to us. But, turning to scripture, why, then, should the Lord say, "I am *come* that they might have life"? (John 10: 10.) They had it all the same, whether He came, or not, according to our paper, which is true as to the absolute fact of the life they possessed — divine life, as born of God — but not as scripture presents it. And it is our only wisdom to abide by the word. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee [the Father, whom He was addressing], the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." It was not eternal life, as scripture speaks, to know God as Almighty, or as the Jehovah of Israel, but as the Son came to make Him known — the Father revealed in the Son. Eternal life, then, according to the word, is that which was manifested in the Son, that He came that we might have then, or "more abundantly" when we should possess it in a new way in Him risen from the dead, carrying with it all His own relationship, as Man with the Father and God, as that into which we are consciously brought. Now this last is what is

expressed as "life in Christ Jesus" — not simply divine life, or even eternal life, but this life possessed in the power of resurrection, of Christ's new place before God as Man risen from the dead. Thus there was "the promise of life which was in Christ Jesus" — why, *promise* if it was theirs; but even this unrevealed — *unrevealed as promise*, but, "according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel." So Titus 1: 2, 3: all the ways of God with the first man coming between this purpose and promise of life in Christ Jesus before the world began, and its manifestation through the gospel.

*A very different thought from the unhappy expression, "life is deposited in the Lord as Son of man, as source of it for men," from any false use of which we are preserved by the passages he quotes: John 1: 4, John 5: 26. But he was led to it apparently by the desire to deduce "Hence he is last Adam," which is not the scriptural connection of these different aspects of His glory, and confounds His glory as Son of God quickening whom He will before the cross, in the power of eternal life in Himself, with the place He has taken as Man consequent upon it in resurrection, the last Adam a quickening Spirit.

And this connects itself closely with the point to which I am now come, namely, the close of Romans 5, for the expression, "justification of life" (quoted at page 5). In verse 12 we leave the question of the perfection of the way we have been brought to God by the death and resurrection of Christ, clear of every question of our sins, justified from all things, at peace with God, His love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given us, beautifully represented in figure by Israel's position when the Red Sea was crossed, and up to and until Sinai necessarily changed the whole ground upon which they stood. We leave this, as complete, to enter upon a wholly distinct aspect of truth, tracing us respectively to two distinct heads of races, as of Adam, or of Christ. Here it is no longer a question of the *acts* of individuals, but of the *state* of those so classed, in which they were involved by the acts of their heads respectively — the race identified with its head, whether as Adam having accomplished sin, and entailing ruin, and wretchedness, and death upon his; or as Christ, having accomplished righteousness, and entailing nothing but life, and righteousness, and blessing upon His. Thus it was, "as by one offence towards all to condemnation, so by one righteousness towards all to justification of life" — precious contrast as it is. All who have come under Christ as Head of a new race, possess a life, to which no charge of sin ever did, or could attach. For in that life in which He came in grace, and had to do with sin, as made sin, He died, and died unto sin once, never more to have to do with it again. But not till His work was accomplished did He take His place as second Man and last Adam — "quickening Spirit He had ever been, indeed, as having the power of divine life in Himself for others ("was made" has no place in the original — 1 Cor. 15 — and is misleading), but now to exercise this power as Man in resurrection, to communicate life in a new way, in which it never had been, or could have been, possessed before, life in a risen Christ, to which, as we have seen, no charge of sin could attach; in direct and absolute contrast with the effect of participation in the life of the first man. But this is *not the justification or forgiveness of our committed sins*, of which the first part of the epistle so fully treats, but a life become ours in the risen Christ, where there is no question of any, and thus a justification of *life*; by participating in which we have part in His death, as judged, condemned, and crucified with Him, as to all we were in Adam; and as having died with Him "we believe that we shall also live with him," and be "of His resurrection," and have title to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, even as He has no more to do with it, and alive unto God in Him, to have nothing but God before our souls for ever.

An immensely important consideration now comes in. Is all this transference from one headship to another, from Adam to Christ, from death in sins unto life in liberty of obedience, from the state and

position of the fallen man to the whole position and state of the glorified Man — short of the glory, yet to come for us — simply a question of (p. 4) knowledge by the word (not to speak of "instinct or intuition") according to the writer's theory? Far otherwise. *It is a work of divine power*, not apart from faith in those in whom it is wrought. So far as we have gone (Rom. 6) it is unfolded as connected with the work of Christ, which is ever the ground of it. before God, and by faith in which we have part in it. Chapter 7 is introduced parenthetically, expressly to develop the "middle ground" (p. 3) which this paper deliberately ignores and refuses but which is the ground on which *numbers* of souls are found — nay, the necessary condition of every one sooner or later, in order to know as our own, a deliverance in power by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, that "*has made me free*," from the whole old order of things that was ours in Adam — the law of sin and death. Necessary, I say, because it is the divine conviction of the state to which that deliverance applies, and without which we should never have known our need of it. It is a quickened soul as we have seen, one truly born of God, but who, as to the ground upon which the soul actually is, is still in the flesh, under law that applies to that condition and that condition only. "If ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law." (Gal. 5: 13.) A soul under the law is in the flesh, according to the clear force of the expression in Roman 7 a state fully developed there, and with which that of Romans 8 is directly contrasted. (Compare Rom. 7: 5, Rom. 8: 9.) It is a wholly new place and standing, fruit of the power of God, that raised Christ from the dead, when He had been delivered for our offences, and had closed in death our whole first Adam place in the flesh under law and captives of sin, but in Romans applied in its *negative aspect*, if I may so speak — I mean as to that out of which we are delivered, rather than carried out into the full consequences of it in association with the risen One. It is the Christian "in what *characterises* him as such. . . without raising the question of how far human failure might come in to hinder the realisation" (to adopt the author's words at p. 5, not so truly applicable in *his* connection as to Romans 8). Will it be believed that the expression of this characteristic state of the Christian "in Christ," as his place before God consequent upon redemption, "in the Spirit," as the power of it down here as surely as the Spirit of God dwelleth in us — is taken to prove that the Spirit of God dwells in the directly contrasted state of the undelivered soul in Romans 7? "It is said we have nothing of the Spirit in all the seventh chapter, etc. The thought seems contradicted by what is said directly afterwards: But we are not in the flesh," etc., quoting chapter 8: 9. Is "directly afterwards" a just account of the order of the truth of Romans 7, Romans 8: 1-9? That is, does Romans 8: 9 follow directly on Romans 7: 14-25? No one could think so who will take the trouble to read the passages and see what comes between.

Now in this description of the characteristic state of the Christian, in which it is said, If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is not His, the Spirit is presented in three ways: the Spirit of God (ver. 9) in contrast to the flesh; the Spirit of Christ (vers. 9, 10) as the formative power of the new man, so that Christ may be formed in us, hence with the immediate result "if *Christ* be *in you*;" and lastly (ver. 11), as the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead. These correspond with the three parts of our deliverance in answer to the cry of Romans 7: 24, as first, by life and nature; secondly, by the objects presented to that life; and thirdly, the body yet future. Nor is it yet the truth of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost as a distinct Person, though this is assumed (and taught from ver. 14), but His presence as identified with, as He is the power of, the delivered condition. No wonder then that it should be presented that that condition cannot exist without the Holy Ghosts presence, that where He is not, the man is not of Christ — not in his characteristic christian state, that in which Christ Himself as man now is; for it is not here the question of *belonging* to Christ, but what is "of Him," that forms the subject of the Spirit's teaching. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." (1 Cor. 6: 17.) And mark, that whereas it is by faith in the death and resurrection of Christ we passed out of our condition in the flesh and under law, into that of being in Christ, yet because the operation of divine power in the Spirit of

God enters into this, it is here said, "ye are not in the flesh," not because we have eternal life, or even have died with Christ and are in Him risen, but "in *the Spirit*," so integral and necessary a part does the Spirit of God bear in this total change of our position — "if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you." This intimate association and identification, in wondrous grace to us, of the Spirit with the delivered man, is marked again in verse 10: "If Christ be in you the body is dead "held to be such for faith, for if tolerated in its smallest will it is only sin, "and the Spirit is *life*" - the simple blessed power of it, as He is its source, unto practical righteousness. And this is as absolute as If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is not of Him, for it is the same full christian condition from another aspect of it — "Christ in us" become our life characteristically, as surely as we are "in Christ" and "in the Spirit."

Nor is it without its full significance in blessing, that it is only after this first part of chapter 8, in which the Spirit is identified in the most absolute way with the delivered, that is, the full christian condition, that we find Him presented as a Person distinct from us, dwelling in us; though the former could not have been without the latter, and we received the Spirit to dwell in us the moment we believed the testimony of God to the work of Christ for our justification as in chapter 5. The order of the truth is as simple and clear in answer to the needs of the soul, as it is divinely perfect in wisdom. "The question as to peace is long before settled" (p. 13). Who introduces it here? To do so would indeed be "to destroy the proper significance of a most needful lesson." But we must have had extraordinarily little to do with the state of souls and their difficulties, not to know how the whole question of peace and relationship with God is often affected by the want of deliverance, and this because until set free from the law of sin, the soul is under the law in its condemning power, and is not beyond the reach of peace even as to justification being disturbed, until in its place in Christ, in all the impossibility of condemnation for Christ — made free from the law of sin and death, by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. So far, also, is it from being the case that one must "be consciously a child of God before he can realise that even in a child of God sin dwells," that the consciousness of indwelling sin, till the soul is brought to reckon itself to be dead unto sin, tends constantly to cause uncertainty as to the relationship. The soul reasons from its own state to the state of God towards it, as "can I be a child of God and find all this evil in me?" Certainly to the soul that has passed through the deeply-needed exercise, and been set free. Romans 7 presents no problem. It is then that peacefully he can look back and recount, as the close of the chapter does, what he has been through. Again, I repeat, it is not the state of one who has been set free, but of one who has not: and this paper plunges the truth and soul, into confusion by seeking to make out that it is the condition of one who has received the Holy Ghost. It is not that there are not those who have the Spirit, who may not have to pass through the experience in a modified way, as the effect of bad teaching or not having previously learned themselves; but this is not Romans 7 in the principle and true force of its instruction. Of *course* it is the expression of "a saint," if by saint is meant one who has been truly born of God. All question of fruitfulness only comes after the "saint" has been set free from the bondage of sin.

But I pass on to another aspect of truth, very distinct from what has been before us, but bringing out more fully one point of all-importance to our souls, wholly ignored by this paper, namely, the way in which the power of God enters into so as to effectuate the full position of the Christian. I refer to that which we find in Ephesians 2, where, when we are viewed as wholly *dead in sins*,* God came in in the exceeding might of the power that wrought in Christ when He raise Him from the dead, and quickened us together with Him — here followed out to its fullest consequences of heavenly association with Christ, seated in Him in the heavenlies. In Colossians we have the same truth (Col. 2: 12), bringing in faith in the *operation of God* when it is a question of being risen with Him; only that here it is not as absolutely as in Ephesians, the *state* in which we were found — only dead in sins — but the Epistle looks at us also, as Romans, as having *lived* in them, and does not carry us into our full heavenly place.

But the point of view as to *being quickened together with Him*, is the same in both Ephesians and Colossians. It is that of a wholly new place for man, into which we have been as it were quickened out of the grave of Christ by the operation of divine power which put Him into it — "together with" involving union, and in Ephesians that of both Jew and Gentile believers, of the whole body, which is looked at as having been taken by one mighty exercise of divine power out of the grave of Christ when He was taken out, and put into the whole of His new place as man before God. Hence we do not find the baptism of the Holy Ghost in the Epistle; union was so fully involved in the exercise of this power that has put us into His place, "together with Him." The point of view in both epistles is the same as to the power that put us into the place, though in Colossians not carried beyond our resurrection with Christ, and developed more as to the blessed effects of the place, on the side of Christ in us as life.

*Note here, what is of importance to those who observe the way truth is presented in scripture — every distinction with its own significance — that when it is our full new place in and with Christ, it is God who quickens, Christ being looked at as dead, come in grace and under our judgment where we were dead in sins. In the case of eternal life as in John, it is Christ who quickens, communicating divine life and nature as the Son of God to the dead who hear His voice; and with this the exercises of soul begin that lead to the reception of our new place, by faith of our death and resurrection with Him. Only that our death and resurrection with Him is more the way out of the old condition; when it is our full positive position in heavenly association with Christ as the fruit of God's everlasting counsel we were found dead, and were quickened together with Christ into it. We find both in Colossians; the last only in Ephesians. Death and resurrection with Christ are never presented as putting us into the full place of God's counsels in Christ.

Now this is the passage (Col. 2: 13) that is taken to prove that the forgiveness of sins belongs to the action of the Spirit in quickening by the word, as He ever did before Christ came, or to that of the Son quickening whom He will while He was yet upon earth, or to these operations still, of which it speaks nothing. "This surely teaches that forgiveness accompanies life; having forgiven, refers the time of forgiveness definitely to the time of quickening" (p. 6)¹ — of life in a new position in arisen Christ, and of quickening *together with Him* involving union by the Holy Ghost, indeed; but of life and quickening apart from these conditions it surely teaches nothing. From the moment that we are united to Christ, we are taught in His blessed grace to look back and see all as one complete act of divine power when Christ was raised; but, of course, it is another question altogether when we were individually brought into it. Of the quickening of the Spirit, or of being born of God, the passage says nothing; but of our *being quickened together with Christ*, which is a wholly distinct thought, as any one must see who will read the verses for himself. Divine power, expressed in the resurrection of Christ, has come in and taken us out of all we were in Adam, and put us into the whole of the position of Christ founded upon the finished work of the cross, and made good to us individually when we believe the glad tidings of our salvation, by the Holy Ghost who takes up. His place in us, giving us the consciousness that we are in Christ and Christ in us, and of union with Him and with all that are His. All reasoning as to what Old Testament saints had or could not have had, will not take away from the plain force of such scriptures to a mind subject to them. Whither this reasoning leads may be seen: "the direct result to me would be this, that Old Testament saints were neither children of God, nor could they be justified from sin, or in the last Adam," etc. (p. 8.) Thus what scripture applies to a revealed

1 And both therefore to the time of Christ's resurrection. So that if time is taken into account here, we were both quickened and forgiven before ever we were born! The truth is, the passage teaches nothing as to the time of either.

position before God, that we are brought into on earth as the fruit of a gloriously accomplished redemption, is here attempted to be applied to saints before Christ came, which if it were, would have taken them wholly off the revealed ground upon which God placed them. To have our place in Christ according to Romans 8: 1, our old man must have been crucified with Christ; but having died with Him we have died out from under the law, and the bond of relationship with that first husband has been absolutely broken; how then could Old Testament saints, who were "kept under the law" have been in Christ? Of course they were children of God, as surely as they were born of God, though the mere possession of the nature carried with it then no more than now the consciousness of relationship, and were justified from sin *before God*,² and not under condemnation; though none of these things were the ground upon which they stood, as they are, and are characteristic of (in contrast with them) the ground upon which we stand. Read 1 Corinthians 15 and think of an Old Testament saint being "in the last Adam"! Also Galatians 3: 23 - 4: 7 for the contrast of their place and ours, specially Galatians 3: 28 as to how "in Christ" takes out of Jewish ground, as out of all other distinctions of the flesh. For "if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation." (2 Cor. 5: 17; compare also ver. 16.)

I turn now to the way the Gospel of John is brought in to support the position of the writer to the detriment of the truth. The knowledge of the glory of the Lord Jesus as one with the Father ought to have preserved from the assumption, that our being in Him is a parallel thought with His being in the Father (p. 8). "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father." (John 14: 20.) I have no manner of question that this is the full divine glory of His Person, ever true of Him as that the Father was in Him, perfectly expressed in His words and works when He was here (vers. 10, 11), the full sufficient witness of that glory. But when He had taken His place as man in the glory of God and the Holy Ghost was given, they should know it fully as they had not while He was with them. (Ver. 9.) They should know Him in the Father; and now came the added wondrous truth, "Ye in me and I in you:" in community of life and nature indeed, but not theirs or ours simply by being born of God or quickened, but the fruit of His being glorified, and the Holy Ghost come, give them thus their privileged intelligent Christian place. Thus when this position is developed in 1 John, from the same point of view of community of life and nature, we find three things, that mark it according to Paul, even in the babes. They are addressed as consciously forgiven (1 John 2: 12); they know the Father (ver. 13); and have an unction from the Holy One, the Holy Ghost dwelling in them. (Vers. 20, 27.) But here, as elsewhere through the paper, we meet the contradiction of the express statement of scripture. We are told at the foot of page 8, that "the life He communicates makes us *sons of God*" (the italics are the author's). Now the communication of life was nothing new in itself. It was communicated to the Old Testament saints, yet it did not make them sons of God. It needed that He should "*redeem* them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4.) "Ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 26); and then, "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father;" thus completing the glorious position. "Wherefore," it is added, "thou art no more a servant, but a son." Again, the paper confuses being in Christ and Christ in us, with *abiding* in Him — John 14 in which the Lord distinctly and in terms brings in the *future* for their knowledge of His glory in the new place He was about to take (adding to it the statement of the new place consequently to flow to us, in both its parts in richest privilege and responsibility, connecting all with the coming of the Holy Ghost), with John 15, the *then* position of the disciples with Him upon earth; though the

2 "Before God" I say, in contrast to any revealed position; for note the difference in Romans 3: 25, between "the *passing over* of sins that are past through the forbearance of God," and *justification* now, the cross laying the righteous ground for both the one and the other. The paper here as everywhere, leaves out the full place the cross has before God.

abiding belong to both positions as the essential condition of fruitfulness.³

As to John 20: 22, nothing can be built upon it in the way of doctrine. Clearly there is a figurative bearing of those three occasions, recorded in chapters 20, 21, upon which Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after that He was risen from the dead, besides the actual and historical; for there were many others. And the first, taken figuratively, must bring out the Pentecostal gift, as the second does the calling of the remnant, and the third the millennial day. Taken historically, when the truth is known from other parts of the word, it helps to *illustrate the difference*, between the Spirit as the power of life in Christ Jesus (the last Adam breathing upon them, as God once breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, would suggest strongly this connection with life) — of life now theirs (the same life as before but) in a wholly new position in a risen Christ — and the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; though one could not be without the other now — so far from the absurdity suggested as the contention of some (p. 11), that "people in fact receive the Spirit as life before they receive it as the indwelling Spirit of sonship." And this leads me to note the way the paper mixes up such crudities of thought and teaching, if they are to be met with, with the sober setting forth of what those taught in the word have gathered from it on the points in question. It is not a method that commends itself, to say the least.

Last, but by no means least in importance, we come to what Scripture connects with the giving and reception of the Spirit. John 7: 39 is a cardinal passage; by which we learn, that the gift of the Holy Ghost was not connected with the communication of life before Christ came, nor with the Son quickening whom He will when on earth, though life precedes its reception in every case, but with the place He takes in glory when redemption was accomplished — "the Spirit was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified" — they that believed on Him should receive the Holy Ghost when Jesus was glorified. He comes then as the witness to that glory, and therefore of the perfection of the work on the ground of which He has been glorified. Now the knowledge of salvation is conveyed by the remission of sins, as we know from Luke 1: 77. For when God speaks of remission, it is not the thing true in His heart of us before we knew it, but of forgiveness positively conferred on us. "Peter's preaching at Pentecost proclaims One whom they had crucified, raised up of God, made Lord and Christ, and giving the Holy Ghost." (p. 14.) Pricked in their hearts they ask what they must do. "Then Peter said unto them, *Repent* and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2: 38.) Now in the face of all this, we are told that "the efficacy of Christ's death is not mentioned throughout." Yet on the ground of it, the two characteristic blessings of Christianity, the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, are presented to them; nay, they are exhorted to repent and be baptised that they may enter into them. And the Holy Ghost is connected with the forgiveness, which ought to have preserved from the rash assertion that it is *governmental*. I should like to ask in what more powerful way the efficacy of Christ's death could be presented? As to the next case, that of Samaria (Acts 8), let me say, No one is pleading for delay. (p.

3 The paper distinguishes between identification and union — rightly, for they are distinct truths. But union is not the subject of John — never enters into it. Now for identification, of which John does speak, it was necessary that the corn of wheat should fall into the ground and die. There was none without this. "He abideth alone." Yet we are told there was nothing future in the fullest expression of this identification, "Ye in me and I in you." It was all theirs already, they had only to know it by the Spirit. (p. 9.) Nor is the verse quoted for union (1 Cor. 6: 16) truly so applied "Union . . . applies to the Church alone." (Same paragraph.) There is nothing about the Church in the passage. It is the Spirit as the source and character and power of our connection with Christ, in contrast with "two shall be one flesh." But "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," involving union of course as the indwelling of the Spirit ever does.

15.) Scripture puts not *time*, but a *thing*, between life and the Holy Ghost, that is, the blood of Christ. But the passage goes far to prove the falseness of the theory of the paper, that the reception of the Holy Ghost is connected with life; for when the apostle went down "as yet he was fallen upon none of them." He is given, as wondrously conferred privilege. In the first Gentile case of Cornelius (Acts 10), Peter is sent to this quickened soul to tell him words whereby he and all his house shall be *saved*. Is there no parallel case to this now? And we see what salvation is according to scripture — not the mere communication of life, but the position into which we are consciously brought, by faith in the testimony of Christ's finished work. To this Peter bears testimony — to the infinite facts of His lowly life of doing good — His rejection and death — His being raised up by God and given place of Judge of quick and dead. And now, to give knowledge of salvation through the remission of sins he adduces the united testimony of the prophets, "That through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins." It is at this (one would have supposed) significant point of his testimony, that the Holy Ghost fell upon these prepared souls. "This is the whole statement. Blessed be God it is, and *therefore* fraught with the deepest interest for our souls. We have no such treatise on the atonement as the writer seems to miss, in all the preaching of the Acts. But we have repentance and remission of sins preached through His name, founded upon the divine facts of His death and resurrection; and where faith receives the testimony, the person is sealed by the gift of the Holy Ghost. In Acts 19 we have a company of believers again, at Ephesus, who had believed through John the Baptist's testimony "on him that should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus." If not here, in Ephesians 1: 13 Paul tells us what he brought them, "the word of truth, the glad tidings of their salvation" — that is, of a Saviour come, and of His accomplished work — "in whom having believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," of whom indeed they had not heard till then that "he is," that is, in His special place and testimony on earth.

"Faith in the Lord's Person is" not "what is emphasised" in all these places, but the testimony, upon His accomplished death and resurrection, of the remission of sins. There was the testimony to the glory of His Person by His words and works when He was upon earth and this rejected, and now, and this is the cardinal point of the testimony of the Acts (and it only shows how far even a beloved servant of the Lord may be carried by the bias of his mind, that it should be overlooked and denied), there is the testimony that "thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem." It is not the "intelligent apprehension of atonement" (p. 15), that is "necessary either for the forgiveness of sins or for the reception of the Holy Ghost." But what we do learn from all scripture, from the united testimony of type, and history, and doctrine, is indisputably, that the Holy Ghost takes up His dwelling-place in the believer, on the reception of the forgiveness of sins by faith in the Holy Ghost's testimony to the death and resurrection and exaltation in glory of the Lord Jesus. For to this answers exactly, as we have seen, the place the Holy Ghost is introduced doctrinally in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 5: 5); and in beautiful type, in the cleansing of the leper, where the application of the blood of the trespass-offering comes between the water, type of the word by which we are born of God, and the oil, the type of the Holy Ghost. (Lev. 14.) Of course it is those who believe in Christ who are sealed, not those who do not. But the question is, Does the indwelling of the Holy Ghost follow upon faith in the Person of Christ, *apart from and before the testimony of His work* is believed. Scripture leaves no doubt or cloud upon my mind as to the answer. Those of Acts 19 believed and had life, before they received the glad tidings of their salvation; when they heard these, their faith in Christ receives what they had not before, that is, the seal of the indwelling Spirit.

Nor will it shake the simple Christian who knows his place before God, and has the testimony of the word to the blessed effects that accompany the presence of the Holy Ghost — that the love of God

is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, that He is the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba Father, that where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty — to have the case of souls before Luther's time brought up to him. (p. 4.) For he who knows the grace of God, and marks the ways of that grace with souls, knows how many there are, who are in reality in these effects of the Spirit's presence, whose doctrine forbids it to them. He holds to what scripture teaches him of these effects, and refuses the theory of this paper, that would reduce the great characteristic truth and witness of Christianity, the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer, to a mere means by which he enters intelligently into what in fact he already possessed before, thus reducing His presence to a nonentity, effecting nothing actually, and alike dishonouring to the glory of Christ on high (glorified in God consequent upon God having been infinitely glorified in Him — John 13: 31, 32), and the Holy Ghost witness to it on earth. The "intelligent apprehension of atonement by the cross" might indeed in such times have been sought for well-nigh in vain. But it is not this, nor any question of intelligence then or now, that brings with it the divine power and blessedness of the Holy Ghost's indwelling.

By the infinite and precious grace of our God, the state of the soul is not measured by its intelligence, but by its *needs* and God's answer to them, through the faith of His testimony in the gospel. False and defective teaching may hinder much, so that the intelligent apprehension of the place may be small — yet there, and enjoyed, and expressed in the spirit of their intercourse with God, when sometimes denied in the formal doctrine of it — and with deepening intelligence will come deepening enjoyment of all that we have been brought into. As to the danger of slipping out of known and enjoyed blessedness (p. 4) by unwatchfulness and the like, it is most real. If the Holy Ghost be so intimately bound up and identified with the christian state, what grieves Him must affect the enjoyment of all parts of our blessing. But enfeebled as the sense of it may be even to the loss of all the practical power of it, one who has been brought into the christian position does not lose it, blessed be God, any more than a deeply-failing child loses his relationship. Now this position, this relationship, based on accomplished redemption, flowing from the new state and place the Lord Jesus has entered into as Man in resurrection power and glory, and the Holy Ghost given to bring us consciously into it, is His own place as risen Man before God and the Father, and therefore, is one of assured divine favour and acceptance. The power of His resurrection entering into it involves our deliverance from the whole old status of man in the flesh, and therefore from the dominion of sin under the law — as well as the forgiveness of the sins that belonged to that status. It makes sin a far more terrible thing. But it is one thing to be on this ground with God in the soul, and estimate all failure as inconsistency with a constituted relationship, of which the Holy Ghost is the power, and another thing never to have been in the relationship; but to be, on the contrary, carnal, sold under sin, and brought into captivity to the law of sin in the members, albeit with the holy desires of the new nature and the earnest struggle to be free. These prove the life and nature of God to be there, by birth from God, as surely as with those who are in their full christian position, but that that position is not the fruit of life (though it could not be ours without it), but of the death and resurrection of Christ made good in divine power to our souls by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

The Epistle of John (from which a verse is quoted in a way to weaken its full force, page 5) is the blessed counterpart of the christian position as unfolded through Paul — the complement of it. By our deliverance in power into that position, we have become entitled to disown absolutely any other life as ours, save that we have received in the Son of God, now to be displayed in us in its characteristic divine traits, in the place where it was once displayed in all its perfection in Him. I am crucified with Christ: it is no more I that live, but Christ that liveth in me. That life is free to express itself now. There is not a word of the deliverance, but we are instructed in the essential privileges and characteristics of the life as if we never possessed another. What a confirmation of the deliverance to the delivered soul, of the

ground of the new creation upon which we have been brought. Power to walk as such, comes from taking the place He gives us by this Epistle, to disown all other life but His as ours. But what constant energy of faith and abiding in Him this needs! Then we shall walk as He walked. Thus the passages quoted on page 5 (1 John 2: 11, 3: 6), are as simple to faith as they are solemn in their application to our souls. If these things are not known as true in us, it is either that we have never been brought into our full christian place (the "perfect" or those "of full age" of Paul's Epistles), or else the far more serious alternative, that having been brought into it, we have gone and sinned against the known light and love and relationships of that place — against all that Christ was, and was manifested for (chap. 3: 5) — against known deliverance from sin's power. And to this too sad possibility (such are our hearts) the only two exceptions to what is the general rule of the Epistle (recognising nothing as true of the Christian but what was so of Christ, for He is our life) apply, to sin in my own case in chapter 2: 1, and in my brother's in chapter 5: 16. It is sad to have even John 4: 13, 14, used in the same way in the same connection as the passages above, as if this last, too, does not apply in all its absoluteness *to what Christ is speaking of*, that is, eternal life in power by the Holy Ghost in us, rising up in communion to its source and level in God — did anyone ever *brought there* ever thirst again in *it*? But surely the Lord does not promise that we shall never thirst again, if we turn away from the source and sphere of this divine satisfaction, to some poor earthly cistern that never sufficed even for the natural man.

I have written at more length than I intended originally in a letter, but the importance and blessedness of the truths involved have led me on, though so little able to present to another the full disproof, that the word of God gives my own soul, of the position taken up by this paper. The effect of its perusal, in the light of the word, has been only to strengthen and deepen the hold of the truths, and their connection, that has been the apparent object of this paper to call in question. These are nothing less than the foundation on which Christianity, as in contrast to Judaism, rests — the truths in which a full Christianity is contained and revealed. So far am I from believing with the writer (p. 1) that no fundamental point is in contention. Those who have found it as, in the infinite grace of God, the answer to the deepest needs of our being — but not measured or limited by those needs, being the answer of divine love and power, and nothing short of the fruit of God's everlasting counsels for His own glory and joy, accomplished at such a cost — will not lightly give up the truths in which it has been made good to our souls. J. A. T.