

Life Eternal
WITH F.E.R.'s HETERODOXY AS TO IT,
OTHER DIVINE TRUTHS
AND ABOVE ALL CHRIST'S PERSON,
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This immense privilege given to the believer let us weigh as scripture presents it. Always of the deepest moment, the assertion of its truth is more than ever called for, as will appear to faithful men before this paper closes. The spirit of error boldly opposes the Spirit of truth. Christ Himself is not only imperilled but misrepresented and undermined by the error; and error against the Son is of all things hateful to the Father. How dear to the Christian should be the truth!

For Christ is revealed to be, not only the true God, but life eternal (1 John 5: 20). The Father raises the dead and quickens (John 5: 21); and so does the Holy Spirit, as Rom. 8 shows variously; but it is emphatically said of Him who is image of the invisible God and object of faith to man. He, the eternal Word, became flesh and tabernacled among us, full of grace and truth. For of His fulness we all received, and grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the Only-begotten Son that is in the bosom of the Father, He declared [Him] (John 1: 14-18). Hence the apostle (2 Tim. 1: 10) lays it down that Christ annulled death and brought to light life and incorruption through the gospel. Only then and thus were they revealed in Him personally, through His work and by words He spoke, spirit and life to His own.

In the O.T. the light as to this shone dimly, the expressions were comparatively vague, yet enough to convey a real sense of a blessed state of future being for those who truly received the testimony of God. This is certain from the Synoptists as well as John's Gospel: Matt. 19: 16, Mark 10: 30; also Luke 10: 25, and John 5: 39. Abel's faith testifies the death of another for the need of his soul. Was it lost on others? The translation of Enoch bore witness to a life in heaven, as he had walked in that life on earth before God took him. Was this too without help as to life for saints after him? When Abraham said to God, O, that Ishmael might live before thee! we can hardly imagine that he thought only of the earth and present things. Certainly "Thou wilt make known to me the path of life" conveyed far more (Psalm 16: 11), and such words as "With thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36: 9).

The direct source of what even Jews owned in our Lord's day was presumably such scriptures as the last verse of Psalm 133. "life for evermore," and the exact phrase in Dan. 12: 2, as has often been remarked. Nor ought we to doubt that the revelation of grace which man heard at the fall itself gave assurance to repentant hearts, from the outset of his sad history, that the coming Seed of the woman would not only crush the mischievous power of evil but bless saints who

looked to God through him with a new life victorious over death and capable of enjoying Himself in peace. Abraham exulted that he should see Christ's day; and he saw and rejoiced. The resurrection of the just was before Job (Job 19: 25-27), no less than of the unjust (Job 14: 10-12); the one connected with the Kinsman Redeemer's standing up on the last day on this earth of dust, as the other is with even the heavens being no more.

Thus from the O.T. we gather that life everlasting by psalm and prophet was bound up with Messianic days of power and glory. The Lord in Matt. 25: 46 enlarged the Jewish expectation so as to embrace equally those saints of all the nations who receive the messengers of the gospel of the kingdom at the end of the age. Said generally of Israel, it is expressly applied to the believers of the ten tribes so long sleeping in the dust, and to those of the nations who believe at that time. It seemed needless to say it of the God-fearing Jewish remnant.

All this remains true; but it is not all the truth. Now comes that which is distinctive of Christianity. Here we find a rich part of the "better thing" God foresaw for us. It was reserved for Him Who was worthy, Whose personal dignity it suited, through Whom grace and truth assumed subsistence and shape, to make known present life, in the Gospel which starts with the Son unknown to the world and rejected by His own people. To Nicodemus, as far as revelation speaks, it was first divulged, and this when he was but an enquirer, stirred in conscience but not yet born anew. The Lord, correcting his ignorance in view of what the Jewish teacher ought to have known from the ancient oracles for the earthly things of the kingdom, presents Himself come in flesh as the sole way to the Father by faith. How adequate a Witness was He who says of Himself that no one has gone up to heaven save He who came down out of it, the Son of man that *is* (not that "was" merely) in heaven! "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that every one that believeth on him may have life eternal: For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that every one that believeth on him may not perish but have life eternal" (John 3: 14-16). Thus the positive blessing is the gift of life eternal, followed up by the assurance of "not perishing" and being "saved" (ver. 17), as flowing from divine grace. The believer was brought in Christ to receive known life, a life eternal capable of knowing and enjoying God Himself.

If John 4: 14 speaks of the Holy Spirit as given the believer to be "in him a fountain of water, springing up unto life eternal" (inward power rising up to its fulness), John 5 opens the source. It is not healing sin-sick man wants, but life. Angelic visitation is quite insufficient; He was present Who is Son of God and Son of man. Jesus gives life in communion with the Father. He, received as Son of God, quickens; if rejected, He solely judges by-and-by as Son of man. Thus is there also a twofold resurrection to come: one of life for those who practised good (the issue of divine life); the other of judgment for those that did evil (as dead in trespasses and sins). If they believed not on the Son of God, they cannot escape Him when He executes judgment as Son of man. "Verily, verily, I say to you, He that heareth my word and believeth Him that sent me hath life eternal, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (ver. 24). Here revelation is explicit that the believer on Christ *has* life eternal. It is not future only, but his present possession. It is not surer that he does not come into judgment than that he has passed out of death into life eternal. Verse 25 is precise with the same solemn asseveration. "Verily, verily, I say to you, An hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that heard shall live." Hearing Him and consequently "now" is pointedly distinguished from His voice afterwards calling from the tombs specifically, first those who share the first resurrection, and next such as are raised for judgment or the second death. How solemn a word for such as searched the scriptures, thinking

that in them they had life eternal! In fact the scriptures bore witness concerning Jesus; yet would the Jews not come to Him that they might have life. For in Him, not in them, was life; and the life is the light of men.

John 6 appropriately follows, setting aside, not only every other object, but even for the present His own Messianic glory according to promise and prophecy. Jesus is shown to be the true bread which the Father gives out of heaven. It is Himself incarnate, the bread of life; so that every one that beholds the Son and believes on Him should have life eternal, and as a distinct but sure consequence, be raised up by Him at the last day. This elicits the deepening unbelief of the Jews, and the Lord again solemnly affirms "Verily, verily, I say to you, He that believeth hath life eternal." But He goes on to the gift of His flesh, not for Israel only, but for the life of the world. As the Jews contended yet more, He said, "Verily, verily, I say to you, Unless ye shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of man and drunk His blood, ye have no life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood *hath* life eternal, and I *will* raise him up at the last day." The possession of life eternal is most real now, the result for the body no less sure and glorious, as the full victory of life in Christ over death.

It should be borne in mind however that John speaks also of life eternal in the final sense, as in John 4: 14, John 5: 39, John 6: 27, John 12: 25.

Knowing in Himself that not Jews only but His disciples were murmuring at a word so foreign to Jewish thought, Jesus said, "Does this offend you? If then ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before?" It is Himself again, not incarnate only, nor in death, but going up to heaven; a move traversing all Jewish expectation, once Messiah was here. But it is the characteristic of Christianity there to know Him, though given to another apostle to develop as connected with the mystery concerning Christ and the church. Here the great truth is the Son of man, not as Judge of quick and dead, but meanwhile the food of Christian faith, and the means of having eternal life now, while awaiting its crown at the last day, and without loss of either for a single soul that believed, in bright contrast with the present ruin of Messianic hopes so withering to Jewish hearts. To receive the incarnate Son rejected by the Jews was to have life eternal. Yet He must die to glorify God and deliver sinful man; and so faith eats His flesh and drinks His blood. Unbelief might seem to welcome Him incarnate, but betrays its opposition to God and its rest in humanitarianism by stumbling at the still deeper grace, even expiation, and judgment of sin in order to bring in a new state, of which the possession of life eternal now is the pledge, and that completed state the blessed and sure result. His words are indeed spirit and are life.

In John 7 as in chap. 4 we hear not of "life" exactly, but of "living water" which is more, being the Spirit in power: the one as a fountain within springing up, power for worship, the other as rivers flowing out, power for testimony to Him who, refused by the Jews, is already glorified at God's right hand.

In John 8 and John 9 the Lord is fully revealed and rejected, first in His word and so in His divine nature and His Person; secondly in His work when become flesh, and so operating that those confident and proud of their sight are blinded judicially, and that those who saw not, being born blind, see clearly according to God. Here we have in both chapters Christ the light of the world, with the blessed effect, for him that follows Him, of having "the light of life" (John 8: 12). It is not only knowing Christ but having Him as his life, the light of men. Now is the great need of it, and here in this world of darkness, whatever may be soon for the fulness of bright enjoyment on high. But the subject called for no more than, "Verily, verily, I say to you, If any one shall keep

my word he shall never behold (or, taste) death" (John 8: 51, 52). Figurative terms he employs, but in the strongest way He claims to give a life superior to death through His word kept, as Satan murders through his lie. Christ is the light of life.

John 10 is more simple and definite. "The thief cometh not but that he may steal and kill and destroy; I came that they might have life and might have [it] abundantly" (ver. 10). Incarnate, He was life, and gave it to the believer; but when He died and rose, it was His life in resurrection power, with all the offences forgiven (Col. 2: 13). Truly it was life abundantly, and marked on the resurrection day by His breathing on His own, as He is never shown to do before (John 20: 22). As in all previous cases, the birth is said to be not only of the word (typified by water) but the Spirit, so now He said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit, for indeed such was its character, though the Paraclete was not yet given to dwell in them in personal power. And there the non-imputation of sin is impressively implied by His investing them with the administrative function of remitting or retaining the sins of others, as the occasion might require in God's service. It is an important accession, and here distinctly announced, as well as significantly fulfilled, as we have seen. His Person and His work are the key.

In a further discourse of the same chapter our Lord explains to the Jews why they refused all evidence and witness. "But ye believe not, because ye are not my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give to them life eternal; and they shall never perish, and no one shall seize them out of my hand. My Father who hath given them to me, is greater than all; and no one is able to seize out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one" (vers. 26-30). Here indefeasible security is assured: neither inner failure nor outer force could jeopardise their life; it is maintained by the Father and the Son, who were not more truly one in divine nature than in loving care for the sheep.

In John 11: 25 Jesus declares, "I am the resurrection and the life." Of this the resurrection of Lazarus, dead and buried, was a bright testimony. If it be said that this raising up was but to natural life, His words that follow look forward beyond doubt to its final perfection. "He that believeth on me, though he have died, shall live; and everyone that liveth and believeth on me shall never die." So will it be at His coming. The dead believer shall be raised, and so live as to the body evermore; the living believer shall not die, but have mortality swallowed up of life. The phrase "eternal life" is not here used; but this it is, and in full conformity to Himself even bodily, for heavenly and everlasting glory. Again, in John 12: 50 says the Lord, "I know that His (the Father's) commandment is life eternal." This the Father gave Him, what He should say and speak. Eternal life, not providential care nor governmental dealings, was the blessed subject-matter of the Father's injunction and of the Son's gracious declaration. If He and His words in grace so rich were not received by any, that word which He spoke should judge him at the last day.

The Lord in John 14: 6 says to Thomas words divinely suited to banish his gloom and readiness to stick at difficulties, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." In seeing the Son they had seen the Father whom He declared and made known. Thus then He Himself was the way to the Father, as He was the living word or the truth, and also the life, the divine nature which alone knows and enjoys Him as God and Father. And this is so true, as the Holy Spirit when given would enable the disciples fully to apprehend, that Christ does not hesitate to say in vers. 19, 20, "because I live, ye also shall live." How truly is He our life! "In that day ye shall know (γν.) that I [am] in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Their beholding Jesus in that day would be in no way a physical fact, such as the Jews will have of the Messiah, but in the Spirit; and so is their life, and such is their knowledge as Christians, that Christ is in the Father, they in Him (as is

marked in the Epistle to the Ephesian saints),* and He in them (equally so in that to the Colossians):* the true and distinctive knowledge, and privilege of the Christian.

* Only in these Epistles it is said in developing "the body" of Christ. It is even more intimate here as a question of life in Him.

If John 15 opens with fruit-bearing as due to the Father and flowing from our abiding in Christ, and is followed by preparing the disciples for the world's hatred, yet to be strengthened by the Spirit's witness whom Christ should send from the Father, in addition to what they heard and saw from the beginning, John 16 dwells on the action of the present Spirit toward the world and in the saints. But in John 17: 2, 3 we have the Son, the Second man, with authority given Him by the Father, and the special object of giving life eternal to all those given to Him. "And this is the eternal life, that they should know (γιν.) thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou didst send." His work, like His glorifying His Father on the earth follows and is distinct; His giving eternal life precedes as attaching to faith in His Person, whatever the added power when He rose from the dead.

Here too it is objectively presented, though generally applied to our subjective state. For the Lord speaks of what forms and characterises it to our faith in its full Christian import. Those have the eternal life now who receive the wondrous revelation, in manifest contrast with Jewish thoughts of Jehovah and His Anointed. As yet He had dwelt in the thick darkness. Not till the Father was revealed in the Son whom He sent as man was the true God known. And He is thus to be known as the Lord had already shown by the power of the Spirit to be sent forth. Higher, deeper, nearer than this (when the Lord adds His going on high after the work was completed) God Himself, be it said reverently, could not go; and this now constitutes to us life eternal as objective revelation. Heavenly counsels in their immense scope were left for the Spirit to reveal by the apostle chosen in sovereign grace, when redemption would fit the believers to receive what they could not then bear. But here the Lord concentrates His teaching into a few simple words of marvellous depth, as bringing His own into the communion of the Father and of the Son which transcends all other relations, about to be definitely made theirs on His resurrection day (John 20: 17).

Here it is not only life eternal such as Christ gave when souls believed on Him in the days of His flesh, but in its full development for the Christian. In no case is it natural life but supernatural, not of man but of God, nor a restoration of the life which Adam had unfallen, but life in the Son, the life of the Second man, not the first. Every saint that ever lived to God had this life, for none ever lived to God save of the life the Son gave, He object of the faith of all the faithful, though only when come revealed as the Son of the living God, the Only-begotten Son of the Father. The life that it was in Him which quickened those who believe could and did through Him in communion with the Father acquire its highest character, when He was manifested in flesh, and, we may add looking to His glorification, not simply on the ground of His Person but on that of His work which avails for us as well as every other purpose of God. Hence the emphasis laid here on "the eternal life," and its declared character as giving the knowledge of the Father, and His Son whom He sent, Jesus Christ.

The knowledge of the Father and of His Son Jesus already sent is in effect the possession of life eternal; they are inseparable. But it was not throughout the O. T. so characterised, nor could be till the Son of God was come and had given us an understanding to know Him that is true, as is implied in the verse before us. Yet none the less were all saints born of God; only if now, Christ

gave this title to those that believe on His name (John 1: 12, 13). Yet Himself laid down (Luke 20: 35, 36) that all saints "are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" *i.e.* from out of dead men, the "first" and "better" resurrection of life. They were born of the Spirit and thus had life as truly as we, though they understood it not. But God was pleased to mark it as life eternal when Christ was received in His rejection, and yet more in His ascension glory. But it was life eternal all through, though suitably so designated according to the new revelation. And Christ gives it now in this present character and fulness. The gospel brought it to light and in power through resurrection; but it was ever in the Son, and believers had it in Him, in unbroken connection with its source.

A few words more may be cited from John (John 20: 31), the apostle's comment on the selected signs, rather than many others not written, which the Lord did before His disciples. "But these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name." Scripture is all the more perfect, because God's design excludes what is not needed to render His mind clear, no matter how excellent might be any other deeds or words. An unneeded addition, however in itself excellent, would have been really a defect. Nor is the best of men capable of carrying out the design save as inspired of God to write. But here the aim as to the readers is plainly stated. The first of all divine claims is to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; the first of all blessed issues is to have life in His name. It is the eternal life, or life everlasting, as the Lord called it often not only in John 17: 2, 3, but in 3, 5, 6, 10, 12. It was always such substantially, though wise and fitting to reserve the known gift of it now for the rejected Christ. He imparts this new, everlasting and divine being; and the believer receives it, in virtue of which he is to be glorified with Christ. But even now He is a life-giving Spirit. The glorious result for the body awaits His coming again.

In the two short Epistles of John love and truth are applied in divine wisdom, and set forth richly in his First Epistle where life eternal is found afresh, the governing principle throughout. As wisdom in Prov. 8 points to Christ, so does the life eternal in the grand introduction here. "What was from [the] beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and report to you the eternal life, the which was with the Father and was manifested to us): what we have seen and heard we report to you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea and our fellowship [is] with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we to you that your joy may be full." (1 John 1: 1-4) The manifestation of the life in the fullest degree was to the apostles, though not restricted to them, that they might report to others, who taught in faith have fulness of joy in sharing their fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus on the basis of eternal life, the same life which, he declared, was with the Father before the manifestation, and then unrestricted in time; for He was eternal.

The statement is not abstract as in John 5: 26 ("the Father hath life *in* himself"), but personal ("with the Father" πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα); it cannot be truthfully denied. Walking in the light indispensably accomplishes such a fellowship as this. The rest of the chapter lays down to us the divine message, judging every false profession, while the true one enjoys the grace that cleanses from every sin through the blood of Jesus His Son. Provision for failure is in the advocacy of the Righteous One with the Father (in 1 John 2: 1, 2), as He too is propitiation in all its abiding value, and widest application.

Then from 1 John 2: 3 follows practical application to those that bear His name: obedience first in 3-6; love next in 7-11; the necessary traits and exercises of the life in Christians, contrasted

with spurious professors. There succeeds a most instructive and interesting digression on the family of God, and its differences in 12-28, all being addressed in these extremes, each class (fathers, young men, and little children or babes) in the intervening verses. The only express reference to the eternal life is in 25, where its promise before the world is meant, not that it remains a promise unaccomplished now.

Then in renewing the theme of practical righteousness, as the proof of being born of Him Who is righteous, is a parenthesis of grace in 1 John 3: 1-3 to strengthen the warning against lawlessness. Thereon he resumes the thread, but presents Christ as the clean opposite, Who not only took away our sins, and had no sin, but gives a nature like Himself, and this in love as well as righteousness. The world on the contrary hates; and as we know that we have passed out of death to life because we love the brethren, so to hate one's brother is to be a murderer; and no murderer, we know, has life eternal abiding in him, like the believer.

We may now however omit a glance at the rest and the precious 1 John 4, for the next direct occurrence is in 1 John 5: 1, etc. "Every one that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten (or, born) of God; and every one that loveth him that begot loveth him also that is begotten of him . . . For every thing that is begotten of God overcometh the world." Only a perverse will could question that one spiritually born of God has divine life in His Son, who in no way treats "life eternal" as a higher or a future life; for in John 6: 40, 47 He in terms predicates it of the result of faith in Him incarnate no less than of faith in giving His flesh to eat and His blood to drink in ver. 54, that is, faith in His death. Again, who can avoid seeing in vers. 11, 12 of our context that "life eternal" and "life" are interchangeable in this sense, though the one may be more fully expressed than the other in divine wisdom? But they mean the self-same life of Christ. No less truly were the O.T. saints begotten of God, and instinct with that life, though it could not be said that they believed in our Lord Jesus, but had rather a living hope in Him that was to come. Such was necessarily the character of their faith, but faith it surely was, the faith of God's elect in their day. No intelligent saint doubts their good portion through divine grace, which we, for whom God provided some better thing, should be the last to doubt or disparage. Nor was it a small part of the greater blessing to believe on Jesus, revealed by the Father as the Son of God (the living God), on Him too that came by water and blood with the Spirit bearing witness as well as the water and the blood.

"And this is the witness that God gave us life eternal, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life." (1 John 5: 11, 12) To us it is made known, as it could not be to an O.T. saint, and we therefore know it as they could not. This is fully warranted to us by the next verse (13): "These things I write [the epist. aor., or, I wrote] to you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know (εἶδ.) that ye have life eternal." This conscious knowledge of it, what a privilege and to us essentially characteristic of Christianity! Nor does the Epistle close without reminding us that, among other things consciously known by us, this is one, "that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we should know (γιν.) him that is true; and we are in the true One, in his Son Jesus Christ: he is the true God, and life eternal." How establishing and endearing to us! What a safeguard against every idol!

It was not the apostle Paul's work to dwell on the present gift of life eternal to the believers. The righteousness and the counsels of God are fully treated in his Epistles with Christ's work the basis, His resurrection and ascension to give them heavenly character, and His coming to crown all. Hence He speaks of life eternal at the end (Rom. 2: 7, Rom. 5: 21, Rom. 6: 22). He does

however speak, not only of reigning in life but of justification of life (Rom. 5: 17, 18): a remarkable phrase, and a blessed privilege which the Christian is meant to enjoy now. It is not "eternal" only but in risen form and power. Justified by His blood meets our sins, justified in His risen life goes farther and meets sin, sin in the flesh, not what we did evilly but our evil self, in Him dead and risen. Hence we are called Rom. 6: 4 to "walk in newness of life." This assuredly does not refer to walking with Christ in white when in glory, but to present walk here below. But this implies the life of Christ ours now as truly as then, when all is complete. It is none other than life eternal. And as Christ, being raised, lives to God, so are we to count ourselves dead indeed to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus. Such is the virtue of His death and resurrection, as Rom. 7 states, that, had we been Hebrews of Hebrews, we were made dead to the law through the body of Christ, that we should belong to another that was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God: an impossible result without life, life eternal. So in Rom. 8: 2 the law, not of Moses, but "of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (compare John 20: 22) made me free from the law of sin and death, the communication of Christ's risen life, the form in which He now gives life eternal to every Christian. The co-operation of the Holy Spirit in this life is clearly marked, and that which is now as clearly distinguished as the completion of His work when the body is raised (10, 11).

In 1 Cor. 9, 10 we have the danger of power without life written for our admonition; indeed it runs throughout this Epistle. In the Second it is yet plainer, as in 2 Cor. 2: 16, and 3: 6. Take again 10, 11, where we are exhorted always to bear about "in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body; for we that live are ever delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifest in our mortal flesh." Can language express more explicitly that the believer now has His life, eternal life, mortal though our body still is, while waiting to be raised, not merely "through" but "with" Jesus by-and-by (14)? This triumph is attested as superior to death ("mortality swallowed up of life" in 2 Cor. 5: 4). And what life is meant (2 Cor. 5: 15) "in those that live," in contrast with "all dead"? Is it not life eternal and abundantly? and is it not now and here below? "So if any one [is] in Christ, [there is] a new creation." What can be stronger, unless one were hardy enough to deny this a present application, because it is going to be complete at Christ's coming? or doubt that "we have this treasure" (2 Cor. 4: 7), because it is "in earthen vessels"?

The Epistle to the Galatians speaks no otherwise. In what way was God's Son revealed *in* Saul of Tarsus when called (Gal. 1: 16) but as life, Christ our life? So in Galatians 2: 20 the apostle says, "I have been and am crucified with Christ, and no longer live I, but Christ liveth in me, and what I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of (or, in) the Son of God, that loved me and gave himself up for me." Can any Christian doubt that this living was of life eternal? In Galatians 5: 25 the word is "if we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk." Can any one be so rash as to separate this from Christ, or deny that it is life eternal now?

In the Epistle to the Ephesians we are seen blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. Have we now (Eph. 1: 4, 5) no new nature, holy and blameless in love according to God's purpose? is the predestined sonship, or adoption, only future? or can either exist without life eternal? Eph. 2 utterly refutes such thoughts, and declares that God rich in mercy and of His great love to us quickened us, once dead in our offences and sins — quickened us together with Christ, and raised together, and made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2: 6). What can transcend this life, a clearly present privilege, which could not be said of O.T. saints, any more than it is of the millennial saints? It is life eternal, but much more. It is the Pauline truth given him by the inspiring Spirit of Christ, not only as quickening which

John treats so fully as a real thing now, but of Christ raised from the dead and the believer already quickened and raised together with Him, and seated in Him, waiting as we know from elsewhere to sit with Him when changed at His coming. "One new man" (Eph. 2: 15) supposes life now and a status most excellent.

So does Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3), and spiritual intelligence, and His love known, though surpassing knowledge; so does the exhortation to walk worthily of God's calling us after so marvellous a sort (Eph. 4), not only together but individually, we having put on the new man as well as put off the old. Hence in Eph. 5 it is to imitate God as children beloved, and to walk in love as Christ loved us, and as children of light (life being supposed throughout), and not as unwise but as wise, understanding what is the will of the Lord.

To the Philippians the apostle dwelt on Christian practice. "For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die gain" (Phil. 1: 21). How possibly live Christ without having Christ as our life, and this beyond controversy life eternal? As believing on Him was the means, so their completeness as to the fruit of righteousness (ver. 11) and suffering for Him (ver. 29) could not be without the existing reality. Preaching Christ even of envy and strife might easily be without life, but not holding forth its word as lowly and blameless children of God, nor glorying in Christ in self-renunciation, nor learning, in whatsoever state, therein to be content.

In the Epistle to the Colossians, if not on the surface, life in Christ is everywhere the understratum. He did not cease praying for our walking worthily of the Lord to all pleasing, bearing fruit and growing: surely not without life. Hence thanksgiving to the Father who qualified us for sharing the portion of the saints in light (Col. 1). But in Col. 2 it is yet more precise. How walk in Christ (6), already received, without the life of Christ? When dead in the offences and the uncircumcision of our flesh, God quickened us together with Christ, having forgiven us all our offences, and raised us up together. It was not only life eternal but having His life in the highest form and the closest association with Him. Hence in Col. 3 if risen together with Christ, they were to seek the things above, and not have their mind on the things upon the earth. "For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory." But He is our life as truly now, though not so completely as then.

It is needless to gather similar evidence from the letters to the Thessalonians, and the Hebrews, to Timothy, Titus and Philemon; yet everywhere is it taken for granted as possessed by all save empty professors. Yet let us in no way strain the exhortation in 1 Tim. 6: 12 "lay hold on the eternal life," or in ver. 19, "that which is really life," in contrast with present things desirable to the flesh. The glorious end is in view. But such as have not Christ as their life will become weary of well-doing, if they do not openly draw back, dead while they live. But 2 Tim. 1: 1 does appear to touch John's presentation of life in Christ now brought to light through the gospel. We may compare Titus 1: 2, Titus 3: 7 as distinguishing the Christian from the Jewish expectation.

As addressed to "the twelve tribes that are in the dispersion," the letter of James resumes in general "the word of the beginning of Christ" (Heb. 6: 1), and insists, not on redemption but on the life communicated from the Father of lights, who of His own will brought forth, or begot, us by word of truth. Nothing less than this new nature satisfies him; no one else can from his works show his faith as in chap. 2. The faith that has no suited works is barren and dead. "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." The word quickens by revealing Christ to the soul, and fruit follows by abiding in Christ; for the new life lives by dependence on Him. This Epistle looks at the practical and righteous side, judging by a law of liberty in consistency of way, word, and heart, and

the friendship of the world is enmity with God, but patience is to be till the coming of the Lord.

The life abundantly is disclosed as the present portion of the Christian Jews whom Peter in his First Epistle addresses. "Blessed the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to his much mercy begot us again unto a living hope through resurrection of Jesus Christ out of the dead," etc. At the close, as at the beginning, the new life of grace and truth is shown clearly, and as it is by the word of God that we are thus born, so are we nourished (1 Peter 2). Husbands and wives among them are exhorted as fellow-heirs of the grace of life. Without this now they could not rightly dwell together for an hour or a moment. The Second Epistle addressed to the same puts the same truth strongly in 2 Peter 1: 3, 4; for it affirms the partaking of a divine nature, and not a merely moral change. If it were no more than this, he shows the utter ruin of turning back after having escaped. Only life eternal abides. Otherwise one is but a dog still, and a washed sow: they were never born of God.

Jude indicates the more awful case of apostasy, rather than of the unrighteousness Peter denounced, though both might be in the same person. But he writes to saints without restriction as "called, beloved in God the Father and kept by (or, for) Jesus Christ" in view of the perishing of Christendom and the Lord's judgment of all the ungodly at His coming amidst His holy myriads. The beloved, meanwhile, building themselves on their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, were to keep themselves in God's love, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto life eternal. This is "the end" doubtless; but there had been no beginning of grace without believing on Him and receiving life in His name, to walk after God's will in the last time of mockers walking after their own ungodly lusts.

LIFE ETERNAL DENIED AS A PRESENT POSSESSION.

Of this fundamental truth in its Christian form and present reality the deliberate denial is most clearly avowed by "Notes of Readings and Addresses" in the United States and Canada. The responsibility of the production is acknowledged; for the work appears as "revised by F. E. R."

If we pass by a cloud of other errors, and some of moment, in page 54 is a plain statement of direct opposition to divine truth. "It used to be commonly said, I know that I have got eternal life. Why? Because the scripture says, 'He that believeth hath everlasting life.' I say you have thus the faith of eternal life; but that does not prove that you have the thing itself (!). Many a person has had a promise, but not the thing promised, that [sic] was the case largely with the Old Testament saints. They embraced the promises; but they had not the things promised. Christianity is not only that you have the faith of the things proposed, but that you have the consciousness of the things that you believe." "Scripture says" this; "I say" that! But even what he says of Christianity virtually contradicts his aim.

Can any sober Christian question that the truly blessed confession of Brethren from the greatest to the least for seventy years is here abandoned? yea, that the word of the Lord Himself is undermined? How awful to hear one frittering away the plain meaning of "He that believeth hath everlasting life!" This is *not* a promise, but a revealed fact. The Lord did *not* say, he that has the faith of eternal life shall have this life by-and-by. To confound His present assurance with O.T. prophecy is to abjure the gospel for the law. The truth in question is distinct from promise, and contrasted with not having the thing promised. Nor does the Lord here speak of having "the consciousness of the things that you believe" (whatever this may or can mean on the speaker's hypothesis), but simply if not solely of now possessing life eternal.

Equally evident in page 56 is the perversion of scripture, even if we omit the misleading talk in the preceding page. "Eternal life is there, and it is God's mind for you to be in it, but there is a gulf between you and it, and you have to pass over that gulf." This is what "I say." Let us hear what the Lord says. "Verily, verily, I say to you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, *hath* life eternal, and cometh not into judgment, but is [hath] passed out of death into life" (John 5: 24). F. E. R contradicts the gospel. The believer's privilege now, this gift of grace, he denies. A gulf may be between the unbeliever, and eternal life. Yet Christ is, not even a bridge over the gulf, but eternal life immediately to him that believes. His word has so explicitly declared the present gift of that life, that it can only be a lie of Satan to teach, as F. E. R. does, any gulf at all for the believer to pass. The Lord declares that he "has passed" out of death into life. F. E. R s. voice is not the Shepherd's but a mere stranger's, an "idea" in open contempt of the Saviour's final decision by grace which flesh never trusts.

What follows is hardly less evil. For in reply to one who says, "It has been stated that eternal life was communicated to us this side of the bridge," F. E. R. dares to answer, "There is no truth in it; what is communicated to you on this side of the bridge is the gift of the Holy Ghost, and He is the well of water in us springing up to eternal life. Unless you have the Holy Spirit you will never get divine teaching, but it is by divine teaching [!] that you get over the bridge." This is no passing mistake or blunder. Is it not utter effrontery? That we *have* life eternal now he excludes. Yet the gift of the Holy Spirit supposes eternal life given, and redemption rested on by faith previously (Acts 5: 32, Gal. 4: 4-6, Eph. 1: 13). If there were any propriety in the figure of the gulf and the bridge, Christ crossed it to meet the sinner; and the believer has already the life eternal, comes not into judgment, and has passed out of death into life. The gift of the Spirit is to know and enjoy the grace and truth thus come in the power of the known relationships, to live Christ in accordant ways, and to worship in spirit and truth.

The "teaching" here is flatly opposed to our Lord's, and as it is a departure from what even its propagandist long and uniformly professed, who but those in the evil or bent on compromise can hesitate to pronounce it "devilish," not "divine"? Think of a believer without eternal life receiving the Holy Ghost! It is a quasi-incarnation of God's Spirit. This unscriptural and profane dream "divine teaching" forsooth! Nay, it is the sheerest impossibility if judged on scriptural principles, and the wanton guesswork of impiety. No wonder not a word of scripture is cited for it.

Again, we read in the next page 57, "In the third chapter of the epistle [1 John] you come to children of God, but not yet to eternal life [!]. Children brings in the thought of Father — God is Father to us as children in the world." In page 58 "sons of God brings in the thought of eternal counsel and of heavenly places. The close of the epistle lands you in what Paul speaks of, and that is, 'God has given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.'" Does such evident confusion, such incoherent trash, need exposure? The truth revealed in the Epistle as in the Gospel is that every believer has life eternal and is a child of God; to which the apostle Paul adds that he is a "son" as well as a child, and the end everlasting life, but of either "the epistle" says not one word.

Again, Rom. 8 in the central part of that instructive chapter disproves the rash assertion that "sons of God brings in the thought of eternal counsel and of heavenly places"; for therein the apostle speaks of us, alike as "sons" and as "children," but is silent about "eternal counsel and of heavenly places." Children is opposed to strangers; sons, to slaves; and thus sons may be adopted for a position of dignity. But we are of God's family also, and hence children in respect of true and intimate relationship. Both terms are well suited and actually employed in view of the glory to be revealed (Rom. 8: 19 and 21). — Gal. 3: 26 again refers to present Christian standing, "God's sons," not children, by faith in Christ Jesus; but in no way does it in itself bring in the thought of eternal counsel and heavenlies. This is not Spirit-led exposition, but random and reckless misinterpretation to the pain and shame of all who

honour God's word.

In p. 59 we read, "I think the mistake has been made of confounding the idea of children with eternal life. I have fallen into that too much myself; the thoughts are, I judge, quite distinct. Sonship is connected with eternal life; that puts you outside the death-scene." Did one ever read such empty and self-complacent drivelling? The connection of "children" is really nearer, than that of "sons," to life eternal. For the scriptures which most fully treat of children treat also of eternal life, predicate both of the same persons, and that, not outside but now and here, where all else is under the power of death. They are in truth intimately and inseparably associated privileges. "And the witness is this that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." so says the apostle of all addressed. 1 John 5: 13 goes farther still: "These things have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know *that ye have* [not at all, that ye shall have] eternal life." It was now and here where death reigns, yet according to F. E. R.'s wild reckoning "the highest platform," after having greeted them (1 John 3: 1-3) in the most glowing terms as "children of God" from "now" till manifested in glory like Christ. Could scripture more pointedly write folly on this elaborate and persistent effort to say something new, which is after all wholly untrue?

In the pages that follow are strange conceits as to life eternal. Take 66 for example. "If you fail to enter into the reality of eternal life [who ever failed more egregiously than himself?], it proves that you don't understand what it is to be identified with the minister of the sanctuary." Can the most friendly eye discern a grain of sense, to say nothing of truth, in this jumble? Heb. 8 has its own divine force; but why drag in here failure "to enter into the reality of eternal life"? Even if one have eternal life, one may fail to appreciate, exercise, or manifest it; but how do any such failures prove that you do not understand what it is to be identified with the Minister of the Sanctuary? The language, the logic, and the exegesis are alike perverse. One comprehends failure in faith, or fidelity, or intelligence. But nothing can "prove," and nobody can understand (it seems to me), what it is to be identified with the Minister of the Sanctuary, because it is neither intelligible in itself nor true of any one. To be "all of one" is not identification with Him, which is not taught in this Epistle. Such teaching, far from being "divine," is not decently human, but a farrago of presumptuous impertinence and falsehood transparent to all that are not blinded.

On the allusions to eternal life in pp. 74, 75 one need not speak, as they refer to "the end "; and this all admit. Such too may be that in p. 94, though vaguely expressed. But we come to egregious trifling, as well as abandonment of the truth, in pp. 107, 108, to omit the page before.

"G. F. Would you say a believer then had eternal life in a certain sense?

F. E. R. I answer it in a very simple (!) way, he has eternal life if he has it.

R. S. S. It is not a very bad way to ask those people who say they have eternal life, what they have got.

F. E. R. If I came across any one who asserted it at the present time, I would be disposed to say, 'If you have got it, let us have some account of it.' Our difficulty in England was that nobody could give any account of eternal life. If there had been anybody who could have given an account of it, the difficulty would have been much less. One person said it was one thing, and another said it was another. One old brother who affected a good many people, said that eternal life was obedience. He took up a verse in John 12 [*sic*], 'And I know that His commandment is life everlasting,' and argued from that that it was obedience. It shows you in what a muddle the whole thing was. Everybody claimed to have it, but nobody could give an account of it. Another brother asked me, 'Have you got eternal life?' I did not know how to answer it exactly because he simply meant resting on a statement of

scripture. [Yes, *this* is what F.E.R.'s followers must avoid!]

G. F. Would you not define eternal life?

F. E. R. I do not think that we have any definition of it. You can speak of what is characteristic of it, and scripture gives you that, but surely if you claim to have eternal life you can give some account of it. If a man has a possession he can give me some account of what he possesses. Otherwise I doubt if he has it. I don't say he has not title to it.

R. S. S. Or the enjoyment of it.

F. E. R. I think thousands have title to it who are not in the good of it. Eternal life is God's purpose for you; God gave His Son to that end. I have the light of this, and hence it is mine in title, but to say that I have it is another matter."

Could the unbelief of a professing Christian go farther? Over and over again is the present possession of life eternal denied. According to F. E. R. it is "God's purpose"; and the believer has a "title to it," but in no way has he that life himself. "To say that I have it is another matter." Yet he knows as well as anyone, that the Lord with most marked solemnity ruled that He *gives*, not will give, life eternal, and that the believer "*has*" it, not merely is to have it. Simple title or God's purpose is excluded. Christ's meaning is made the more definite and indubitable (except to will under Satan's power), because He also says that the believer *has passed* from death into life. F. E. R. stands here in open antagonism to the word of the Lord on this vital matter. To quibble away His plain authority for it is to sap divine truth.

Again, how sad is the levity of the oracular platitude in answer to "G.F.! Would you say a believer then had eternal life in a certain sense?

F. E. R. I answer it in a very simple way, he has eternal life if he has it."

Any upright mind must feel that such a come-off is, if not Jesuitical evasion, anything but "simple," being just incredulous banter and a cheat.

All but the most ignorant know that life in itself, and of every form in nature, is difficult to explain, especially to a caviller. Yet who questions its reality but a materialist? With such F. E. R. here "lands himself" as to life eternal, however clearly revealed. On the highest authority the simplest Christian is divinely assured that he *has* this life eternal, not its mere title or promise. He expects indeed its certain completion in his body when Christ comes again; but he has no less certainty of possessing it now in his inner man. This F. E. R. denies emphatically, unequivocally, and constantly. Yet the scheme defrauds every Christian of his primary blessedness, dishonours the Lord in His grace and truth, and perverts His words of spirit and life into a willy-nilly of dark unbelief.

Is it true that in England "nobody" among the companions of this misguided man "could give any account of eternal life"? How deplorable if it were really as he says! *I* dare not allow that all have accepted the lie for the truth they once seemed to hold firmly and universally. Every intelligent saint, on the contrary, is able to explain that, just as he has by nature the sin-tainted life of the first man, so has he by grace, on believing, the holy life of the Second man. Who could expect our spiritual life to be outwardly cognisable more than our natural life? Yet even sceptics do not go so far as to deny it absolutely as a present thing, though they do its everlasting permanence.

It is almost needless to say that life eternal attests its presence by a newly given faith in Christ, by prayerful dependence on God, by delight in His word, by holy ways and walk, by a broken and self-distrusting spirit, by sympathies and antipathies upward and around and within, never displayed before.

Besides these subjective qualities, the objective side is at least as marvellous and real: Christ sent from above, and the only true God, the Father, made known as only then in the gracious working of the Spirit by the word. Surely this, and it might be largely increased, is "some account of it," and familiar to the family of God. What does this incredulous talker want or mean? He is blinded by self-will and vanity against the truth. But what of the many who know better, yet hold their peace? Are they swamping truth for a unity worthless without it? Is this what they owe Christ the Lord? Do they keep His word, or do they deny His name?

The passage is really a tissue of extreme unbelief, a gross exaggeration of the condition of his companions, and withal vulgar mockery, to support a lie of the enemy. The "muddle" is in F. E. R. and his dupes, through defection from the truth which no doubt he long preached and taught, if he never in heart believed it. It is of comparatively recent years that a doubt was breathed, only to be sternly reproved and scouted as wholly unsound. Even mere Jews, as is allowed, had "the idea of it." But whatever may be judged of those in O.T. times, the error before us is the formal repudiation of life eternal as actually attaching to the Christian, though the Lord explicitly assigns it as a present inward reality. Even if a believer were so strangely ignorant through bad teaching as to be unable to explain the matter to an adversary, he might have the fullest conviction that he *has* life eternal and enjoy its effects in obedience, love, righteousness, patience and hope, as he never did before his setting to his seal that God is true. Does anyone but an idiot or a philosopher doubt he is alive, because he cannot give "some account" of life — cannot even explain why his movements answer his volition? Who questions "time," or "space", because he finds it hard if not impossible to give a ready interpretation of either?

"The idea of eternal life" which Jews had is quite different from the believer's present and known possession of it. This did await Christ's coming. It is a crude and confusing statement that "It was the same thing referred to all along" (page 108). Could any say or accept this save an unbeliever in the Christian's privilege, which did depend on the Son of God? Before He came, the saints had life in Him, but they were ignorant as to it; when He came, He gave them understanding of this and much more. It was greatly increased when He rose and the Spirit was given. But it is untrue that "all depended on that." And the error affects still higher truth.

Think of a person presuming to teach yet so dense as to say that in the opening of John's Gospel "the apostle is, I judge, speaking from his standpoint, not from God's!" Such a judgment might fall from a natural man: Luke 1: 2 gives not the slightest warrant for it. It is the kind of slipshod comment by which Unitarians and other adversaries of the faith seek to undermine Christ. John 5: 26 is not the expression of Christ's divine right, but of the subject place He took when He became man, and received everything from God. Otherwise His deity is taken from the Lord.

Take another example. The alleged difference between "the Son" and "the Son of God" is rash and wrong, being even refuted by the text itself. That "Son of God" is (in Ps. 2 and elsewhere as John 1: 49, as well as Luke 1: 35) said of Christ as the King of Israel is true; yet the generalisation made in page 109 is a dangerous falsehood, as is made certain by such texts as 1 John 3: 8, 1 John 4: 10, 14, 1 John 5: 5, 9, 10, 20. But if one desire a single distinct disproof of its folly, one could not have a more decisive one than 1 John 5: 12: "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." In this case the emphasis is rather the opposite way, as every spiritual mind must feel.

Similar lack of insight and subjection to scripture is at the bottom of page 113. God's calling is not "sonship" as such, nor is it synonymous with "eternal life." Take Eph. 1 where His calling stands richly; but not a word is said of "eternal life," as indeed page 119 admits. Take the Gospel and the First

Epistle of John where "life eternal" is most fully treated; yet we have absolute silence about sonship. And what means the desire in page 116 to exclude "eternal life" from heaven, making it refer to earth? One might have expected a tyro to have profited better by the Lord's words to Nicodemus. A "teacher of Israel" ought to have known that to be born anew was needed for earthly things of God's kingdom; whereas the cross and eternal life suit the higher things of heaven, as made known by Him Who came down from heaven and would return thither, the Son of man who *is* in heaven.

The conversation on "the sphere" (116,117) is a characteristic specimen of unintelligent pretension. Of old the term "sphere" had been rightly used to designate the heavenly source whence He came Who was the eternal life and went back into the glory He had left, where we behold Him now and look to be, conformed to Him in body at His coming. We while on earth are given life eternal; but we have it in Him Who is above, and hence for that sphere where we are not yet, however assured by His grace. This morally becomes of the highest importance to act on our faith and love as well as hope according to Paul no less than John. What bewilderment, not to say darkness, of mind to refer to Rom. 5: 21, Dan. 12: 2, and John 17: 3, the last being said to "describe the sphere!" Was ever more pitiable hallucination, if it were not bound up with spiritual guilt of a black dye?

Contrast to death is the lowest and shallowest possible "idea" of life eternal. If we simply and truly believed Christ to be our life, could we fail to apprehend that this eternal life is our newly but truly given spiritual being, capable of communion even now with the Father and with the Son Whom He sent? Why this incessant and fruitless beating about the bush, ending in absolute denial of its present possession, the very thing on which the Lord most sedulously insists?

Remark too how far the reduction of life eternal to the contrast with death carries away this sciolist. "I think eternal life refers to earth. I don't think we should talk about eternal life in heaven . . . I don't think the term will have much force there . . . I don't see much sense in connecting the idea of eternal life with heaven." To one who pleaded his understanding "that it is connected with heaven also," F.E.R. answers, "I don't know the connection. The point of eternal life is that it comes in where death was. I think it stands in scripture in contrast to death." The expressions that follow might imply getting life here and now. But this he elsewhere so pointedly repudiates that we are obliged to believe that it is only "in anticipation now," not as actually possessed. But this novel jargon is as unmeaning as the strange dictum, "If you don't apprehend a sphere, you have no idea of eternal life"!! It is self-evident that *he* does not apprehend a sphere, simple as it is, but mystifies it.

On the "proportion" of deliverance here taught (page 106), it is enough to say that it is not so that scripture teaches. There is also no sense of correlation in saying, "I think the Father orders the world" (page 110) (for scripture testifies the contrast between these two), and in thinking that worship addresses itself to the Father, because the thought of God is presented to us in the Father (111). Now, John 4 is express in distinguishing the worship of "God" as such from that of "the Father," as any one may see in comparing verse 23 with 24. Spiritual perception is wholly lacking; and most sects have a peculiar style, or lingua franca, of their own. Could any one match the strange absurdity that John 17: 3 describes the "sphere"? His friend J. S. A. (who writes the introduction) indulges in the dream that where his leader is deeply astray, he is "correcting defective or erroneous use of terms!" Where could be shown infatuation more complete? And the worst is that not only are the terms defective and erroneous to an extraordinary degree, but the vital truth of scripture is misrepresented and lost, whilst empty falsehood takes its place.

The true sphere of eternal life was for the Word, the Son, with the Father (John 1: 4,1 John 1: 2) till the Incarnation. Then on earth in due time He said, "I came that they [the sheep] might have life,

and that they might have it abundantly" (John 10: 10). They believed and had life eternal in the days of His flesh, and in yet greater power when He died and rose (John 5: 25, John 6: 33- 50, 51-58, John 20: 22). Finally He returns to heaven and is glorified above with the Father's own self, with the glory which He had along with the Father before the world was. This is the "sphere" proper to the eternal life in its fullest character as we know it. But it is of the essence of the truth when revealed that we, Christians, have it now, and were to live because He lives, Christ living in each Christian, not merely in a future and risen state, but as to the life which each now lives in the flesh.

There will be, as no instructed saint doubts, life eternal for Israel and the nations in the world to come; but it will be in a way quite inferior to our privilege. For as it is our characteristic portion to know Christ with the Father in heavenly glory, we now have it in Him there but have also Him in us here. Were it otherwise, what incalculable loss! But it is not so; we cannot have the one without the other. The N. T. which alone reveals the full character of the life eternal in no way points *us* to "the world to come," which is its earthly display, but to the Son on high. Then shall we, and not we only, reign in life by the One, Jesus Christ (Rom. 5: 17); and this is not limited by "the world" and "age" to come, but will be true for ever, an everlasting and a far higher enjoyment of life eternal than Israel or the nations enjoy in "the world to come." Nor can there be a more senseless view of life eternal than to look for the earth at that period as our sphere of its display. It is systematic error from ignorance of scripture, a repugnance to dispensational light through the word, and a falsification of what life eternal is. Here judaising too plainly ousts Christianity and its better hope. What a blind leader of the blind is he who would exclude "heaven" from the completion of life eternal, or from the Christian's enjoyment of His association with Christ there even now *I* See the trumpery too of treating "sonship" as greater than eternal life in page 119.

As to "the world to come," most astounding the departure from the truth. "What thoughtful person could say that grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life now? I do not think it does yet. I do not think that grace is manifestly set in the ascendant" (p. 136). Not yet in the ascendant manifestly when Christ sits on God's throne! when grace triumphs in the power of the Spirit sent forth! It is the most deplorable ignorance of the world to come; for "righteousness" shall reign then, not "grace" as now. Christianity is ignored for the Jewish hope. This profound error is repeated and applies throughout; yet he says, "I do not doubt at all that what I have indicated to you is the line of divine teaching!!" Did ever fancy's fondness for its offspring more deceive itself? But where is God's word and Spirit in all this assumption? It is apostasy from what was once loved as the truth, now alas! trodden down under unclean feet, or at least by animals which do not ruminate. Rom. 5: 21 applies now, as will Isa. 32: 1 to the world to come.

Though my immediate duty be to vindicate the Christian truth of life eternal and to expose its frightful and pernicious denial now propagated, I cannot refrain from pointing out how the revealed testimony of Christ here suffers eclipse, and little remains but a morass of mud and vapour. Who but F.E.R. would say that we get in Ex. 15 figuratively "an idea" of the Kingdom? No one denies that as to this it goes no farther than anticipating the everlasting reign of Jehovah (Ex. 15: 18) at the end. But the true aim is the celebrating of the people's redemption by power as well as blood, and the destruction of the enemy's force for salvation accomplished. In no way is it the Kingdom come, which in this series of types is the figuration in Ex. 18. Hence here as elsewhere all is confusion worse confounded.

Indeed the like destructive vagueness characterises the volume from the first address at Quebec and its first page (8): "The Kingdom was coming in in connection with the Lord Jesus, who was the expression of the grace of God." Could any one of spiritual discernment thus put together Luke 10: 21-42 etc. with John 1: 17? Indisputable that the Kingdom of God came in Christ and was proved by His

casting out demons in virtue of God's Spirit (Matt. 12: 27); equally so that it was in their midst then, instead of coming with observation as in the days when the Son of man is revealed. But it is *olla podrida* to mix up as here grace and salvation with God's Kingdom even in its present moral aspect, which scripture declares to be "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."

But a greater contrast can scarce be found between the Kingdom as presented in scripture, and as it is travestied in these "Notes," save elsewhere in this deceptive and unsavoury volume on the various topics discussed. In scripture there is a most distinctive object in God's Kingdom, the display, or at least morally speaking the reality, of divine power and government. By F.E.R. this is spoilt and smothered in "that sway of God which has to be established in the soul of every man; if God is have to say to man otherwise than in judgment, the Kingdom of God must be established in man. Every Christian must know the Kingdom in himself" (p. 25). J.S.A, singular to say, comments on "the vague kind of idea that many of us had," that is, before the new lamp shed its light of death, "that the Kingdom was heaven or something of that kind, something you get into by-and-by instead of an actual present thing in the soul." How can he be blind to the fact, that his chief has misled them with himself into a moral platitude, which might content a Scottish Moderate of the past or a German Rationalist of the present day? They might all stand together under the capacious shade of "the moral sway of grace" (26).

Assuredly Abel, Enoch, Noah, and all the elders of the Old Testament who obtained testimony by faith came fully under that "sway," if one may use for once their language? Yet the Kingdom of God was for some not at hand for thousands of years; and the great type was a long while after in David and Solomon. But here all is a fallacious dissolving view, to reduce the full-grown into babyhood and worse; for in the next page (27) F.E.R. is so benighted as to say that "the Kingdom means salvation." It never does. One had hoped that all brothers (so called) were well aware that, however they may be connected, the Kingdom and salvation are each as essentially distinct as the church or assembly is from both. This man's mission is not from the Holy Spirit, but from an opposing and evil spirit to seduce unwary souls from the truth they once seemed to know and enjoy into a whirlpool of confusion and corrupting error. Honest ignorance we ought not to snub but to compassionate; but it is an imperative obligation to expose and unsparingly denounce ungrateful and rebellious departure from the truth of God.

It is in the Toronto reading (pages 23-34) that the vagaries about the Kingdom come out so grotesquely. Matt. 18 is spoken of as very important, notably for the condition of entrance, but "at the close the great principle of the Kingdom *i.e.*, grace reigning through righteousness." Now every person of real intelligence must know that the closing parable gives a totally different teaching; not in the least grace reigning through righteousness, but after pardon was proclaimed, the one who proved alien from its spirit consigned to condign torment. Can we conceive an archer more thoroughly missing the mark? No wonder he and his friends regard dispensational bearing with disfavour. "This is the rock on which many have split" (26) says the wrecker.

Nor is this specimen of "divine teaching" all the error here. In p. 32 we read that David's throne is really the throne of God! the very thing which the apostle contradicts in Acts 2. For David both died and was buried, and his monument was among the Jews unto that day; but being a prophet he testified of Messiah's resurrection; and to Ps. 16 we can add Ps. 110 where he tells us of His Son sitting at God's right hand, on His throne above, where none ever set or ever can sit but Himself. "You could not understand this well from the Old Testament, but in the New find that David's throne is God's throne!!" Was there ever a more perverse as well as pretentious blunderer? The O.T. does speak of Solomon chosen to sit upon the throne of Jehovah (1 Chr. 28: 5), which, as it is differently expressed, has quite

another import. "But in the New" you do *not* "find that David's throne is God's throne." Not only is it a confusion but a falsehood. The Son of God, the anointed of Jehovah, *shall* sit on David's throne. But every decently taught Christian knows that this will not be till He appears in glory: and we have always treated such an identification as the ignorance and even folly of adversaries.

In contrast with sitting as King on Zion by and by, Christ sits now on God's throne, His Father's throne. This is not mere ignorance in F.E.R. It is shameless abandonment of the truth which he long confessed. Yet not one of his fellows moved the wing, or opened the mouth even to chirp. They seem spell-bound and won over to invincible darkness. Can one be surprised that these unworthy retrogradists allowed it to pass that "ecclesiasticism! standing!! ground! and such ideas!! have almost ruined us" (34). Brethren, how have such insults to God's precious truth been heard or read without rebuke and repudiation? Truly "all have not faith": if men have only "ideas," they must come to ruin; yea, some seem ruined already.

"The New Covenant and Reconciliation" (35-47) abounds in judaising and the like confusion as before. What F.E.R. means, by saying in page 38 that "you get two things in this chapter (Col. 1), viz. the new covenant and reconciliation," is just a proof of his total incapacity to expound scripture. Where is a trace of the new covenant in the Epistle to the Colossians? Apparently he, for one statement, alleges "In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell", but this immense truth goes far beyond, and wholly differs from, the new covenant; and, for the other statement, "by Him to reconcile all things to Himself" is a purpose wholly future. "In the cross" says he, "there was the removal of the old man to the glory of God: but where that man was removed, the love of God was expressed. The latter gives you the covenant! and the former reconciliation!" Can one imbued with scriptural truth imagine greater imbecility, letting pass the phraseology employed? For according to scripture the love of God was pre-eminently expressed in His Son's mission, that we might live through Him, and that He might die as propitiation for our sins. Only F.E.R., not scripture, connects it with "the removal" of the old man. Nor does scripture but F.E.R. say, that "where that man was removed the love of God was expressed," but that "love hath been perfected with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4). This we could not be if we had not now eternal life, propitiation, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a power far beyond the new covenant or the reconciliation, as Israel are to know under Messiah.

The new creation is a distinct truth, super-added to reconciliation and never in scripture confounded. No divine teaching is clearer on it than Rom. 5: 10, 11; which closes the question of God's righteousness in view of our sins, before the supplement which treats the annulling of our old man, a special Christian privilege for faith but not without the need of learning it experimentally.

As to the new covenant the apostle cites Jeremiah's words for days to come of blessing on all Israel; but thence for the Christian he turns to the beautiful shadows of heavenly things which the Mediator's death brought in, "God having foreseen some better thing for us." This never seems to enter the mind of these interlocutors. Yet is it the express truth which God opens in the Epistle to the Hebrews, a hope that enters within the veil, of which the new covenant in itself knows nothing, and never will. Have these sorry labourers forgotten what used to cheer and gladden the hearts of true men in days that are past, and of some by grace still? Let them read and learn what follows in Heb. 9, 10 where the Christian is shown to be put into living relation with the true holies, ourselves not only sanctified but perfected in perpetuity. Israel even under Messiah and the new covenant will have no such spiritual portion, but Levitical priests, and the sons of Zadok, material sacrifices, and an earthly temple with doors. How fallen from divine teaching are those who once seemed to enjoy it, forsaking the fountain of living water for broken cisterns which can hold no water! And what are others who sit

quiet and dumb in the face of such enormous corruption? For there are not a few spiritual men who value heavenly truth, I feel sure, and who groan at this spurious substitute.

Is it by the way worth noticing the absurd change (p. 121) from the plain and certain force of Gal. 3: 26? The only error in the A.V. is in "the children," where all agree it should be "sons," of God. Thus "W.M. Do you read that passage in Galatians 'ye are all the sons of God *in Christ Jesus by faith*?' F. E. R. I do." This seems drawn from the R.V. which by its strange punctuation comes to the same sense, or from an English scholar who followed two or three Germans, and, being himself learned, had great weight with the Revisers in misleading them too often. But learning carries none safely through Scripture. The present instance is a distortion of the sentence, and the issue a truly unnatural abortion. No scholar would so twist a classic. Where is there anything in the N. T. to warrant "sons" any more than "children" in Christ Jesus? Either would be out of harmony with God's word. It is due to sonship on the brain of one who has no title to pose as the least authority in such a question, despising here as elsewhere an honoured servant of God who really had the fullest claim to respect. [FER N.S. Vol. 18 p. 136ff.]

In pp. 125, 126 are found remarks derogatory to scripture which are natural enough in a system of unbridled imagination. When J.C. went so low down as to claim that "the word of God is in the scriptures, F.E.R. answered "Christ is the word of God. The scriptures are more the record of it than the thing itself". How unlike the Lord when tempted by the devil! how like Quakers of old, and rationalists in our day! And when W.M. dutifully chimes in, "Then a Bible student is not much after all," F.E.R. rejoins, "I have said that if I had to live over again I would study scripture less and pray more. The great thing for a Christian is to get into his closet and pray. Prayer and meditation." Had he not forgotten that Luke 10: 38-42 precedes 11: 1-13? Has he not taken as his model not Christ but the Jew in "much speaking" or the eastern monk? Certainly he does not profit by 2 Tim. 3 "Every scripture (not "the sacred writings" of the Old Testament only, but "every scripture" of the New too, written or to be written) "is God-breathed, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for discipline which is in righteousness." Prayer is of the utmost value on that basis, but is of none without it; for God's word is left out, which He has magnified above all His name, as Christ beyond all others exemplified here below. Even when 2 Tim. 3 was referred to, the effort was to reduce all to its "disciplinary value." But this is expressly only a part, and when R. S. S. "was wondering if, in Luke 11, where the Lord teaches His disciples to pray," it is that He first reveals God to us, the answer goes off to His giving the Spirit that they may pray. But our Lord says nothing whatever of this end, but of their asking the Father and of His surely giving Him. The Spirit was given for every need and every privilege, not merely for prayer and meditation, very notably to guide into all the truth in glorifying Christ.

What again can be more empty and divergent from the true scope of Rom. 4: 23 to end of 5 than the "four great thoughts" of F.E.R. in pages 128,129 of his Chicago Address on the Principles of the world to come" fraudulently imported into the passage? The apostle here shows neither the Kingdom of God, nor the Covenant in its bearing on teaching; but that even as to the inheritance of Abraham, it is neither by law nor circumcision but by promise and therefore to faith, that it might be according to grace. In the verse with which F.E.R. begins, the Spirit goes farther and contrasts our faith in the gospel with Abraham's in his being fully persuaded that what God promised He is able also to perform; whereas the Christian rests, not on promise however sure, but on His work already accomplished in raising from the dead our Lord Jesus, who was given up for our offences and raised for our justification. This is the truth, not mere thoughts great or small. Indeed they are unfounded in themselves and quite outside the scripture alleged for them. They are *not* the line of the Spirit's teaching. It is false to say so. We may leave aside what is irrelevant and dragged in by force for many

pages.

But let us turn to page 148 which led to this retrospect. There we find contradiction of himself as well as of his betters. To the question of the difference between the Kingdom "of God" and "of Heaven," the absurd answer is given that the latter is analogous to what God did at the beginning: [For it was on the fourth day] He set a great light in the heavens to rule the day. Surely any old woman might furnish one with more sense, and any Christian child with more truth. But his explanation of the former is darker still. "The Kingdom of God, on the other hand, is connected with the presence of the Holy Ghost down here." Now he had already acknowledged, as all know, that the Kingdom of God was here before His presence at Pentecost. Again, to one who asked, what was once universally owned, whether the Kingdom of God is a more inclusive term, says F. E. R. "I don't think so." Yet when another remarked that "the Kingdom was really set up when Christ took His place on high," his answer was, "Yes, the Kingdom of Heaven." Yet he adds what contradicts himself, that "the Kingdom of God was present when Christ was on earth;" for this conclusively proves the latter to be the "more inclusive term," and before the Spirit's presence at Pentecost.

But what means the thought (page 150) that the robber "got salvation by his death"? "the death of Christ took him to paradise, but his own death was salvation"! "He was never baptized to the death of Christ, but he got salvation by death; that is, through it he got complete emancipation from the power of evil. We get salvation by death in a sense, but by the death of Christ we get heaven." One knows not what the saints beguiled into sanction or sufferance of this strange doctrine think of the new appendix — our death as a supplement to Christ's death for salvation. But it does seem a worthy appendage to the denial of eternal life as a present possession that "we get salvation by death in a sense." Is not F.E.R.'s "sense" sheer nonsense? is not our death given an unscriptural value when put as a partner with Christ's death? But can we be surprised where the scriptures lose their place as the divine standard for us?

Who can wonder that one who dispenses such "ideas" says in the same page "I think a great point in connection with the Kingdom is to get away from dispensational ideas. We have been greatly hindered by taking things up dispensationally"! Think of so bold a revolt from the fullest chapter God ever inspired on the Kingdom! For Matt. 13 (and it is far from being alone) for the most part sets forth dispensational teaching, though not this only. "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" said the Lord. F.E.R. says on the contrary, "Get away from dispensational ideas." "Have ye understood all these things?" the Lord asked. F.E.R. is not afraid to gainsay Him: "We have been greatly hindered by taking things up dispensationally." Exactly so think the uninstructed leaders of Christendom. Extremes meet. Yet here samples only are noticed by the way, by no means all that deserves severe castigation as well as entire rejection; that those who love the truth may see how far-reaching is the departure which once would have been felt intolerable and without excuse.

Think too of such erratic teaching in the same short paragraph (154, 155), "for the moment the Kingdom is hid at the right hand of God," compared with the quotation of the future day when "the angels shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend," etc. Had it been said that "the King" is hid, one could understand; but "the Kingdom" has no sense. It is the fruit of sneering at dispensational truth and cultivating a crop of moral vanities. "In a day of confusion" (153) scripture is the divine resource, not mere moral views, which without it only mislead. But what can Christians think when to one who asked the difference between the Father's Kingdom and that of the Son, the answer was, "They refer to the same point"? And to another on the same page he maintained that Christ *has* "received the kingdom!" and cited for his error, "we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour!!" It is to be hoped that all who heard knew the gross mistake of both answers. Heb. 2: 9 is no more proof of Christ's reception

of the Kingdom than Rev. 4, 5 proves that the heavenly saints then reign. It is His present exaltation when we do *not* yet see all things put under Him. When He comes to reign, He wears many *diadems* and is not merely crowned. Who can fathom this disgraceful ignorance? or the dense delusion which accepts it as fresh light and truth? It really annuls the sure witness hitherto rendered by all taught of God as to the future within brethren or without.

When one even before this asked, "Could a person enter into the moral sway of the kingdom not having life?" there is evasion. For to be "born anew" is life from God; and this life is in the Son of God. Why start off into "receiving" the Kingdom of God, which is by that faith which is inseparable from being born anew, as the Gospel of John so strongly insists? The truth is not only evaded but distorted and denied for the foolish dream which will have life eternal *only* at the end, instead of bowing to God's testimony that it is also given immediately on believing.

In p. 164 (the Minneapolis reading on the Sanctuary) we come again to the old strange doctrine. "You don't begin with eternal life," says an accommodating disciple.

F.E.R. You end with it, at least if scripture is right, "The end everlasting life.'

W.E. And that scripture does not mean then that you die?

F.E.R. I don't think so. A man gets to eternal life on earth. He may not get it until resurrection, but get it he will. Every believer will certainly get it.

W.H.F. Before he leaves earth?

F.E.R. Yes.

W.H.F. You don't enter into it now, but in resurrection?

F. E. R. You will be put into it then; you will not enter into it." The meaning of this utterance seems to be eternal life given only at Christ's coming when we shall not all sleep, but all be changed. But this is to efface the Lord's giving it to believers now, as a known and present possession, for mortality swallowed up of life at His coming, with which he confounds it. Scripture is as plain about the beginning as about the end. F.E.R. denies it for the believer when he most needs life eternal to know God, follow the Lord, enjoy the heavenly things at God's right hand, overcome the world, and resist the devil. He is doing the enemy's work and corrupting the temple of God.

Then in page 166 we have the arrant stuff so often repeated about the covenant. In page 129 "covenant on the part of God really means teaching to us"! Here "it is God's disposition toward you, and that is love. That is His covenant"!! Was there ever so downright a muddle with such pretension to "divine teaching"? Covenant means neither teaching nor love, though the new one flows from grace and ensures conscious knowledge of Jehovah, with sins and iniquities remembered no more. But it means, not God's disposition but, His order established for ever, in this case with His people according to His unchanging mercy.

Passing over wild statements about reconciliation, in page 171 as often before we have that phrase, so offensive to a spiritual mind, "you touch life"; "You touch His life now because you have accepted His death." Among other outlandish expressions (p. 172) we read, "The moment you love God, you are in the life of Christ." Scripture puts the truth in quite the opposite way: Herein *was* the love of God manifested, that God in our case hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Never is it written or meant that when we love Him, we are that moment in the life of Christ, unscriptural as the language is. That life is from God's love, not from ours. But the constant error is pretending to be in the life of Christ, whilst we have not life eternal; for His life

exclusively is that life eternal, and He gives no other. Had Christ two lives to give, a life of His now that is not eternal, and another life at His coming which is eternal? Whatever is meant, it is a detestable lie of the enemy, incompatible with scripture, and contradictory to it.

What can one say of an assertion so preposterous in page 173 as that the reconciliation we have now through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5: 11) means that we "have another head?" "There is the sense of change from Adam to Christ. That is the point realized in reconciliation." Think of one who often heard the truth calmly drawing so untenable an inference from the passage! It is wholly alien from the mind of the Spirit. The context forbids it to anyone of the least spiritual judgment. When another asked (175), Does reconciled bring out the difference between the first and second man? the answer is "If you accept reconciliation you don't go in for (!) the comeliness of the first man." Now, leaving this slang of the race-course or the prize ring, one may be astonished at ignorance of the reconciliation so deplorable. Yet it goes on to the end; for we read with the emphasis of italics in 178, "In *reconciliation* Christ gets His place with us as Head." But everyone of intelligence knows that the verse closes the apostolic discussion of our sins; then the next verse begins the further truth of the two heads, in order to treat aright the new subject of deliverance from sin. Does F.E.R. flatter himself that he can overthrow the conviction of instructed saints for more than half-a-century? But why speak of any such conviction? The scripture is perfectly clear. Alas! he is a mere trifler with God's word; and those who, knowing better tolerated his folly ought to hide their heads for very shame.

The same page is disfigured with a truly scandalous comment on 2 Cor. 5: 20 ("We beseech in Christ's stead be reconciled to God"). "F.E.R. I think it is practical (!!); the Corinthians had not left Adam for Christ. They were practically very much in Adam"(!!!). This quite benighted man who sets up to teach had never learnt, or utterly forgotten, the very elementary lesson that the apostle is here giving the gospel message in his brief formula, as it were a specimen "word of reconciliation." Practical indeed for the Corinthian saints! *Had* not God already reconciled them (ver. 18), as He does for all who believe? Compare Col. 1: 21, 22. It is a divine work done once for all through Christ's death, and in itself distinct from His headship, however truly this is superadded. But "practical," as it is here made for saints in a bad state, is anti-scriptural; so that it raises the question whether one who so teaches has read his Bible to any profit, or can ever have submitted to the word of truth. This is not a gratuitous anxiety. Not the smallest reference is here to practice, in which the Corinthians were indeed low and inconsistent. Reconciliation has nowhere an aspect to saints. It is really the word of reconciliation in the gospel message: we are told how to address the world of sinners. Reconciliation, like justification, is a work absolute, and does not admit of degrees.

Suffice it to say that on Reconciliation his teaching, if so it is to be styled, is as thorough and vague make-believe as on the Kingdom; nor does Covenant *ever* mean in scripture what he affirms it to be, "the disposition of God towards His people." In divine things it means an order established by God and made known to the men concerned, according to which He forms relations with them, and they walk before Him. The first covenant wholly broke down because it depended on the obedience of a rebellious and wicked people. The second depends on the faithful mercy of Jehovah by the intervention of Messiah and His work to divine glory and their blessing; and this is everlasting. But that either one or other means "God's disposition, in F.E.R.'s sense of His gracious affection, is a dream. God's disposition, like His nature, His ways and His purpose, was ever good and worthy of Him Who is light and love. But the sinner must learn his sinfulness, ruin and powerlessness. Sin too must be judged to glorify Him morally and in a work efficacious to deal with it, fruit and branch and root, for all that believe. In such there is an inward work of return to divine order and peaceful enjoyment of God, based on the work wrought in the body of Christ's flesh through death. This is reconciliation; as the new

covenant with both houses of Israel will be Jehovah's undertaking to secure their full and changeless blessing, the principle of which the Lord and the apostle apply to the Christian.

What impresses one's soul in reviewing these dreary talks and effusions ("readings" and teachings they are not, save by euphemism), is that Christ is lost, not being held in faith. Hence the truth sinks into a chaos, partly of traditional ignorance as on the Kingdom and the world to come, and partly of hazy "ideas" as on the new covenant and reconciliation even beneath old puritanism. On the Kingdom enough has been said, however briefly. But a fairly sober Christian has only to confront the "readings revised" with the Epistle to the Hebrews, to convince himself how manifestly these speculations stop short of the "divine teaching" vouchsafed to us in holy writ. They are no more than the inanities of an active yet feeble mind, which has broken away from subjection to scripture. In 2 Cor. 3 care is taken to guard against "letter" instead of "spirit"; for though the foundation is laid in the blood of Jesus, the terms and fulfilment of the new covenant can only be for the houses of Israel and Judah. We have only that of it which is compatible with a heavenly calling, yet enough to help greatly the Christian remnant of Jews to whom the Epistle was addressed.

Think too of the strange "idea" in 182 that "The only way in which you escape from the wilderness is in your own house. I don't think one's own house is exactly the wilderness, for it is a circle which God owns. The moment you are outside of your own house, you are in the wilderness"!!! Was there ever such puerility in a Christ-given teacher, or even a sane man? Who does not know that if typically we pass through the wilderness, which the world is to the new man, tents are an essential part of it, and that these become the pilgrim rather than the settled houses of Egypt? But what a conglomerate of thought, or at least of words and figures, to claim for "our own house" so favoured a circle! Would to God, our homes were more pilgrim-like, and more redolent of Christ!

But we come to more serious and systematic development of error in the use made of some later types in the book of Numbers (183, 184).

"G. R. Does the brazen serpent answer to Rom. 8: 3?

"F. E. R. Quite so . . .

"J. S. A. And I suppose that although a person might be out of Egypt through the Red Sea, and brought to God in that sense, he cannot enter into the purpose of God unless he apprehends the brazen serpent.

"F. E. R. No, the Spirit is the real beginning of life in the believer, 'The Spirit is life' (184) . . . God goes back to Adam (!) and the serpent, and sin is condemned in the flesh in the sacrifice of Christ, in order that God might impart the Spirit as life to man. You get the Lord's own expression of this in John 3."

These heterogeneous "ideas" may please souls immature in the truth; but they indicate a mind caught by appearance, and at sea with a compass wholly out of order. For the book of Exodus furnishes the shadows of redemption and its consequences, up to God's dwelling in the midst. There we have not only the sacrifice of Christ in the Passover but God's action in power for His people in the passage of the Red Sea, Christ dead and risen. "The purpose of God" had been before them in Ex. 3: 17, and Ex. 6: 4, 8; as they all celebrated it in the song, Ex. 15: 13-17. In figure they were truly and fully brought to God. Then come lessons of grace by the way and conspicuous among them the Bread of life come down from heaven marking out the true rest, and the gift of the Spirit in the living waters from the smitten rock fitting for conflict, though victory depend on the Mediator's intercession on high.

Is it not therefore certainly and manifestly in contradiction of scripture that one could not enter

into God's purpose without the serpent of brass? For its object as the emblem of Christ crucified was to annul the power of Satan through the fiery serpents which bit those that loathed "this light bread." And it was an absolute and immediate remedy to the lack of faith, Aaron being dead just before: for those concerned seem not such apostates as Jude speaks of, but souls who had not come out of Egypt nor passed through the Red Sea. They were a fresh generation requiring a new enumeration soon after, who have God's intervention for them against the enemy within and without. Hence they too receive the Spirit's refreshing, as they had the emblem of Christ made sin for them just before. It was meet that God should grant all this for the generation about to leave the wilderness; as He had done in previous figures for those who left Egypt for the wilderness.

But what a hodge-podge is made of "divine teaching" by these ill-assorted ingredients from Exodus and Numbers boiled together for a witch's cauldron of poison! Yet not a soul among his British companions or his American friends raised a note of warning! If the progress of audacious error is alarming, the silence of men in the party who must see more or less through Satan's deceits seems more distressing still.

The human invention of the believer's life by the Spirit, which is *not* a present reality in Christ or life eternal, explains much said hitherto, and is distinctly taught in "The Wilderness and the Land." "You have not yet got to eternal life, but it is life Godward in the wilderness" (185). The truth is that life in Christ, life eternal, is at the starting-point; as is taught in John 3: 15, etc., John 5: 24, 25, John 6: 40, and very clearly in 1 John 4: 9 compared with 10, unless you say that this life is *not* eternal life. It is unmistakably false doctrine that "John 3 carries you farther than Romans 8": a total misconception of that Gospel, which tells of the Son come down from heaven, Who is withal in heaven, light come into the world then manifesting God on earth. This is not less "the wilderness" than anything in the Epistle to the Romans; and "the thought of God" is as truly in both Rom. 5 and Rom. 8 as in John 3. In short the teaching is a string of discreditable and mischievous blunders. It is owing to the thought of only the end, life everlasting.

Hence "perishing" is said to be in the wilderness (181), yet it means to "apostatize" like Judas, a lot so exceptional, that there is another string also to the bow. It really expresses the everlasting perdition (whatever its shape) which befalls every unbeliever. And what, even before that, more inept than the comparison (180) of Rom. 8 with 5 — "what we are for God in the Spirit?" Surely if Rom. 5 is God fully known in grace superior to our sins, Rom. 8 is our place in Christ, superior to law, sin, and every other difficulty. But this book drags souls from divine truth to self habitually, instead of ministering Him Who alone acts on us in the power of grace by the Spirit.

If we turn to the fuller light of the N. T., the violence done to revelation is extreme. For a twofold reason is given in the opening of Rom. 8 why there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus, itself a wondrous expression of divine favour. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and death." This was not only life eternal but in its risen power: God could not condemn one so liberated. But there is more. "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent his own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us that walk not according to flesh but according to Spirit." As God already in Christ's cross condemned sin in the flesh — not merely sins but sin, He is not satisfied only (as the old divines were wont to put it) but glorified therein. Thus on neither score can condemnation fall. The sins of the believer are forgiven in virtue of Christ's bearing them on the tree; and the sin in the nature also has already been condemned there to God's glory. The believer in both respects stands clear, in order to righteous practice in loving God and man, as he walks in that life which he has in Christ according to which the Spirit enables him.

No Christian doubts the part played by the Holy Spirit in new birth: but how can anyone overlook the plain truth that, when the apostle discusses the further working of grace in the verses which immediately follow, not a word here teaches that "the Spirit is the real beginning of life for God in the believer, 'the Spirit of life'"? For F. E. R.'s aim is to deny that Christ now gives life, life eternal, and here in resurrection power, to the believer. This he deliberately discards as the beginning or indeed at any time in our actual existence till He comes. "Life eternal" he believes to be only given in "the end" — an end of glory which can never come without its beginning in grace now. The apostle shows that it is no question of duty only, but of a new nature with its spiritual affections quite opposed to the flesh and its lusts which are enmity against God. The believer's relationship to God is in the Spirit, but grounded on having Christ for life and on being in Him. This is made clear even by ver. 10: "But if Christ [be] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin, and the Spirit life because of righteousness." Christ already in him as life warrants him to disallow the body as a guiding power, that the Spirit may act in that life and be life practically. For thus only is sin excluded and righteousness produced.

But this is power in Christian practice, quite distinct from and subsequent to the gift of life eternal in believing. As no Christian doubts that the Son quickens in communion with the Father, so he holds that one is thus also born of the Spirit. God in the fulness of His being acts in this operation of His grace. Thus here we learn how the Spirit is the immediate energy in the inner man all through. But to pervert it (as heterodoxy usually avails itself of a scripture difficult to many) in order to deny Christ as the present giver of eternal life, O what a sore grief to Him who is sent here to glorify Christ, and should receive of His to report accordingly!

Is it not blindness to say as in p. 185, after Rom. 5, and 8: 3 which is said to answer to the brazen serpent, that "you have not yet got to eternal life, but it is life Godward in the wilderness?" As we have seen, the very verse (Rom 8: 10) abused to put forward the Spirit, in exclusion of Christ's gift of life eternal, refutes the unbelief, and makes "Christ in us" the antecedent to the Spirit's power in making it good in our practice. But more: the Lord's application in John 3 proves that the life given forthwith to such as looked on the serpent of brass answers to "eternal life," and not to an imaginary different and inferior life meanwhile. Scripture never speaks of Christ giving the believer any life but His own life eternal. F. E. R.'s doctrine is a fraud of dangerous consequence from every point of view. Can a faithful man doubt that the Holy Spirit, far from accepting F.E.R.'s error in pretended honour to Himself, resents it as a profane slight on the Son of God and on God's own love?

If it were really meant that the life we have in Christ may in some disclose little beyond a pilgrim character, whilst they ought to have a heavenly character also as occupied with Christ glorified on high, one would accept its truth as long confessed and prized. This however is in no way his "idea." He fancies life eternal to mean neither the one nor the other; he asserts it to be "a purpose of God," and "a promise" to the believer, but in no case his present and known reality, and less still admits it to be the life of which all Christians live. His notion that "the Spirit is life," to the exclusion of eternal life in Christ now given, is a wretched falsehood, and beneath not only every Christian teacher, but any Christian whatsoever. He confounds the new being at the start with power for practice on deliverance. It is possible indeed that he was beguiled by his own misapprehension of the difference between the heavenly life and the earthly (or pilgrim) life in a practical sense, whether of Christ or of the Christian. Such a misunderstanding of one truly taught of God may have been the enemy's snare into his own systematized error. But if any one a dozen years ago doubted what he meant, there can be no real excuse now. The reader of this volume has abundant and decisive proof. Who with the fear of God can now say that there has been no false system, nor false doctrine at root? To deny it at this time of day would be party-spirited will and obstinacy unworthy of Christ.

No doubt mistake on the side of these who were right in the main weakened their testimony and gave a seeming aid to the adversary. For all ought to have seen that there are two principles and directions for the life Christ communicated, figuratively the wilderness, and Canaan. The heavenly ways and the wilderness walk are quite distinct. It was so even for Christ, where all was perfection. But this raises no uncertainty as to the unity of His life, any more than as to the life eternal now given to us. It affords no real cloak for the error, which positively denies the communication here and now of eternal life, and only admits the gift of the Spirit (56 *et passim*). For it is foolish and evil perversion of Rom. 8: 10 to exclude our having at present eternal life in the Son, under the plea that *without it* "the Spirit is life." Even verse 2 had clearly joined Christ with the Spirit, like the verse tortured into the contrary. For what means "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," if not that? What God joined together, let not man venture to sever.

Further, what Christian taught of God does not see that in Rom. 8 it is a question, first in 2, of delivering power in the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and, next in 10, of the Spirit as power inwardly in order to walking in the Spirit? Think of confounding all this with being born of the Spirit, or with the gift of the Spirit! Yet this is a root-error throughout the volume; as if one could be born of the Spirit without life, or have life imparted to the believer which was other than life in the Son, life eternal. What a return to old ignorance, if one conceive that the experience of Rom. 7 could be that of a soul not born of God! Yet as clearly it is one without the Spirit of liberty. But F. E. R. is on every side wrong; and the worst is, that it is a departure from light into darkness on the foundation as well as the privileges of Christianity.

It would be tedious to analyse "The things before God" (pages 198-207). But there is the like confusion, instead of the truth, in what is fantastically entitled "the world to come" (pages 208-225) and its continuation (226-242), the submerging of Christianity under Jewish expectations, just as in the denial of life eternal as a known and present reality for our souls in Christ. Take the statement that "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has properly reference to the world to come" (208, 9). Now where is the Christian of spiritual intelligence and candour who can fail to discern that this is no casual slip but error down to the foundation of revealed truth? It is the surest self-evidence that he who holds and utters such a view was not taught of God as to either the present or the future; and this in what is and must be the innermost of all, the true relation of God to each according to His word. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" has *no* proper reference to "the world to come." His only reference properly, if we bow to the word, is now to the saints and faithful in Jesus Christ, though of course they will enjoy Him for ever. The error is complete on both sides. The proper title of God in reference to the world is *not* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that blessed *us* with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, but Jehovah, El-Elyon or the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, according to the beauteous type of Abraham and Melchisedek in Genesis 14, and so predicted in the Psalms as well as the Prophets.

Nowhere does scripture warrant the faintest hint that God's relation to the world will be "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" which is His exclusively given relation even now to those who compose the church. No Papist, no Protestant, within the scope of my reading, ever erred so scandalously, not even B.W.N. in his Thoughts on the Apocalypse or in any other of his most erroneous writings, though he shared the common ignorance that all saints from the beginning to the end compose the church. F.E.R. learnt better through Brethren; and therefore his error is the less excusable, because it is the more inconsistent. Alas! what makes it hopeless, as it is, is his consistency, rather than his inconsistency. He dares, after professing the truth in both respects, to contradict revelation in both; he robs the Christian now of his most cherished relationship shared with his risen

and ascended Lord, and bestows it improperly and with reckless ignorance on "the world to come." All the effort of J.S.A. or J.P. to palliate it (209) is in vain. None ventured to expose or even oppose the twofold lie against the truth.

Again, weigh the words in page 210: "Every thought enumerated in chapters 1-10 [Heb. 1 - 10] connects itself with the world to come." Now had it been said that there are points of connection through the Epistle to the Hebrews with "the world to come" (beyond the text in chapter 2 which openly speaks of it), no one could fairly dispute it. But the grand central truth, which governs its teaching through more than those ten chapters, turns those bold words into dust and ashes. Christ's session at God's right hand after having made for Himself (if not also "by Himself ") purification of our sins is from first to last characteristic for the Christian now, and does *not* connect itself with the world to come. Any one versed in the truth could disprove it in detail from each one of these ten chapters and indeed from all. But, not to heap up counter evidence, it suffices to allege the indisputable fact of the teaching throughout, that sacrifices are now consummated and closed *for us* Christians in His one offering. Hence even every tyro in prophecy knows that it will not be so for "the world to come;" as for example Ezekiel (Ezek. 43-46) proves for Israel, and Malachi (Mal. 1: 11) for the Gentiles.

In these revised notes, after ample time for reflection, there is the issue to every eye of what deliberately and systematically reverses apostolic teaching of a fundamental kind. For in the Epistle from which it is sought to show that "all is viewed in relation to it with the world to come," the wilderness with the tabernacle and its antitype is ever the ground, not Canaan and the temple as then and there according to the prophets. Our position as Christians ever looking on as sufferers in full assurance of hope is the express aim of its teaching; not "the world to come" but the holiest relationship [not union here] with Christ in heaven itself which contrasts with that world. It is the better light of God's presence on high, the "heavenly" soon to be our actual portion. We are Christians, not Jews anticipatively, or the Israel of God as Christendom fancies; and our time, if this be meant (211), is the eighth day, not the seventh. So the Lord by His word (in John 7: 37 et seqq.) would have us enjoy now in the Spirit. But these judaizing errors flow from the fatal root-error of denying to us the known present possession of life eternal.

In the notice of Heb. 11 according to the new school, we are told that since "sin came in saints were being instructed in some way or other in detail as to the world to come. In Abel we see the principle of the world to come, that is acceptance by sacrifice. Then in Enoch we get translation". . . "and in Moses the destruction of the world power" (211). Did ever a narrow and prejudiced Puritan convey anything paltrier? In Abel it was really a question, not of the world to come, but of righteousness from and of God, as it was testified in Enoch the next case for heaven and eternity. Noah might as to this bear such a view in the world after the flood; but what God's word actually says is that he condemned the world, instead of inheriting it, and became heir of the righteousness that is according to faith. No doubt the pilgrim fathers are said to be heirs of the same promise; but it is carefully shown that they all sought a better country, that is, a heavenly, the city that hath the foundations. Must one tell these darkened brothers, who formerly needed it not, that "the world to come" means the *habitable earth* to come, and does *not* include the heavenly side of the scene? The Epistle, while owning it habitually and in this chapter, was written to set their eyes on things above where Christ sits. This book retrogrades and sinks to an earthly level. Lastly what halting poverty of application only to get in Moses the destruction of the world-power! Why not point out, in blessed type, the overwhelming downfall of Satan's power and ourselves brought to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus? Yet no one denies the outward analogy when Israel's foes are destroyed by-and-by.

One of the pupils remarks that "It is not that they were delivered at the moment, but they were

waiting for the One who delivered them" (213). Now scripture (1 Thess. 1: 10) puts "our Deliverer" from the wrath to come, as the most expressive form of conveying their abiding rescue. So said our Lord in John 5: 24, speaking of the last crisis of that coming wrath (cf. Rom. 2: 5, 16), the believer "cometh not into judgment." It is a present and assured exemption. Another adds from his teacher that "we do not need Christ as our righteousness for this world. We need practical righteousness here, Christ is our righteousness in view of the world to come." Well, if we have not got eternal life now, and thereby communion with the Father and with His Son, this might be; but just think how its denial degrades His life both now and by-and-by! A third has found out the error of taking (Col. 1: 12) as heavenly, the inheritance of the saints in light! "That is not heaven", says J.S.A., "but the world to come"! How deplorable the descent of error!

It may help him to learn that the word which deceived him is not κληρονομίας (inheritance) but κληρου (portion or lot). This is far above the "world to come." Even "inheritance" in Eph. 1 rises higher than the earthly horizon. Let him unlearn this folly and use this scripture, as they were all wont to do. How evidently one lie about a vital truth unsettles, vitiates, and falsifies many more! Would to God that no saints might "grasp these thoughts"; for they are a grievous perversion, and can only defile and destroy. A soul less an adept did cite 1 Cor. 1: 30 for Christ made to us of God wisdom and righteousness now. Yet F. E. R., after admitting it, said "I don't think it is in relation to this world, but to the world to come(!)." It was written to the saints here and now; and has no more to do with "the world to come" than the rest. "The age to come" attached to "the world to come." Neither contemplates heaven. This prattle is one tissue of blunder on blunder. No sound and well-taught man can truthfully deny it; and I trust that none such out of party zeal may have the hardihood to palliate it. They are likely enough to cry out about my tone and spirit, as once against J.N.D. because he did not mince his words when his soul fired up against outrage done to Christ or the truth. He was not at all animated by fleshly enmity or feeling, which I too disclaim. Is there to be no righteous indignation at such sin?

We can see in pages 220, 221 that neither J.S.A. nor O.O.'B. could give up without a protest the certain if mysterious truth of Eph. 6: 12; but F.E.R. showed himself alert to lower, here too, all he could. "I don't think the rendering is quite right (!). We wrestle against the spiritual things or influences of wickedness in the heavenly places (!). We don't wrestle against the wicked spirits (!). We have to do with the effect down here. There are influences which are abroad in Christianity. We have escaped one evil, but may fall into another." "*We don't wrestle against wicked spirits*" says this adversary of the truth, ever bold against God's word when it is plain.

"We have to do with the effect down here," says F. E. R. But the apostle says we have to do with the sources up there. The express aim is to assert that our wrestling is, *not* against blood and flesh which are down here, *but* against principalities, against authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against "spiritual [hosts or powers of] wickedness in the heavenlies." This I venture to affirm *is* the right rendering; and it is dead opposed to "things or influences," which sense in the context is nonsense; for this would-be renderer himself means "influences which are abroad in Christianity" [? Christendom], and can hardly mean to call the evil spirits "things" on high. The apostle speaks here solely of spiritual *beings* of subtle energy and malice banded against us; and all the more seriously, because they rule the world's darkness from that heavenly elevation by their wiles as quasi-deities. *He* does not speak of "spiritual things or influences" in the heavenlies, but a man as far as possible from being an apostle, for he contradicts the true one. Nor does he seem to be aware that infidelity and rationalism are as real if not as rampant in Popish lands as in Protestant, though the latter are generally more open and outspoken.

The reading ends with a few vague, obscure, and scarcely intelligible remarks on eternal life; but

there is nothing definite enough to call for any notice further than the mistake of putting resurrection, instead of the Son, for the coming out of that life (225). How all these "thoughts" belittle Christ, and becloud the truth! Whose work is it to do either? Not the Holy Spirit's certainly.

Passing by not a little worse than worthless in the last reading as in those before, we may now consider in its continuation (220-242) some of the more shocking errors. Take this in concurrence with J.S.A. (page 227): — "F.E.R. Every point in the Epistle [Heb.] holds good for the world to come." Such a sentiment is worthy of a Jew masquerading as a ritualistic clergyman. He saps the transparent truth of the Epistle; for as it proves the "better thing" than even the fathers looked for in the fulfilment of promise, the surpassing difference of Christianity is, I may say, everywhere made plain. The lowest object in God's purpose, the habitable earth to come (ἡ οἰκουμένη ἢ μέλλουσα), is abused to swamp the far more commanding and distinctive truths of the Epistle.

It is utterly false that "every point in the Epistle holds good for the world to come." Israel and the nations shall see the King in His beauty, and their hearts muse on the terror of His day begun on earth. But not even the most spiritually intelligent among them can look by faith on the Son seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high when He had made purification of sins (Heb. 1). Nor will they behold Him crowned with glory and honour in heaven, as we do when we see not yet all things put under Him (Heb. 2). For though it is a citation of Ps. 8, the Epistle shows that Christians have the excellency, which Thomas had not, of having believed without seeing. Then again is it no point of vantage that Christians are "partakers of a heavenly calling" (Heb. 3) while the millennial saints have an earthly one? Nor will it be theirs to suffer being tempted, like Christ, yea, to endure, and reign with Him, as 2 Tim. 2: 12 says, whereas they are reigned over, having had no such gracious experience. And the rest of God (Heb. 4), is there no difference in enjoying it on the habitable earth to come, or with Christ above?

In all the similar and deadly thrusts of B.W.N. at our heavenly privileges, I remember none so sweepingly pernicious as these "thoughts" of F. E. R. palmed on the unwary as the truth of God. Surely "an enemy hath done this"; for one might easily go through the Epistle and prove that in every salient point *it* ascends and associates us with Christ, in contrast with his descent to the world to come. But, even again, to cite (the same page) "we which have believed do enter," as our anticipation of it, ought to disgrace a youth on the outside seats of a meeting-room. For it is really "a promise," and not our anticipation by faith, as ranters preach, but a simple fact that we enter there (*viz.* at Christ's coming), not that we have in any sense entered in. In the same context, as ever in the Epistle, we are as yet and only passing through the wilderness. No: this is the reverse of divine teaching, and wholly opposed to the truth accepted and taught by every instructed person among brethren. Surely they are not all traitors to it now! It must be so, if some teach the truth, and others are allowed to teach error. Is this the compact?

"This brings in the House of God, for the truth of the House of God is not literally fulfilled in the present time, it points on to the time to come" (page 229). What a discovery! One might have expected a due appreciation of what is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being a corner stone for God's habitation in the Spirit, though it be not literal. Yet no saint need deny or grudge the future house in the land of Israel. But will that house of visible glory be comparable to a living God's church, pillar and ground (or basis) of the truth? Truly this abuse of "the world to come" is letter, not spirit; and a like abuse pervades the volume. Christianity *is* here debased. How very largely it is "I think" and "I suppose" and "quite so" we all can see; and alas! how many are content to remain "by this wonderful system" bereft of the truth! Consider the absurdity of counting it (page 234) "a great mistake to think that Christianity is one thing, and the world to come another"!

Christianity *not* another thing from "the habitable earth to come"! One might excuse such ridiculous error in a pulpit rhapsody from a preacher to whom that earth is an unknown land, or who is a spiritual babe.

But is it honest to allege that F.E.R. can plead either excuse? He poses as the burning and shining lamp in the obsequious company of several who do not think meanly of their lesser degrees of light. Is it not a stern duty, for any loving the truth who can, to expose so shallow and self-complacent a pretension? For where is "Christianity" or "the world to come" in the admirable group of Heb. 12: 22-24? Does he identify "Zion" with the one, the heavenly with the other? If so, he only demonstrates the same darkness into which he has fallen by yielding to his own ideas. We can hardly conceive that he found either in the "myriads of angels," or in the "spirits of just men made perfect." It would be blasphemy to identify them with God or with Jesus, and folly to do so with the "church of firstborn ones" (which is neither Christianity nor the heavenly city), or with the blood of sprinkling. Christians these firstborns are without a doubt.

But Zion, though the most exalted spot of the millennial earth and the embodiment of royal grace as its principle, is a very small part of the habitable earth to come. And the city of a living God, heavenly Jerusalem (distinguished from David's city, the earthly one), is the glory above this world, for which the patriarch waited (Heb. 11: 10, 16); *not* the new Jerusalem seen by the last Seer (the symbol of the Bride the Lamb's wife herself), but the glory which is to be the seat of the elders who believed of old. Thus self-evidently this heavenly city is not Christianity, and as clearly distinguished from the assembly of those associated with Christ as first-born ones.

The order of Melchisedec does apply now, in that Christ like him is the one sole priest without predecessor or successor. But the exercise of His priesthood now is after the pattern of Aaron in the sanctuary, and His intercession is founded on sacrifice, in contrast with the blessing and refreshment of Melchisedec for the world to come. F.E.R. shows he is a bungler following the tradition of Christendom, not scripture, when he says (page 232), "It is King and Priest, Jesus crowned with glory and honour, and at the same time saluted as High Priest." Heb. 2 says not a word on His kingdom, which is not come till the seventh trumpet of the Revelation, long after the rapture, and only announced a little before His appearing. It is not "at the same time." The soi-disant teacher is a forgetful professor, and a dreamer of dreams. As almost all in fellowship used to know better, so he must have been drinking the waters of the veritable Lethe from the dark regions. A King in righteousness by and by is *not* grace reigning through righteousness as now: none but a hopeless retrogradist could say so. But it is far worse; for it indicates, as far as the truth is concerned, a wicked heart of unbelief in departing from a living God. Even he once learned better, when at school and apparently grateful for sound teaching.

Page 236 has again the ridiculous disorder of the new covenant, purgation, reconciliation, and sanctification, directly opposed to what the Epistle indicates, as a child may see. How Satan must enjoy such nonsense greedily swallowed by persons who once seemed to love the truth, and the sad sight of grave men deterred from their allegiance to the Lord in not clearing His name and word by fear of consequences! Think too of such trash as the comment (page 237) on 1 Cor. 6: 10! "F.E.R. I think every man is set apart in the mind of God before he is justified." Brethren, is not this a falsification of the text? "Washed, sanctified, justified," you used to know, is a blessed existing fact, whatever the difficulty of such as have not learnt the truth of setting apart to God before justification here.

"The old man gone in the death of Christ" is a light and unguarded speech, as if flesh or sin were not there still. "Crucified with Christ" is the truth, "that the body of sin might be annulled, that we henceforth should not serve sin." Sweeping human phrases are dangerous for souls.

It is evident that he is as wrong about sanctification as (336, 7) about the kingdom, the Covenant, reconciliation, and life eternal. Sanctification, he says, is after reconciliation. It "means that you are before God as the brethren of Christ, in association; 'in Christ,' in a word." Now this all familiar with scripture must know to be utter falsehood. For 1 Peter 1: 2 clearly teaches that sanctification of the Spirit is *unto* the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; whereas F.E.R. allows, as all must, that no one can be reconciled save through death, the death of Christ (Col. 1: 22). This fundamental setting apart is therefore in being quickened by the Spirit by the faith of Christ unto obedience and the sprinkling of His blood, whereby justification comes. It is the same error which betrayed itself in his perversion of 1 Cor. 6, where the apostle Paul joins Peter in putting "sanctified" before "justified," contrary to common evangelicalism, which sees only sanctification in the practical sense, and therefore of course after being justified. How comes to pass this incessant ignorance of, and opposition to, what every average "brother" used to know? Is it not the unmistakable work of the evil one that a leader should be thus guilty, yet without any decided or effective correction? An attempt was made by W.B. but silenced by the shuffle of "in the mind of God."

Just think that his answer (page 238) to What is the Minister of the sanctuary? should be, "Christ is Head of the body, the Church, and has the place of Minister of the sanctuary. He presents the saints to God; He takes the place of Head;" and this is interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews!

Other remarks follow which in an average saint might have seemed strong; as in 240 where F.E.R. says to W.M., "Yes, but you see we are now going in so that we may be qualified to come out. W.B. I never saw that before. F.E.R. Well, it is a very good thought"(!). Whatever may be felt at such self-applause, all sober Christians must agree that it was sad for any to remark (241), "I think that word 'will' declare it, in the second clause of John 17: 26, is what has been misleading to many of us." No, no: the misleading is from another source. The word of God here as always is quite right.

But I do call the attention of every saint to the atrocious verdict of F.E.R.: "Eternal life is realized only in the Assembly; no one touches (!) eternal life except in that connection(!)." This is an unmitigated lie of Satan. Scripture *never* speaks of it in that connection. It is strictly an individual privilege, and was as it is realised in each Christian apart from the assembly. Their corporate communion begins and goes on in the given Spirit. Such a statement betrays a soul not taught of God as to the assembly any more than individual Christianity.

What an astounding error to propound that "eternal life is realized [*not* possessed] only in the Assembly; no one touches [*not* has] eternal life now except in that connection!" Scripture on its very face *never* speaks of eternal life "in that connection." Neither did F.E.R. give one written word to warrant so bold an assumption and indeed untruth; nor did a single soul rise up even to ask for scripture. The Christian truth which is throughout denied, that the believer has it now, and that we know that we have it, and know it both objectively (John 17: 3) and subjectively (1 John 5: 13), is not in a single scripture connected with the Assembly, still less "only" there. All this is inexcusable departure from the plainest assurances of God's word. It is wanton opposition to scripture; and what must one conclude from his saying (page 242) that "the proper connection" of life eternal is with the world, the habitable earth, to come? Has he ever done more than read to talk about John's Gospel and First Epistle? Is it not there we find eternal life applying to the Christian *now*, thus only attested, and applied in the fullest and deepest way? Never is it there connected with the habitable earth to come, which is a prophetic "connection" and not "the proper one;" nor is it "in association" that we get it as a present thing, but individually by faith in the Son of God. "You are out of death" by *His* death and resurrection, as His coming will prove. As to our souls, we are risen with Him now. To say that we have this "only for the assembly," and talk of earning one's living and providing for the family now is

to talk strangely like a poor raving creature.

The reading on "Fellowship and the Lord's Supper" opens with the effort to draw the contrast between the coming together and the assembly: the former in connection with our life down here; the latter having it in association with Christ (243). There is the usual fog of thought and phrase; not mystery, for this is God's revelation, but mist wrapping things up in dark ideas. "I think the supper is introductory in the assembly; the supper rallies the saints, and they come together in assembly to eat the supper: it is what is immediately before us in coming together, but as introductory to the assembly" (244). What does this mean? The Supper "is introductory *in* the assembly," and yet "introductory *to* the assembly", both in the same sentence, and each incompatible with the other. How can the same thing be introductory "in" and "to"? The mystification is increased by the care taken to show that "fellowship may exist even if we never come together" without the least pains to explain what sort of fellowship is meant. The enemy's aim is helped on by leaving high-sounding words in entire vagueness. Truth is not stated or even sought, save that 1 Cor. 10 is referred to for "fellowship" insisted on, without any "coming together."

Now what true-hearted saint can fail to discern that this is the letter that kills, not the spirit that quickens? Here is what the apostle lays down in real and refreshing contrast with that vain and unprofitable idealising. "I speak as to intelligent ones: judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not communion of the blood of the Christ? The bread which we break, is it not communion of the body of the Christ? Because we the many are one loaf, one body, for the whole of us partake of the one loaf." In 1 Cor. 11 it is the authoritative order of the Lord's Supper, where the coming together of the saints is in season and place to eat it. There, where the object was to preserve from all taint of idolatry without, and not from internal disorder, he even begins with the cup and ends with the one loaf as symbolising the one body of Christ. Hence there was no moment then to speak of our coming together; but think of the folly of forgetting it is strictly presupposed! Yet we have as to cup and loaf the expression of our most intimate association with "Christ," more so even than in chap. 11. It is not merely fellowship with one another, but also the communion of "Christ's" body and blood.

But we come next (245) to the still more solemn and most fatal error as to 1 John 1: 1-4; for the effort is to confine the fellowship there to the apostles, depriving the saints of their best. This troubled O.O.'B. and no wonder.

No soul of the least intelligence doubts the special place of the apostles and prophets as inspired vehicles of Christianity; and here the beloved disciple treats of truth and privilege made known second to none. The apostles' function is perverted to deny the self-same fellowship to the Christian. *Those* heard, saw, contemplated, and handled; for Christ was manifested, and to many beyond them. But those had seen, and were witnessing and reporting to the saints generally, as none others could with like certainty and power, the eternal life which *was* with the Father, and was manifested to them. To what end was this testimony and report? Expressly that others, Christians, also might have communion with them. "Yea, and our communion (says John) is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ; and these things write we to you that your [or, our] joy may be filled full."

Due honour to the chosen witnesses; all praise to the Father and the Son made known in the Incarnate Word, the eternal life that was with the Father manifested. But even the witness and the report of the apostles came, that the saints everywhere should know that they share the most essential boon grace bestows, known present possession of eternal life. No otherwise can there be communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. This communion is enjoyed in having life eternal. The way is this, and there is none else. Satan never more audaciously assailed "the proper Christian

privilege." Others in general may have been feeble, doubtful, and dark; F.E.R. is his deadly instrument, ever striking at its principle.

The reason why limitation to testimony is spoken of is, because thereby life eternal as *ours now* in the Son is wholly denied. Thus and thus only had the apostles fellowship with the Father and with the Son; and they in the power of the Spirit communicated the truth of Christ to us, that we, having the same eternal life as they, should enjoy the same divine fellowship. There is many an inconsistent thing said in these readings; but the most awful feature is the consistency of the error with itself, and its power of perverting other truths to subserve and confirm the capital error. In my judgment only an evil spirit could effect such concatenation of falsehood or impose a gloss of truth so persuasively on unwary souls.

Observe how smoke from the pit darkens the truth of God: "If anyone will take the trouble to read the first four verses of John's epistle he will see that they are an introduction, in which the apostle shows their title to address us. Then it goes on to say 'this then is the message which we have heard of Him and declare unto you (248, 9).'" Such a remark proves fundamental ignorance of this scripture; for these verses, far from being a mere assertion of apostolic title, are the foundation laid for all that follows. What proof could be more complete, that the system leaves out the revealed manifestation (on which depends the gift of life eternal to the apostles, as well as to the saints for whom their testimony was written), and also that divine fellowship which is its fruit now and evermore?

"These things write we to you that your joy may be filled full" refers *not* to "the message" subsequently sent, but to His manifestation of which the opening speaks, the pillar on which depends all that grace builds up. It is utterly false that John begins with the lowest point. He could not speak, and nowhere does, of aught higher. This is spiritual blindness generated by the enemy. He begins with Him fully and intimately manifested, Who was the eternal life with the Father, but afterwards a Man as truly as the witnesses, though infinitely more. And what they had seen and heard, they report to other believers also, that they too may have that fellowship which they themselves had with the Father and His Son. And this is the truth to fill with joy, which is evaded and annulled by F.E.R. and his school. For it is plain that many besides himself are caught in the net of the fowler.

Very far is "the message" in the rest of the chapter from being that grace. It follows up the blessed beginning in 1-4; and consists of tests in varied forms of the deepest wisdom and interest, applied to false profession under the Lord's name. The pretension to life is put to the proof by God as light, in Whom is no darkness at all, by the three "if we says" (6, 8, 10). The first two verses of chapter 2 are an appendix completing all by the provision of grace for any so blessed, if there should be a sin. But the deadly lie betrays itself by denying fellowship in heaven, because of the wildly false hypothesis that fellowship is in a scene of contrariety. The wonder of Christianity is that we *have* life eternal and such blessed fellowship in a scene so evil; but to deny either, now or for heaven everlastingly, is to deny the essence of Christianity. If persons born of God can so think and talk, does it not show how far such can wander from the truth?

But this too is sad consistency with the statement in page 116, "I think eternal life refers to earth. I don't think that we should talk of eternal life in heaven." Were it one demented who blurted out such folly and falsehood, one could compassionate. But no; it is a man with his wits, energised by will to undermine the most precious privileges of Christianity under the darkening wiles of the great enemy. If eternal life be not now given to be our life, and its best fruit communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, Christianity is unknown in its positive and proper character. But if and as it is our sure and present joy, where are F.E.R. and his echoes? That both the life eternal, and the divine fellowship

thence, are our portion in God's love by faith in a scene of contrariety is most true, though denied by this dismal system; nor is there ground to doubt that they will be perfectly known and enjoyed in heaven and for ever. It is distinctly affirmed in the "eternal" life, and the fellowship results unfailingly by grace. Hence it is that here we are told of "the Father and the Son;" whereas in the rest of the chapter it is "God" as such.

Next (250, etc.) we find a quantity of truly small talk, as in the previous readings, unfounded and unedifying and indeed injurious: so we may skip these trifles now as before. But in 260 we arrive at words which manifest alienation from God's mind very plainly. "R.S.S. Does not the more blessed part of the meeting come properly after the breaking of the bread? F.E.R. The supper is introductory to the assembly; and that is the reason for finishing all that is formal at first. Passing round the bread and the cup and the box are so far formal; you cannot help this, but it is a great thing to be free of it, so that you may be prepared for the assembly in its proper character" (!). Surely no reverent believer will bear lightly such a profaning of that which is the very heart of true worship, as in the solemn calling of Christ to our remembrance. Can it be that the great thing which ordinarily follows is the speaking of one or more? And the same pair add yet more clearly to the same effect of irreverence and presumption. "R.S.S. Is the first part of the meeting what *you* do, and the last part what *the Lord* does? F.E.R. Yes. It is the cup *we* bless and the bread *we* break. The Lord never does that again. And then the presence of the Lord is realized; He has His place, and we are conscious of Him as Head." "If the Supper is over, it is over. If you get hymns and thanksgiving after, it is worship in connection with Christ as the Minister of the sanctuary. He leads the praises." "We are risen with Christ and quickened with Him, and therefore are priests."

Can words disclose more clearly men who have broken loose from God's word? This never hints at such splitting in two the gathering for the breaking of bread, that is, the Lord's Supper. Least of all, does it sanction any such slight put on the saints in sharing the bread and the wine for remembrance of Christ. There is no part, time, or act so profoundly near or deep in the meeting; and the contrast of what goes before with what follows is a myth. The Lord does not come into the midst at the Supper, nor does His word justify such words as "you cannot help" the formality of "passing round the bread and the cup and the box," and a "great thing to be free of it;" or again that "when the Supper is over," it is "worship in connection with Christ as the Minister of the sanctuary." It is letter work and theorising with little reality and not a little contempt for the Lord's Supper. And where does scripture connect the Christian priesthood with being risen and quickened with Christ? What random and sensational effort or mere dogma!

So in One Spirit and one body (263), the Lord and His death are lowered to a means: "the subject leads on to the assembly." Where is such an "idea" in scripture? In this page the error grows bolder still." F.E.R. You cannot call Him to mind as dead, but as One who is living, Who did die." This is to destroy the force of the Lord's repeated words, Do this for remembrance of Me; which is simply, expressly, and exclusively recalling Him to mind in His death, His body given, His blood shed. It is in no way looking up to Him as alive again for evermore and glorified. This is a present joy, not at all His remembrance. His headship or our risen state are not what should then occupy the heart. I remember one put out by some of these brethren for this error: now it passes as precious truth. The argument about the Duke of Wellington is beside the mark, not to say profane also. Christ's love in dying for us, for the remission of our sins, is His alone; and Him thus would He have us call to mind. His being made known to the two disciples in the breaking of bread was not His supper though not "curious" but most instructive in its way.

Farther, the contrast (268) between the Corinthian saints and the Hebrews in the Epistle is utterly

contrary to scripture and facts. They were alike short of being "perfect" or full-grown Christians; and their state distressed the apostle according to both Epistles. He speaks of falling away or reprobation, and warns solemnly of such an end. Nowhere have we the body of Christ more unfolded than in 1 Cor. 12, save on the still more elevated ground taken for the Ephesians; the practical interior of the assembly on earth is given in 1 Cor. 14. The Epistle to the Hebrews richly treats the heavenly calling, giving us the key to the Jewish shadows, and more; but it is silent on the great mystery as to Christ and as to the church.

Again, how incorrect to say that Matt. 18: 20 has to do "with prayer, not discipline!" In fact it lays down the great governing assurance of His presence in the midst of even two or three if gathered together unto His name, including both discipline (18) and prayer (19), as well as a larger range not limited to those aims. This may seem a comparatively small mistake; but does it not expose the folly of so unfit a person assuming, or accepted, to "correct" "what is defective or erroneous?" See the fond fancy of page 5.

See too how the unbelief of life eternal being now affects other truth in the gravest way (276). Eternal life, said W. M., is not introduced in Corinthians at all; to which the rejoinder is, "How could it be, for they had not got to love"? Those who could so speak evince their departure from fundamental truth. For how could any get to love, save as "an idea" without having eternal life to bear that blessed fruit of it as a reality? The only escape from the force of this (what seems to be the fact) is that these benighted and heterodox folk hold that Christ gives the believer now another life, which is not eternal life: an idea inbreathed by Satan, and absolutely incompatible with Christ's own testimony. In short it is a different Christianity, which is not another; for how can there be but one? Besides, the doubt that Corinthians, carnal and worldly as too many were, "had got to love," is an unworthy exaggeration for "he that loveth not knoweth not God;" and the apostle, in rebuking severely, was careful to qualify its application by "*some* have not knowledge of God."

One can hardly conceive a greater muddle of speculation than the theory advanced on spurious authority without a tittle of scripture for a progress from the Lord's supper to the assembly, thence for the spiritual to *touch* life eternal, and thence onward to the sanctuary. As throughout, it is confusion of things which differ, and here of the Epistles to the Corinthians and to the Hebrews (270-280). How loose too to say that "if a man is a believer, he is a Christian!" Cornelius is a sample of genuine piety by faith before Peter was sent with words whereby he and his house should be saved. So indeed it had been for Peter and the rest when they received the same gift from God. No doubt all such had been born of the Spirit; but sealing with the Holy Spirit of promise is essential to enjoy the new relationship. The error is from denying the difference of having life eternal and receiving the Spirit, an error shared with all the uninstructed in Christendom. Only in F.E.R. and his companions it is departure from all that was fully believed, and I hope is still believed by not a few who connive at this painful declension through incredulity. Faith in the gospel of salvation goes far beyond faith in Christ's person.

Then, moreover, how misleading to say "you may accept the truth of these chapters [presumably 1 Cor. 11 and 12] and never enter into the reality of the calling, that is, of the sanctuary and the service of God! In chap. 15 the apostle deposits the truth of the gospel with the Corinthians ! and in the second epistle he brings to them the new covenant and reconciliation!! So they could not as yet enter into the calling of God" (281)!!! Contrast with it what the apostle says to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1: 26-31). No doubt they were shallow; but this is a sadly common complaint. Is it necessary to refute falsehoods so palpable? Was there ever among brethren such trifling in print? and with pretension so unbounded, yet unrebuked?

The same dark departure appears throughout "Things Unseen" (283-304). Truth (well known comparatively) on Heb. 12: 18-29 is set aside, from first to last, yet with a superficial gloss suited to deceive. Speaking of Mount Zion, he says, "I don't think there is the idea of sovereignty in grace so much as in mercy." Why? Was it his pleasure and Satan's plan here to oppose one in particular to whom God's children are pre-eminently indebted? to repay his own debt by the vain contradiction that characterises much through this despicable book? He refers to Eph. 2: 4-6, to Ex. 33: 19 (where divine mercy occurs), and to the fact that the mass of the people in Indianapolis were not present. But how does all this support his correction of J.N.D.'s "defective or erroneous terms"? The truth is that "mercy" does not characterise Jehovah's choice of Zion; nor yet "grace" only, but royal grace in view of David, and of his greater Son and Lord. This makes it the most honoured seat on earth, and clothed with the principle of such special grace in contrast with Sinai or law.

Next he is equally astray as to "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12: 22), which like other untaught men he will have to be the church, with of course his correction. "I think the idea presented is [not God's revelation to Paul himself, but] according to the work of the twelve, especially according to Peter" — anything to change and differ. Now there are plain and solid and unanswerable grounds to disprove the general thought, to say nothing of the futile speciality. For first the epistle speaks fully and distinctly of this very city (as none can dispute) in Heb. 11: 10, 16, Heb. 13: 14. By a suited figure it is the designation of heavenly glory, for which the patriarchs waited. But they never awaited the church of God, Christ's body and bride, either in its present condition or in that which is to be. The mystery in all its parts was then hid in God. Secondly the context itself refutes "the idea." It is *not* the truth. "The church of the firstborns enrolled in heaven" is given as a fresh object in its due place within this group (ver. 23). It is quite distinct from the "city."

We may leave the childish talk, and turn to the object subjoined, "To an innumerable company [or myriads] of angels, [not "to"] the general assembly." Here we have baseless speculations imported from Rev. 21: 9 et seqq., which does present the bride the Lamb's wife, symbolised as the holy city, new Jerusalem: not the heavenly glory *where* she is to be, but *herself*. The only one of these vague remarks worth a notice is the strange fancy that "God's providence may in a way appear to be against His people; but angels are not the providence of God, but agents employed for His people" (288)! Is this to "correct" the belief that they were and are so used in His providence?

Then comes the notable idea that "the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven" is "another aspect," Paul's work here, as the former Peter's. O brethren, is it come to this, that even the least of you should be so readily and madly deceived? Can you have entertained for a moment this double of the church? Separated too by "myriads of angels," universal gathering as they are, and wholly distinct? Once you were not so easily taken in; but now that you have so soon forgotten the sound teaching of many departed to be with Christ, you are become the prey of folly and imposture; and silence pervades the better sort, lest the truth should lead to a universal explosion. O why do you not trust the Lord, clear His name, save your own souls from blighting errors, warn the deluded, and deal with the deceivers? If all fail to deliver others, deliver your own souls from His dishonour.

Having demonstrated the false teaching thus far, I have no wish to occupy the reader with lesser points, though it is sad to think even F.E.R. could not see an incomparably higher reference of the firstborns than to those of Israel. The truth is that it beautifully agrees with Heb. 2: 12, and means the assembly of persons thus associated individually with the Firstborn; an aggregate, not a unity, in accordance with the Epistle. Nor need we discuss the curt and unsatisfactory remarks on the other objects in this group of glory, which are far from a just explanation. All is poverty-stricken as well as untrue. And you who know it, and are one lump with all, hold your peace! Is there not even a

watchman to blow the trumpet? How different of old! What pity for mere weakness and ignorance! What hatred of presumption in divine things! What intolerance of error! Now you seem looser within your borders than the loosest you used to loathe. Beware too of hypocrisy. You still profess veneration for Mr. Darby as a great expounder of "divine teaching;" yet none but a simpleton or a knave can fail to discern that this deplorable book undermines his witness in all that is here pointed out and in much more that it would be a wearisome and needless task to expose. Are you now, through desire to hold together at all cost, imitating those with whom we have had "no communion"? *They* would be ashamed of much which here and till now passes as "great blessing" among you.

"The Kingdom as connected with the Church" (Plainfield), beginning at p. 305, betrays the usual desertion of scripture for human imagination, and is fundamentally erroneous. The truth is reversed in the remark, "if you make much of the assembly you make much of Christ." The assembly wholly depends on Him. Facts too sadly prove that the church may be cried up extravagantly and sinfully to the disparagement of Christ. She answers to the true Eve of the Last and heavenly Adam; she owes all to union with Him. It is a precious truth to know this as our portion in God's sovereign grace. But the one safeguard is to cherish that Christ is "all," *the* all: without this, that He is "in all" is often a danger. Those who ignore the assembly are quite wrong, dishonour God and His Son, overlook and misapply a large part of scripture, losing the full joy in the love of Christ of a relationship so wondrously near and glorious. But those, who teach the error that the mystery is the assembly, instead of the truth that it is CHRIST *and* the assembly, are inexcusably disloyal, ungrateful, and vain. All she is or has is from His love; and to make Christ the all is God's way to keep her from pride and shipwreck. The actual state of the church is its undeniable proof; and such will be the issue of those who make much of her to exalt Him. She thus becomes an idol. "Children, keep yourselves from idols."

In the next page we are told that "the institution of the Kingdom of necessity brings in the assembly," of course without a word of scripture. But scripture is explicit that it is false. The Kingdom, as our Lord speaks of it, is that which was prepared *from* the world's foundation (Matt. 25: 34); but those who were to compose the assembly God chose in Christ *before* it. And this is no casual feature, but an essential difference. Neither the Kingdom nor any other institution necessitates the assembly, which is a part though but a secondary part of the mystery, not told to men but hid in God, which the Kingdom was not but just the contrary. The O.T. saints as a whole anticipated the Kingdom exultingly; but not one knew the purpose of God for Christ's glory as Head over all things to the assembly. The thought is a return to the old lack of intelligence from which the truth better known was blessed to saints fallen asleep, and to some who still survive and await the coming of the Lord.

Then what can we expect from one who, being asked in p. 307 what are "the elements of the assembly," answers, "the Spirit in this chapter [1 Cor. 12] . In the next chapter it is love, which is the heart of the assembly; and in chapter 14 the important point is the mind!" Is this meant for a climax? It is an anti-climax and seems a woefully inadequate summary: and if "mind" be so important, how strange that so poor a specimen should be presented! But leaving this we have in pp. 308, 9 the strange quotation of Col. 1: 27 for "the great importance of the church." Surely any simple saint might rather have said, the all importance of "Christ in us, the hope of glory." This is not to depreciate the assembly; but it maintains the homage to Christ which is His due, and ought to be our chief joy.

Indeed throughout this page the misuse of scripture is remarkable, as generally throughout the volume. How is this? What has brought about so marked a change? What struck me near sixty years ago was the spiritual intelligence of unlettered souls in the just application of God's word. Here almost all is random and vague, if not erroneous. Think of citing 1 Cor. 12: 3 to show that the Spirit "came here to effectuate the Kingdom" ! and John 14: 17 to make one body! It is certain that the former is a

guard against evil spirits; and that John, even in treating of unity, speaks of its family character, never of the body.

Speaking of 1 Cor. 13, F.E.R. (p. 312) alludes to "those with whom we have been once in fellowship" as lacking love. But if they, as before God, reject his teaching as destructive of the truth, how could faithful men slight so great a sin? One could not expect those so accused to appreciate such fidelity. In 1889 he not only objected to apply absolutely to the believer, in his mixed condition (which of course goes on all his life), what is true of him as in Christ, but he declared this to be the key of his system. Now this really means unbelief in God's justification by grace; and no explanation can conciliate it even with the bare gospel. He denied the unity of Christ's Person, contradicting His being God and man in one Person, because his natural mind suggested that this union would necessitate two Persons. He taught in 1897 that in Christ "becoming a man, He *becomes* the Logos;" whereas one of the most momentous communications of John 1 is that He *was* eternally the Logos, and in time He *became* flesh. What can argument in defence of such blasphemy show but his preference of his own "ideas" to the revealed truth of God? What can silence at best mean, but that he prefers his own reputation, if he now knows his shameless error, to owning it and vindicating Christ's glory? He denies eternal life to the Christian now, and fellowship with the Father and the Son in heaven, to say nothing of false trash on the Kingdom, covenant, reconciliation, etc. Can he and his complaining friends have any right sense of the truth, if they look for what they call "love" but really indifference, in presence of such fundamental errors? Is it not a pernicious system and an unholy fellowship, which could tolerate such evils, or seek to explain them away?

The rest of the colloquy is so trivial or such a repetition of errors already pointed out, that we may turn to p. 321 where it is taught that "the Holy Ghost never comes where there is not light"; and Eph. 1: 13 is quoted as the basis of scripture for it. This led one to suggest that "faith is light," which was assented to. It is the old story; not a word about life, though our Lord Himself so often assures that "he that believeth hath everlasting life." Now "light" is equivocal. The apostates in Heb. 6 had been once "enlightened" and had tasted of the heavenly gift, yea had been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted the good word of God and powers of the coming age, yet fell away. They were not born of the Spirit; they had not life eternal. Anything short of this comes to nought; to warn of it is the aim of a passage so solemn. It was not Paul's function to dwell on life now, but given to John; yet he does fully show in this very connection the necessity of believing, not only in Christ's person but in His work, in order to receive the Holy Spirit. One must have heard the gospel of *salvation*. It is after this the believer is sealed. The unction follows the blood on the cleansed leper, as in the type here alluded to. But life is ignored, which precedes peace by the blood. Thus, as to the great truth of a new and eternal life now communicated, all is confusion and error. Here as ever is the evasion or denial of eternal life as a present possession by the faith of Christ, and known through the Spirit.

Again, "Peter was sent to enlighten Cornelius." Why is scripture so systematically ignored? Peter never speaks of mere enlightenment in the case, when challenged by the Christian Jews of Jerusalem; he says in Acts 11: 14, that he was to tell Cornelius "words whereby he and all his house should be saved." This goes beyond light or even life to salvation assured, and is based on Christ's death and resurrection. Cornelius was not a natural man, nor were his prayers and his alms a lifeless form but acceptable to God. He was already born anew, a dependent, God-fearing, and pious man, like Job or other O. T. saints. But he needed to hear the word of truth, the gospel of his salvation; and this went forth on the accomplishment of Christ's work. Then God's salvation came, instead of being "near to come" (Isa. 66: 1), and His righteousness was revealed, as it is now and not before. Without this, as the fruit of Christ's work, the Holy Spirit could not be given. But as Cornelius and the rest hearkened, the

heart-knowing God bore them witness; and they received the Holy Spirit as the Jewish saints did at Pentecost. The work as well as the life of Christ are the due basis for the gift of the Spirit. "They were enlightened first, and then the Holy Ghost was poured out" is superficial and unsound, leaving out the essential life in Christ, and His work received by faith.

To F. L. it was admitted that "the divine work of new birth is always there first": but it is one of the incongruities of the system to allow this, and to deny life eternal. What other life, then, is communicated when one is begotten or born of God (1 John 5: 1-4). Not but that in John 3 wisdom shone, in the language of verses 3 and 5 as compared with verse 15; but it is folly and error to deny life to one born anew, and to doubt that it is life in Christ, life eternal. Think too of one so unenlightened as to say (p. 322) that the blood of Christ is "light, because it is the blood of Christ that reveals God to you!" Where does scripture say anything of the sort? What it teaches is that "the life (not, His blood) is the light of men" (John 1). "The true light was that which, coming into the world, sheddeth light on every man;" it is Christ Incarnate. But the title to become children of God required much more, even to believe on His Name, on God's revelation of the Lord Jesus. His blood lays the basis for showing forth God's righteousness, which is quite another question.

Here too are the old vagaries about the Kingdom and the Covenant (323), and the false statement, "that John 3: 16 is not the beginning of the gospel;" though the Lord declared it to Nicodemus before His Galilean ministry commenced. It was *not* merely "in view of eternal life," but that the believer should *have it*. Eternal life will be the great blessing in the day of the Lord; but the wonder of Christ come, dead, risen, and glorified, is that the Christian has it *now*, and knows it both objectively and consciously. Its denial as a present thing is one of F.E.R.'s fatal errors, the denial so far of Christianity on the positive side.

When one not fully poisoned said (in the same page) "the blessing is heavenly," F.E.R. boldly answered, "No, I think the blessing refers to earth," qualified afterward "by the introduction of heavenly things upon earth." But what perversity! especially when 1 Cor. 12 is mixed up with it. For when the time here spoken of does come, the manifested blessing will be in the highest degree heavenly, and for others in a rich but incomplete degree on earth.

Pp. 324, 325 tell us that "Christ has not taken David's throne, but He is at the right hand of God." But this is flatly to contradict what was taught in p. 32, "Then David's throne is really the throne of God. You could not understand this well from the Old Testament, but in the New find that David's throne is God's throne." The truth is that the N.T. really refutes any such confusion, as we have seen already. So too in p. 155 it was false to say, "He has received the Kingdom," and still more to quote for it, "We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour." This is the present exaltation of our Lord in heaven; yet where does one word of scripture warrant the rash error that "He has received the Kingdom, but has not yet returned"? On the contrary Daniel predicts in his chap. 7 the uprising of the Beast and the blasphemies of the last horn which domineers it, before he tells us of dominion and power and glory and a Kingdom over all peoples, etc., given to the Son of Man. Again Rev. 11 is explicit that not till the seventh Trumpet sounded could it be said that He took His great power and reigned.

What sad ignorance, if it was not still more lamentable opposition to what has been heretofore fully believed among brethren of any intelligence! Whence comes this retrogradism? And why such unwonted toleration of folly? Here too the fundamental error reappears, "In the coming age eternal life comes in," which is thus made only dispensational. Dead silence on what Christ gave when here and still gives in richer power: eternal life *now* the believer's portion for his soul, which he falsely says "you can only touch it (!) in association with Christ; the fact is not yet brought to pass (325)." Alas! the fact

is, that F.E.R. flatly contradicts not only the apostle John but our Lord and Saviour, the Son of God, and His present known gift of life eternal, which is beyond all dispensations, and was promised before time began.

Next we have Reconciliation as connected with the church (326-345). "In many minds the idea connected with it is extremely indefinite," says he; and his "idea" follows, that "where distance was there is complacency." Is this, then, definite? Complacency really was with Christ, where no distance was. Reconciliation has quite another force. It is that change, not in God but in us, when we are brought by Christ's atoning death into God's perfect favour and settled therein.

The grace and truth came in Christ. God was in Christ, reconciling the world. Man would not be reconciled, but crucified Him; and God therein made sin Him who knew no sin, that we might become God's righteousness in Him. Thus was reconciliation made effectual for all who believe. But it is untrue that its principle (p. 330) is "No longer live I, but Christ lives in me." Life in the Son of God, as living it now by the faith of Him, is in no way "reconciliation," though both are our accompanying privileges. That it is the same in principle is truly and "extremely indefinite," and false too; and to say that "you are reconciled by being removed" is not the old truth but new barbarian theology. God reconciled us in the body of Christ's flesh through death.

It is puerile and vain exposition to say (331), "You can understand how Christ is the beginning in that connection." Not so; in Col. 1 Christ is the Beginning, First-born from out of the dead, as adding a second first-born. He was First-born of all creation; and, to be the suited head of the church, He was First-born out of the dead too (Col. 1: 15-18). Then we have the two reconciliations; not only the purposed reconciliation of the universe, but the already effected reconciliation of Christian saints (Col. 1: 20-22). The order just stated is only confusion. Here is repeated the old mistake, so profoundly wrong, of simply presenting "the world to come," the habitable earth really then, instead of (what scripture so plainly says) "all things, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens." Can there be a grosser fault in a teacher than leaving out what is there revealed and bringing in what is not? Again, is it not poor work to drag in here Aaron and his house from another part of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in order to illustrate Christ's relation to the saints in Colosse where He is set before us as Head of the body? And again, what has the ministry or minister of the sanctuary to do with the truth revealed to the saints in Colosse? It is the crudest perversion of the Lord's right paths that I ever remember to have seen; and it is habitual. There is no subjection to scripture nor guidance of the Spirit.

Then in p. 354 comes fresh speculation without scripture: "I don't think we shall address one another in heaven." What is the value of such fancies as these? Souls want the truth God has revealed. But admitting the need of viewing things in spirit as in heaven, it is remarkable that the chapter before us looks at the saints on earth, as its distinction from Eph. 1. It is not, You in Christ on high and in the glory, but "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Thus these "Notes of Readings" meddle presumptuously with what one has not seen (Col. 2: 18), and muddle what God has given for all His saints to profit by.

But we may omit such like thoughts, and come to the serious slight of God's word apparent in page 340. "Suppose I am thinking of the scripture, 'Holy and without blame before Him in love,' I cannot enter into it by accepting a statement; I can only enter into it by being it." The words of men are "statements," and if only such they are powerless. But consider what it means so to estimate the word of God, which faith appropriates. It is the more grave here, because he thinks that being reconciled, and presented "holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable" before God go together. Yet the one is God's reconciliation of us through Christ's death, and the other is our being thus holy and blameless in love. What more incongruous, what more suited both to build up presumption in the self-confident, and to

destroy the peace of the self-judging? Is it only in virtue of our new and divine nature that we could be thus spoken of, we in Christ and Christ in us? If this was intended, it should have been explained. Here all is in the air. But we who believe are to enjoy the wondrous truth God gives us of our place now in Christ, soon to share its glorious result. We are saints according to God's own nature; we are sons according to the good pleasure of His will, who reveals Himself to us as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and blessed us in Christ. His word is no barren "statement," but the means of His grace in Christ to introduce us into every blessing of faith.

With F.E.R. contrariwise it is love that appropriates the Head, instead of His love in all its unfailing fulness appropriating us (Eph. 5). What cloudland! yet no Christian would minimise our love created by love in Christ. First and last this scheme is mischievous. According to it one may have the faith of eternal life, but not the thing; one may have a "statement" of the blessed place in Christ grace gives to faith, but this does not make you to be what is said. Thus faith, like the word, is powerless, as if the Father, the Son, and the Spirit took no part. "You must be the thing itself in order to be before God according to that," whatever this ambiguous oracle may mean. It seems mere self-righteousness, like the Pharisee standing and praying thus to himself, "God, I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men." Who thinks we enter into Christian blessedness "by accepting a statement"? Who doubts of any door so good and sure as through Him Who is the way, the truth, and the life? His words are spirit and are life.

Not the unbelief and heterodoxy alone of the novel school, but its folly stands plainly in "Divine Teaching and its End" (pp. 346-356). "Risen with Christ is God's mind in regard to believers," and so I might go on. "Eternal life is the expression of His pleasure in Christ risen," etc. But how consists this with a system which wholly denies life eternal to believers as an existing fact of His grace? Risen with Christ, it is said, we are; but how could this be if believers have not even life in the Son now? Is "in God's mind" a loophole to escape the acknowledgment that it is already a real thing in the spiritual realm? If F.E.R. means so, simple souls are deceived into thinking that the error is exaggerated, and that he is really orthodox in this; if he does not mean it, it only adds error to error, as if life more abundantly could be in Him risen without life eternal being possessed in Him even before His resurrection.

But "risen with Christ" goes beyond having life eternal, as the Lord told the believer he had when He was here below. It is a fresh privilege which none could have till He was raised from the dead. For this is the way the apostle Paul was inspired to reveal it. Christ is seen as dead and raised up from out of the dead and set at God's right hand: not Christ quickening now, and raising by-and-by, true as this is; but God raising Him by His mighty power, and ourselves who believe quickened and raised together with Him by the same power. If we possess not now eternal life in Him, still less can we be said to be quickened with Him, raised up together, and made to sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. The system betrays its absurdity inherent and evident. The two truths, eternal life now given and ourselves risen with Christ, coalesce in the Christian, but are set aside by this destructive error: and "the consciousness of eternal life" (p. 347) cannot be unless you have it now. The consciousness is false unless we have it already in our souls in the most real sense.

The Epistle of John begins with eternal life in the Word of life, that we may have through the apostles' witness that fellowship with the Father and with the Son which they had. This is left out in any true force here as elsewhere. F.E.R. says it begins with "Christian fellowship," meaning the fellowship we have one with another in ver. 6. But this leaves out the foundation and fulness of grace conveyed in vers. 1-4, on which depends our true relationship to the Father and the Son. It starts with the holy tests due to God and His nature, which follow in vers. 5-10, after which comes the resource of

grace, if the enjoyment of our proper place and blessed fellowship be interrupted by sin. Hence even here the "Father" reappears (2: 1), whereas it was "God" in the interval. How shocking the blindness which wholly omits our fellowship with the Father and with His Son, reducing our privilege to "fellowship one with another"! No wonder he counts it small.

There is nothing deeper or higher in all the Epistle, instead of its beginning with an elementary stage, whence it rises all through to the climax of "He is the true God, and eternal life" in 1 John 5: 20. What wretched fallacy, real disorder, and bold untruth! For it is the same true God and eternal life at the end as the Word of life at the beginning, the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to the apostles. But therein is (what is not in any part of chap. 5 nor indeed elsewhere in the Epistle), such a fulness of love expressed as our sharing with the apostles the fellowship with the Father and with His Son. This is altogether and systematically explained away. To what spirit can we attribute this? Not surely to God's Spirit, but to "the spirit of error," of whose working the Epistle so pointedly warns us.

Undoubtedly there is immense force in the impressive close which the Spirit gives to the Epistle in 1 John 5: 18-21. But the notion of steps leading up from a lowly start to the greatest height of blessing is a complete misconception, even where the truth generally may be seen. Alas! true to the unflinching character of this book, falsehood surreptitiously takes its place; and all that the system allows is "carrying us into the scene and sphere where Christ is, who is the true God and eternal life" (p. 356). For even then it is not eternal life possessed, only looked forward to in hope. Yet the Lord had declared that He gives (not "shall give" merely) life eternal to the believer, who *has* it, distinct from but ending in the resurrection at last, not objectively only but subjectively as "our life," and hence consciously as in 1 John 5: 13. What monstrous unbelief to doubt such ample testimony!

The same insubjection to scripture is seen in "What marks the fathers" (p. 348). F.E.R. says it "is that they had judged the world system in the light of the death of Christ." No doubt they had; but this is what is rather attributed to the "young men" distinctively. Wholly different is what the apostle himself says (1 John 2: 13): "I write to you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning" — Christ as manifested here. And this is simply repeated in ver. 14; whereas he enlarges for the "babes" and the "young men." It is not that truth, but a Divine Person Incarnate showing the Father and declaring God; not here His death really, but Himself (the eternal life before time) come as Man among men, exercised and displayed in every matter small or great, in word and deed. It is *not* the world judged in His death, but Himself, the True God, yet also a living Man in all lowliness and obedience, and with all love and holiness, yet in all the inscrutability of the Son. "From the beginning" (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) is contradistinguished "from the outset" (ἄνωθεν) in Luke 1: 2, 3, and should not be confounded; but why notice such mistakes? F.E.R. has a fatality of error, and seems raised up to contradict, undermine, and destroy as far as he can, what God-taught men laboured to instil into the faithful for much more than a half-century before. "The consciousness of eternal life" (p. 350), if you have it not, is absurd and self-contradictory. The steps of progress are a fiction of his mind.

Turn we now to another chapter of blatant crudities, "Eternal Life in connection with the church" (357- 375). There is the old reiteration of the only order "morally possible" (!), the Kingdom, new covenant, reconciliation, and life eternal, all falsely said to be in Rom. 5 which speaks only of the last two, here misrepresented. For even the last is but eternal life at the end, here and throughout abused to exclude eternal life at the beginning, though it be one of the most distinctive truths and important boons of the Christian as a known present possession.

P. 359 says that "the Church brings us to the truth of eternal life." What does this mean? It is so

vague that it might bear many explanations, not one of them consonant with scripture, either in the final sense which the O. T. recognises as well as the N., or in that present sense on which Christ insists as His gift now, as He too will effect the other at His coming. In both cases it is Christ, and not the church. F.E.R. says "the church," where God's word points to Christ alone, whether at the first advent or the second. There is not an effort to cite scripture, as indeed not one word bears it out. Are not such baseless assertions from Satan? John's Gospel and First Epistle are the inspired authority for the truth of eternal life as a present gift to the believer; and neither even once speaks of "the Church."

Here at any rate the present is in view, for "quickenened with Him" is referred to; and "the whole body is, in that sense, in the life of Christ; He is the Spirit of it." How unscriptural the language! and this to avoid and deny that the believer *has* life eternal! The truth is that "quickenened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses," is another way of regarding God's work of grace: not the Son quickening dead souls by giving them life eternal on faith, but God raising Christ out of the dead, and quickening and raising those who believe *with* Him. This is an advance on John 6 which teaches life eternal given in the days of His flesh, but emphatically in His death: here it is in resurrection power with Him. The error is that this is allowed according to Col. 2 but the life is denied to be eternal life according to John 6. What other life does Christ give believers? How quickened with Him, if not life eternal? It is really saying and unsaying. He adds in the same page, "Eternal life does not take you off the earth," though admitting that "the truth in Eph. sets the saints in heaven." Did they lose life eternal when seated there? Was there ever a more absurd scheme? It is a mania of contradicting what scripture teaches, and what brethren have hitherto believed and taught without a dissentient voice. And now, -?

It is flat opposition to our Lord's plain assurance in John 5: 24, 25, John 6: 35-40, that "you cannot get to eternal life except either by resurrection or the setting aside of death [whatever this last means]. If God sets death aside, as in the millennium, then eternal life comes in." Not a word of Christ giving it to the believer when He was here (to say nothing of believers previously), though no doubt to none without His death whenever it came, as it was before God for all His own when unknown. "On the other hand, we reach eternal life by reaching resurrection." What does "reaching" eternal life signify? Not, *having it*: for this is wholly denied; and it is for those who accept the oracle to find out. It is one of the numerous ambiguities throughout these Notes; so that weak persons are deceived to think F.E.R. does not deny the present gift and possession of life eternal, and the strong who know better shut their ears and hold their tongues. Do they flatter themselves that they thereby escape responsibility? Where is their faith working by love?

Passing over questionable and false assertions of no less moment, we hear again (362), "I don't see any meaning in its [eternal life's] application to heaven." What an egregious statement to one who weighs 1 John 1 to 5: 20! We have it communicated to us here: else we do not belong to Him at all; and by the Spirit as power we enjoy. So too are we transformed by beholding God's glory in His face on high, and await His coming to have the same life completely, even for the body, when He will take us up to the Father's house. Christ is eternal life, and on receiving Him we receive eternal life, but only receive it in full when conformed to Him for glory. No doubt it is superior to death, and the believer in Christ, though dead, shall live; but so little has it "to say to death" in itself, that every one who lives and believes on Him shall never die (John 11: 25, 26). For we shall not all sleep, but we shall be all changed. So unquestionably false is every detail. When we go from this earth, eternal life cease or have no longer force (363)! If these men were Jews, one could comprehend. As to it all F.E.R. judaizes, and renounces the special Christian truth, not only of life eternal now but of its only completeness at Christ's coming for and in heavenly glory. A more shocking delusion and antagonism to plain scripture, who can find?

Leaving lesser thoughts, we take up what is said of 1 John 1: 2. Every true-hearted person accepts the simple but momentous truth that the life eternal was with the Father before it was manifested to the chosen witnesses here below. There was the source and the home proper to it; and there is that life eternal now. And if we have that life, we have it in Him above. This gave the true meaning of "the sphere." Life eternal is here said to be with the Father before the manifestation on earth. It was in its own eternal sphere. Now we have it truly, but in a wholly different sphere; but we await His coming to have it completely where He was and now is. "The world to come" will only know it in a partial and imperfect way, where righteousness reigns, and power suppresses evil; yet there evil is and will break out openly when the wicked one is let loose to call it forth. But this error-loving book lowers the being and gift of the life eternal with the Father to "a moral statement," which is false; and to "an abstract way" applicable to us ("true in Him and in us"), which is also false, for this becomes only true in us "after He rose from the dead." And again, "in the assembly you are risen with Christ": what fumbling in the dark! And when one asked "the significance of the term, you *touch* eternal life" [not the phrase of scripture where it is unknown, but a nonsensical invention], the answer of gloom came forth: — "Your soul comes into contact with what is outside of death, that is, Christ Himself and the saints looked at as risen with Him; we are called of God to priestly service and that is where I understand the soul touches the reality of eternal life. Q. Cannot we touch eternal life outside of the assembly, individually, I mean? F.E.R. I don't think so (368)!"

Can there be a more melancholy exhibition of departure from the divine faith of a Christian? F.E.R. owns some sort of a life, but not eternal life. Not only is the individual believer denied it, though our Lord affirms it of him, but "in the assembly you are risen with Christ" [a rare utterance of folly], you have *not* life eternal — not even those on whom the Lord breathed His risen life in the Spirit; you only "touch" its reality! And the reason why so little is known about eternal life is "because so little is known about the assembly"!!! Can aught be a more shameless slight on the Son of God? Is it not the voice of Babylon? And J.S.A. asked, "If he is going to die, how can he say he has actually got eternal life?" F.E.R. "It is an enigma to me" (p. 374). *Has* the enemy cheated these men, not only of divine truth, but of common sense? Did not Christ die, Who *was* and is the eternal life? Why should one's having life eternal in the soul preserve one from death of the body? So of 1 John 5: 13 F.E.R. says, "You are conscious of it — but not as a possession(!)." Can there be a stranger or falser notion? One might have a thing and not be conscious of it; but how be conscious that you have eternal life, and not possess it? It is indeed a system of delusion.

The last reading (376-396) and the last address (397- 406) call for few remarks, though full of the same or kindred errors as we have noticed. But as we have seen the utmost violence done to the truth in levelling down eternal life for the Christian to a Jewish measure, and hence denying its present reception, so here we have Abraham's blessing levelled up to the height of life eternal, as indeed it appeared earlier. Naturally the usual vagueness prevails; yet there is no thought of Abraham having life eternal: but "I think the blessing of Abraham will be eternal life . . . You get it, I think, in Psalm 133; "There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore (380)."" How simple divine revelation would be, if one could solve deep questions so easily! Because Jehovah promised, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"; and the Psalm speaks of the blessing, even life for evermore; therefore it is the same thing! Q.E.D.

Rash assertions are repeated on the scriptures, especially "It is no good sending out Bibles if there are not preachers." Is this from God's Spirit or from another? 1 John 4: 1. Again "in regard to certain things which have come out in this country as to eternal life, the difficulty was that the limit of scripture was transgressed: the moment you get beyond the limit of scripture you are a transgressor."

Pretty bold this from F.E.R. Had all brethren transgressed scripture in affirming, on the word of the Lord, that the believer *has* life eternal, till it was set right by the audacious denial that any believer possesses it now? And how are those who know he is a transgressor, as to not only this but almost every Christian truth, content to wink at the evil?

Such declension, such high-minded departure, from what once characterised, is of a piece with the denial of life eternal, not in the Jewish future form, but in its incomparably higher Christian privilege. That will be when Messiah comes to reign. This was when the Son came, all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily. No one doubts the blessing to be then, life evermore for Israel and the nations. But O what blindness to the True God and eternal life in the Person of Christ, not only when on earth, but shining out more brightly still when He died and rose! And this in *giving* eternal life to the believer now, so that he *has* it, and comes not into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Apostasy from this essential Christian truth is a horror, whatever one's pity for the blunders of a babe. Christ's words in John's Gospel are so clear that one can only impute their rejection to the deceiving power of the old serpent. What is it to give up truth and prefer darkness?

It is the distinctive character of the N.T. to reveal in Christ God come down to earth, and later Man in Him ascended up to heaven. The O.T. in its brightest aspect is predictive in type and shadow, in promise and prophecy. The N.T. starts with the Promised One come (Matt. 1.) and in Luke 4 proclaiming, Today is this scripture [Isa. 61, as far as He read] fulfilled in your ears. His death in rejection led to the Light shining brighter far in His resurrection. It was life abundantly to those who had it already, bound to tell others of life eternal. But the Holy Spirit, both in His action on believers and in oral teaching as well as the inspired writings which followed, wrought as the Spirit not merely of prophecy but of present communion, a fountain within springing up, and rivers of living water flowing out. As He sealed the Son of man, He sealed the believers; and this not merely as having life and light but in virtue of Christ's work. In Him is the Yea; wherefore through Him is the Amen for glory to God by us. But it is the unbelieving rejection of this present power and fulness of blessing in Christ, which alike denies the actual possession of life eternal and the unspeakable value of the scriptures, especially of the N.T. so called. It is accomplishment *we* have now, not merely "promise"; it is the thing promised before the world began, brought to light by the gospel and enjoyed in the power of the Spirit

This is in harmony with the slighting of the "living oracles" in p. 125. Like rationalists, J.C. said, "The word of God is in the scriptures;" like Quakers, F.E.R. evasively replies, "Christ is the word of God;" but he too can scarcely be unaware that what he added is just the unbelieving phrase of higher criticism at home and abroad: — "The scriptures are more the record of it, than the thing itself." Every word proceeds out of the mouth of God. They are spirit and life to man sin-sick and indeed dead. They feed the soul as well as quicken it by ministering Christ through the Spirit. They cleanse our feet when defiled, in answer to Christ's advocacy. They glorify our God and Father as nothing else does. Time would fail to tell the manifold blessings, which the scriptures confer, though surely not apart from Christ and the Holy Spirit. F.E.R.'s unworthy belittling them is the precise opposite of what pleases God, or what Christ exemplified.

It is nothing to the purpose that when Paul spoke to the elders in Acts 20, the New Testament was not yet written. Those whom God inspired to write it in due time communicated in the Spirit the same truth from Pentecost which was afterwards written by the same Spirit. If we have not the living apostles and prophets, faith is beyond expression grateful for the written word. This, even in a partial shape, our Lord teaches us to set before His oral testimony because of its divinely given permanence: "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" It is all the more sad that such thankless unbelief should emanate from companions of men of God conspicuous for Bible love and scriptural

intelligence and self-sacrificing devotedness beyond any of whom we read since post-apostolic times. O how fallen, fallen, such followers!

Let two remarks on the address suffice. "Those who minded earthly things" does not mean "the working of unsubdued flesh" (404), but rather of flesh religious, seeking its own things, without living association with Christ on high. Alas! it is and has been ever since the religion of the day. They are enemies, not exactly of Christ, but of His cross. It is a fair show in the flesh, not its corrupt or violent working.

Equally is 1 John 3: 2 turned upside down. "It is not that I see Him to be like Him, but I am made like Him in order that I might see Him" (405). Faithful to his mission F.E.R. seems to have no pleasure so prized, or so frequent, as contradicting scripture. The apostle says just the reverse. "We shall be like Him, *because we shall see Him as He is.*" To be made like Him first is to have no cause, or at least not the divinely assigned cause for it. What fatality and perversity of contradicting scripture!

P.S. — Great unbelief prevails generally as to life eternal. But till now I never heard of any sect save American Adventists (the most unsound and infidel of all), that anticipated F.E.R. in saying, that when Christ comes again, we shall have eternal life; "which is not possessed now at all: we have only the promise of it." See J.N.D.'s Letters, II. 469.

F. E. R. HETERODOX ON THE PERSON OF THE CHRIST.

In F.E.R.'s Notes of Readings in America little said on the Person of Christ demands animadversion. But as deep unsoundness thereon has elsewhere appeared, tainting all else as it must, a brief notice is here given.

Like B.W.N. he does not deny the true deity or the perfect humanity of Christ. But the mind of man readily overthrows the truth of His Person otherwise. So Mr. N. did by his teaching that distance in Christ's relation to God was involved in His birth of woman. Still more boldly does F.E.R. assail the common faith of God's elect. This he knows quite well; for he denies that its truth "consists in the union in Him of God and Man." I am content to denounce his own form of denial as a lie against the truth. He has trusted his mind in trying to explain the very point of the Son's inscrutability. The question is not simply of the divine and eternal personality of the Word, but of Him incarnate. The truth no less clearly revealed is that He became flesh, Christ Jesus Man henceforward, as surely as also God from everlasting to everlasting.

It is to the unity of the two natures in His Person that he objects, and in very revolting and contemptuous terms, where reverence and self-distrust were pre-eminently called for. Yet he knew that he was not only opposing but striving to put shame on the confession of every saint who has written on it, as far as is known through all the church of God, to say nothing of every teacher esteemed among Brethren. Here are his words (7 Dec. 1893):- "Where the idea of unity of a person is got from I know not. It seems to me perfect nonsense. The idea of person does not bring in the thought of either parts or unity. A person is that person in every variety of relations he may enter. No one would accuse me of dividing the person of the Queen because I said that in her home life she was seen distinct and apart from what she is as Queen. It is two totally distinct ideas coalesced in one person, but which can be separately presented and apprehended."

Now who does not know that a person among men consists of both parts and unity? There are spirit and soul and body; and yet they constitute the person. There may be temporary dissolution of the outer tie by death; there will surely be their unity in one person for eternity. But for the true believer

Christ's Person is distinguished from every other by the infinite fact of God and man united thus. These are in Him for ever indissoluble, though no saint doubts that He is Son of God and Son of man. Whatever His profound emotion in spirit, whatever the conflict when He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat became as great drops of blood, that Man was inseparably God; and as from His conception, so fully in His death and resurrection. Thus had His every word, work, thought, and suffering divine value. It is not the Son alone, but "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." The man Christ Jesus is not only the one Mediator, but the true God and eternal life; the sent Servant, and the "I AM"; Christ of the fathers as according to flesh, yet He that is over all, God blessed for evermore. Amen.

Deny the unity of His Person, of the Word become flesh; and all the truth of His life and death dissolves. His atoning work is thus utterly subverted; on which depends not only man's salvation, the reconciling of the creature, and the new heavens and earth, but the moral glory of God in view of sin, His counsels of grace as to Christ and the church, and His triumphant rest in men for all eternity. Think of the Queen or any other human being adduced to solve the great mystery of godliness! What have various relations or differing conditions to do with the divine and the human united in one sole Person, the Christ of God, the knot which man's wicked wit and will dare to judge, and essay to untie to his own destruction? Truly "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," where saints love to believe, prostrate themselves, and adore. To F.E.R. IT SEEMS PERFECT NONSENSE!

Brethren, have you ever heard of a true Christian who did not thus confess Christ? Here is one called a brother, and claiming to teach, who utters his scornful unbelief of Christ's Person in terms which must have insured his expulsion with horror from all fellowship of saints in former days. Who has a doubt that then it would have raised an impassable barrier? Only of the Lord Jesus could such a unity be predicated, for in Him alone were the two natures for ever united. F.E.R. talks of the Queen! and "two totally different *ideas* coalesced in one person!" Yes, it is not truth, but "ideas" for F.E.R. Is this to "abide in the doctrine of the Christ"?

It is to join Apollinarius of Antioch (the son). He too made the Logos simply form Christ's Person, as F.E.R. does, and was therefore justly branded as an antichrist; so Nestorius was for dividing the Person, and Eutyches for confusing it: all of them, strict Trinitarians. For if the Logos had not been united to the soul as to spirit and body in the Christ, Christ was not and is not very Man as well as very God. Without that union there must have been two distinct personalities, the divine and the human. It is the union of both in one Person which alone secures the truth according to scripture. F.E.R. with shameless self-confidence vaunts his idea, which is plain heterodoxy. He does *not* "bring the doctrine" of Christ. The Son did not change His Person, but took up manhood into unity, and this in soul as in body.

In some such way deadly false doctrine befalls such as venture to pry into what is only known to the Father and immeasurably above man's ken. The Apollinarian heterodoxy prevails largely at present; as the error which led to it is a relic of heathen philosophy, accepted by early Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, and exceedingly common among "thinkers" now as at all times. It pervades Franz Delitzsch's Psychology and its English analogue, The Tripartite Nature of Man. They (and F.E.R. follows them) make the self-conscious "I" or individuality to reside in man's spirit. But scripture abundantly proves its seat to be in the soul. The spirit is inner capacity *as to* which man is responsible to God; but the soul is that *in* which he is so; and the body is the outer vessel which displays the result, whether by grace for God's will or by self-will in Satan's service.

To the soul belongs the working of the will, and now also since the fall the instinctive knowledge

of good and evil; so that one is enticed into fleshly lusts which degrade man, as well as into reasonings of the spirit and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God. Hence we read of soul-salvation or "salvation of souls" as in 1 Peter 1: 9. Hence Ezek. 18: 4, "Behold, all souls are Mine," and the regular use of "souls" for persons in both O. & N. Testaments. For the self-conscious individual, the responsible person, is in the "I." It is the "I" in self-will without God; the "I" when converted to God, but in bondage of spirit; and the "I" when Christ's deliverance is known in peace and liberty; as for the latter we see in Rom. 7, 8. Read also Gal. 2: 20.

The error falsifies the truth in human things and yet more in divine. F.E.R. has fallen into Satan's trap in the most solemn of all truths through morbid self-confidence, and the mania of correcting every body by the standard of his fanciful ideas. He has imagined for the Christ a being, Who, if God, is certainly not complete man. For in his theory the soul does not enter Christ's personality which is exclusively the Logos. Thus he bans that unity of the two natures which every saint hitherto confesses to be in Christ's Person. He was already wrong as to man's person; for like most philosophers he follows the error of the heathen, and ignores the teaching of scripture which points to "the soul" by many plain and irrefragable proofs. But the awful weight of the falsehood lies in his audacious rising up against faith's mystery of Him Who was manifested in flesh (the body prepared for God's Son), not taken up as a mere condition but united with Himself indivisibly to all eternity for God's counsels, work, and ways. If we can rightly say condition, it is that of humanity sustained by Deity in the Person of the Christ.

Beyond doubt the union of God and man in one Person is the wondrous and unfathomable One revealed, not for our comprehension, but for unquestioning faith, love, and honour as we honour the Father. He is thus at once the weary man and the only-begotten Son that *is* (not "was" merely) in the Father's bosom; the Son of man here below that *is* in heaven, and the "I am" on earth threatened by the Jews with stoning because He told them the truth. He must have been the Logos to have been what He was here as man. His soul was united to the Logos: else the Person had been doubled or severed, and He could not be true and complete man. He cried, Let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt. There was His holy will; and it was right to lay it before His Father, but in entire submissiveness to His will and glory; of which none but a divine Person was capable. It was not therefore the Logos superseding the spirit (still less the soul), but perfectly associated with the soul in His one Person. He was true man and true God in the same indivisible Person. In Him dwelt and dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Yet it is deep pain to feel compelled to speak out plainly, on such a theme not only before others liable to stumble, but in the sense of one's own danger of offending against God's word in defence of what is dearer than life, and far beyond man's thought. Indeed some may be surprised to learn that it was most distasteful to say anything more. A warning I did give in 1890, and a brief leaflet, when the Weston-super-mare Notes disclosed the impious libel against the Lord, that, "*Becoming a man, He becomes the Logos.*" Many hoped that it might be but a slip; but if so, why was it not confessed in sackcloth and ashes? Understanding that it has been defended since, what must one fear? At any rate when the volume unasked for was sent me, not a page was read for years. At length having dipped into it, I perceived an astounding progress of unabashed evil. Even then I intended no more than a short paper on "Life Eternal," and another on its denial as a present gift. As one read on, it seemed a duty to expose unsparingly the system of error in general. This may account for a lack of due order through enlarging the original design.