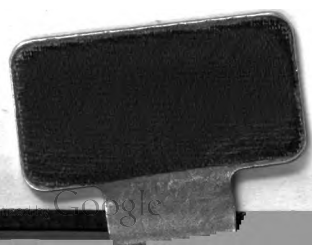

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“They zealously affect you, but not well.”

GAL. iv. 17.

REMARKS

ON A

RECENT PAMPHLET BY F. G. PATTERSON.

WITH AN APPENDIX,

Respecting the Doctrine of Christ's Risen Life.

ADDRESSED MORE ESPECIALLY TO THOSE CHRISTIANS WHO ARE OF
THE COMMUNION REPRESENTED BY MR. P.

BY

K

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PREFACE.

THEY only who have tried it know the difficulty which that Christian has to encounter who endeavours so to deal with what he thinks amiss in others as to avoid sinning against Charity while unmasking error or asserting controverted truth. I am far from assured of my own success in this attempt; but the occasion seemed to call loudly for the effort; and the wise of heart must judge what is thus offered to their notice in the sight of God. Mr. Patterson is personally unknown to me, as I am to most of those who value what he writes. My own name is withheld partly for this reason, but chiefly because its publication could add nothing to the interest of a paper which is concerned exclusively with doctrines and with facts.

October, 1870.

**"THEY ZEALOUSLY AFFECT YOU, BUT NOT
WELL," ETC.**

GAL. iv. 17.

THE reappearance of Mr. Patterson's double paper on the "One Body and one Spirit," in a "second edition, with copious notes," and its wide acceptance on the part of those who own him as a guide, make it needful that it should be carefully examined, especially as it has been offered frequently of late to other Christians as a sort of apologetic manifesto of the communion to which he belongs.¹

What Christian men write earnestly, on any scriptural topic, has always in it something of real value; and Mr. P.'s paper is by no means an exception to this rule. I willingly preface therefore my examination of it by crediting the writer with a true desire for God's glory, and accept in all thankful sincerity whatever of sound teaching his well-intended pamphlet may contain. It must, however, be regretted that he seems to write under an illusory impression that the party which he represents are the sole receivers and observers of the true doctrine of "the Church," and also that a paper which contains so many questionable statements should have been distinguished by so positive a tone.

My task is to notice first what I conceive to be erroneous in Mr. P.'s mode of elucidating this doctrine, and then to state

¹ That known popularly as the "Darbyite" or "Exclusive" party of "the Brethren."

the grave reasons which prevent not a few true disciples of the Lord from accepting the "position" which he extols so highly, and so confidently recommends.

It is clear to me that a false and misleading view is taken of an important doctrine of the faith, when, at the outset of this paper, the apostle's declaration, "There is one body and one Spirit," is pronounced to be "the most important of all truths." The apostle calls the doctrine of Christ's body "a great mystery;" but what sober Christian needs to be reminded that there is a greater mystery than this? or that to us men the *person* of the Lord, not to speak now of His ever-blessed *work*, is a more "important" truth than any other that the Spirit has revealed?²

It cannot but shake one's confidence in a doctrinal writer to meet thus early in his work such inconsiderate extravagance of language.

In the next page the same words are declared to be "the leading truth of God," which Satan above all things strives to hinder men from learning. But in 2 Cor. iv. 4 we have from Paul (whose teaching in the epistle to the Ephesians appears to have had on the mind of Mr. P. an effect not at all contemplated or desired by himself) a very different account of Satan's aim and object, as the opposer of God's "leading truth." Not doubting in the least the adversary's hatred of this branch of Christ's doctrine, and sharing to the full the sorrow of Mr. P. at his successful practisings against it, I must not the less earnestly condemn his language as both hurtful in its tendency, and inexact in terms. Satan's *chief aim* has ever been to assail the truth of God—not in any, even the most important, of its secondary points, but in its vitality and its essential glory, by making the person and work of the Son of God his object of attack. Nor is the least successful of the numerous "methods" of his evil work his habitual endeavour to engross men's minds

² 1 Tim. iii. 16.

unduly by partial and one-sided views of what is written, and make thus God's true but unwary children the unconscious betrayers often of the truth they love.

Even the moderated form in which the same declaration is repeated a little further on, where it is called "the leading truth of the interval or period in which we live," is scarcely less objectionable. The interval in which we live, and during which the Holy Ghost reveals to God's elect the things of Christ, and reproves the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, is the day of the world's mercy or "the accepted time." It is the opportunity also given to His Church to confess the world-rejected Christ as her life and head, her glory and her hope. But I find the same Paul, who teaches us so clearly the nature and calling of the Church, denouncing, in his solemn charge to Timothy, as the leading and ever-memorable truth of the dispensation, not the standing and practical obligations of the saved, but the personal grace and power of the Saviour.³

At the close also of some well-intentioned but rash and faulty teaching on the subject of the Lord's Supper, we are told that coming together to break bread as disciples only, without due regard to "the grand truth of one body by one Spirit," would be "the disowning of God's highest truth."

The capital defect, not of this paper of Mr. P.'s only, but of most of the distinctive literature of the body to which he is attached, is the dangerous habit of elevating secondary truths to an equality, or (I fear I may say truly) more than equality, with the vital doctrines of the gospel. And of this we have here a notable example: for that this is a "turning of things upside down"⁴ is evident to every unsophisticated Christian mind. By the Spirit's teaching in the Scriptures, the Lord's supper is emphatically for His "disciples;" and the highest as well as deepest truth they learn there is, that Christ gave

³ 1 Tim. i. 14, 15.

⁴ Isaiah xxix. 16.

Himself in very deed for *them*. "*My* body for *you*" brings height and depth together, in an adoring discernment on our part of the Redeemer's dying grace. God's "highest truth" is evermore *His Son*. But in lasting connexion with this paramount reality, there is revealed also to His disciples the doctrine of their oneness as Christ's mystic body. Very precious and important is this declaration also of the Spirit, and Mr. P. does well to call attention to it; but he does not well, and must therefore be withstood, when he offers to his fellow Christians as "a divine resting-place for their feet in the midst of the confusion of the great house of Christendom"—not the Lord Himself, His triumphant work of redemption and His ever-living intercession, together with the standing promise of His presence with His Name, for those who love and think upon that Name, but, "the ground of the one body of Christ by the Spirit." This, he assures us, is their alone acceptable position in the sight of God; though most Christians will, I hope, consider that the Beloved, in whom they are accepted, is a surer "ground" of confidence than any result of His travail, however precious, which the Spirit may discover to their souls. "Gathered on this ground," Mr. P. goes on to say, "they are a true though feeble expression of the one body," &c. So that, according to this teaching, God's children, when they come together to remember the dying of the Lord, are to do so "on the ground of the one body," or, "of *what we really are*," as Mr. P. emphatically puts it, instead of flowing together individually, yet in the spirit of a common faith, and common hunger and thirst after God's provided feast; remembering indeed their oneness in the Lord, but busy rather with recollections of His gracious and self-sacrificing love, than of its resulting and abiding fruits. Of this doctrine of the supper, and the strange consequences which result from it, more will be said farther on.

Returning now to the general question, the knowledge of

mysteries, we are warned by the chief apostolic expounder of them, is not the highest aim of a believer.⁵ It would indeed be both unworthy and injurious to underrate his teaching on the Church; but to give it a factitious prominency by applying to it language which belongs rightly to another and far higher object, is to lead Christian thought in an erroneous direction, by claiming for a secondary truth an interest and honour which are due solely to the Lord. God's long-hidden mystery is now revealed, and blessed are the eyes which see light in His light; but let us beware of allowing our admiration of His workmanship to intercept or interfere with our worship of Himself.

That I may not seem to misrepresent by exaggeration what I would fain treat lovingly and faithfully, as the language of a fellow-servant, I shall quote here a passage⁶ in which Mr. P. states distinctly and emphatically both the end and motive of his work. "I desire," he says, "that my brethren may simply discover *what they are*, own it, and link their souls on to it, and walk therein with those whom the Lord has called and privileged to do likewise." I would not criticise a piece of careless writing in a spirit of unkindness, but Mr. P. assumes in this paper the place of an instructed monitor of Christians. He writes throughout as one on whom knowledge had enjoined responsibility, and whom love inclines to labour for his brethren's sake. Accepting therefore his intentions, let us measure carefully his words. What, then, does he covet on behalf of those he loves so well? Briefly this: that they may find *themselves*, own *themselves*, link *themselves* on to *themselves*, and walk in *themselves*; and this in company with a certain number whom he elsewhere calls the Lord's "faithful ones,"⁷ and whom He is here affirmed to have "called and privileged to do likewise!" In other words, spiritual self-consciousness and self-assertion are broadly and impressively recommended to believers as

⁵ 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

⁶ Part i. page 7.

⁷ Part ii. p. 14.

supreme objects of attainment, and that under the especial sanction of the Lord!

Need I formally contrast these sentiments with the genuine testimony of the Holy Ghost, whose ceaseless aim it is to draw away the mind and hearts of Christ's disciples from self-contemplation under all its forms, and to engage them wholly with the Lord? I cannot but think and believe that Mr. P. will shrink from my conclusion, yet it follows naturally from his words. And these are found in a revised edition of his paper, which, strange and sad to say, is circulated largely by his company as a fresh and desirable sample of the grapes of Eschol. I cannot imagine him an *old* disciple; and my hope is, that a maturer knowledge of the truth will bring both his aspirations and his manner of expressing them more into harmony with those of the apostle, whose writings, in his misconception of them, so injuriously fascinate his mind. His present teaching stands in painful and alarming contrast with that of him whose motto was, "*Not I, but Christ.*" With Paul, to be engaged chiefly with our place and privileges is to be "reigning as kings" in spiritual childishness;⁸ while the strength of manhood is to be proved in seeking and pursuing, not our Christian selves, but *Christ*. To "link our souls on" to a "principle" is the counsel, too earnestly offered, and by many too heedlessly accepted, of Mr. P. "With purpose of heart to cleave to the *Lord*" was, and is, the standing exhortation not of Barnabas only—"a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost," and the rest of the apostles, but of all who guide men soundly in the way of truth.

Again, in terms not dissimilar to these, I find Mr. P., near the close of a section devoted mainly to the establishing of "the present actuality of Christ's body here upon earth," exclaiming, "How responsible, then, we are in observing such a truth—to cast in our purposes, our aims, our all, into it—to

⁸ 1 Cor. iv. 7, *sq.*

act upon it. Not merely to know it as some nice truth or doctrine, but as a living member of it; to walk in it, link my soul on to it, with those who are observing it in weakness; to separate myself from all that in practice disowns it; to act upon the living, abiding truth, that which occupies the mind and purpose of God; that which is *now* a 'spectacle to the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' disclosing to them 'the manifold wisdom of God.' (Eph. iii. 10.) How solemn, on the other hand, to disown it."

No doubt it is a serious thing to disown any truth of God, but still more so, I imagine, to exhort Christians in this fashion. For it is plain that to "walk in the Lord," as the apostle speaks,⁹ or "as He walked," as we are exhorted by another,¹ is not the nearest aim of Mr. P., but that, on the contrary, a doubtfully stated view of the mystery of Christ's body is the one thing to be thought of, lived for, and observed. And because the Church is now a spectacle to angels, as an exemplification of God's manifold wisdom, it should also, we are here advised, become an object of intensest admiration and all-absorbing interest to itself!

There is a fascinating power often in a well-sounding theory, however false, which may account for the extraordinary hold which this "ground of the one body" appears to have upon the minds of many Christians. It is the more important, therefore, to enquire how far the Scriptures really bear out Mr. P.'s notion of the unimpaired unity of Christ's body upon earth, and its fitness as a basis of true fellowship for His disciples.

His view, as stated by himself, is that believers are "united by the Holy Ghost to each other and to Christ," and that the body thus formed "is constituted" by the presence of the Holy Ghost. This body, he insists, "*is in the world, as is the Holy Ghost.* It is *not* in heaven. The Head is in heaven, and the members have a *heavenly position by faith*; while in *fact* they are

⁹ Col. ii. 6.

¹ John ii. 6.

in the world. This body," he continues, "has been passing along through this world; its unity as perfect as the day in which the presence of the Holy Ghost first constituted it. Nothing has ever marred its unity," &c. There is in this language at least as much error as truth. It is true that to Christians upon earth it has been said, "Ye are the body of Christ,"² but inasmuch as it is "in Christ" that the many members are "one body,"³ it is unsound to say that His body "is *not* in heaven." Christ's body is "the Church." "The whole body"⁴ is the aggregate of those who through grace believe upon His name; and of this no definite locality can as yet be predicated. It is partly on earth, and because a part may represent the whole, Christ's members may, wherever they are gathered and united in the common faith, be rightly called "His body," in the same manner as a particular Christian's body is called a temple of the Holy Ghost. That there is "one body" is a truth as distinct and positive as that there is "one Lord." Mr. P. is clearly wrong, however, when he limits this body to the saints in any generation on the earth.

But he has fallen into this error through an earlier one, his supposition, namely, that the body "is *constituted* by the presence of the Holy Ghost." This language is inaccurate, and seems to result from an original misconception of the relation of the Holy Spirit, in His operative function as the Comforter, to the Church to which He has been sent. It is most important to remember that whatever the Church (or assembly) of God is, it is effectively *by virtue of the work of Christ*. It is He who "hath made both one." The unity of which the Scriptures speak is "*in Himself*."⁵ The Holy Ghost reveals and declares that previously unimagined mystery as a part of "the whole truth" into which He was to guide the Church.⁶ He is the "unction from the Holy One" by whose revealing grace alone

² 1 Cor. xii. 27.

³ Rom. xii. 5.

⁴ Eph. iv. 16.

⁵ Eph. ii. 14, 15.

⁶ John xvi. 13.

we apprehend rightly any "thing of Christ," or call it by its proper name. But He cannot be said, with any propriety of speech, "to constitute" the body. A body may be said to be formed or constituted in two senses—first, subjectively, of its own constituent members; but in an original and absolute sense, it is formed or constituted by its maker. Now the Church, unitedly and severally, is God's workmanship. It is the purchased possession of Christ Himself, who redeemed it for Himself, and builds it for Himself on the eternal foundation of His Name. What originated in the Father's counsel was effected by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and is now attested by the Holy Ghost.

The baptism at Pentecost was Christ's appropriation of His own, according to His promise while on earth. The Holy Ghost, received from the Father, was sent forth in the fulness of His power by the Son.⁷ Of the Church and its functions the disciples had heard in part at least already from the Master,⁸ and they knew well that God's assembly meant themselves and those who should receive their testimony.⁹ The descent of the Holy Ghost, which was also the fulfilment of His words who would not leave them orphans,¹ not only empowered them to act for Him on whom they had believed, but became also in themselves the source and means of true subjective knowledge. They *were* in Christ before they *knew* they were in Christ. But now the promised day was come in which, by the revealing power of the Comforter, they were to realise the meaning of the Master's words.² But the Holy Ghost, though in another sense He is the author of each believer's being, cannot be rightly said to have constituted that of which He is the Seal and Wit-

⁷ John xiv. 16; Acts ii, 33.

⁸ Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 17. And how much more than what is here written, in His unrecorded communications with them after His resurrection, must be a matter of conjecture only.

⁹ John xvii. 20.

¹ John xiv. 18.

² John xiv. 20.

ness only. That the assembly of God's acceptable worshippers is also the mystic "body of Christ" was afterwards revealed to His apostles and prophets, as a doctrine of the common faith, by the same Spirit who is Himself also its animating and energizing power.

Mr. P.'s position is that the "body of Christ" is solely the actual number of saints on earth at any given time, so that departed ones are out of the unity of the body.³ His justification of this strange assertion is that because the Holy Ghost is on the earth and they are not, they are indeed *of* the body, but no longer in its unity! Now this is not only a groundless and erroneous distinction, but something far more serious. First, the statement is a manifest absurdity. If the body is one, no member of it can possibly be out of its unity. And when Mr. P. affirms that departed saints are no longer in the unity of Christ's body, has he well considered what he writes? Let him ask himself again, by what *kind* of life did they ever hold a place as members of that body? And does that life and what belongs to it cease with their mortal breath? God, as we know upon the highest possible authority, is the God not of the dead, but of the living;⁴ and Christ's body is God's Church. Does God then set members in that body, according to His pleasure, only to die out of it again? Mr. P. may refuse my conclusions, but they are just. He tells us distinctly that departed saints "do not now enter into account of the body as recognized of God. As those on the retired list of the army, they have passed into the reserve, or freedom from service, as it were, out of the scene now occupied by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. We read, if one member suffer, *all* the members suffer with it, &c. (1 Cor. xii. 26.) *The dead do not suffer*. The passage treats of those who are alive here in a place where they may do so."

On the page immediately preceding we have another meta-

³ Part i. 17, Note.

⁴ Luke xx. 38.

phoric passage of a similar description, which I need not quote. Such comparisons of spiritual things with natural are rarely of much profit, and ingenuity of illustration is wasted injuriously when employed to elucidate an essentially unsound position. With respect to all that Mr. P. advances on this subject, I feel justified in saying that it is true in part, but in his application of it *wholly false*. It is of course true, for example, that the Church at Corinth was, when Paul wrote to it, "the body of Christ." Christ's Church *is* His body always; and is *manifestly* such when the "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," who compose it are really walking in the Spirit and abiding in Himself. But it is utterly erroneous to say that "the whole body" of which the apostle speaks contains in its unity the believers only of this or of any other age, or that the measure of the stature of a perfect man can be attained otherwise than by the appointed growth, in its uninterrupted unity, of the entire Church of God. The unity of the body is "in Christ." Are the departed saints no longer "in Christ" because they have the better lot of being *with* Him? The exercise of gift and the activities of Christian sympathy have, doubtless, to do with those who in succession come within the sphere of both, or are, in other words, limited to the Church militant at any time. But this does not justify the monstrous conclusion of Mr. P., that they who die in the Lord die out of the unity of the body of Christ!

Such are some of the effects of wrongly limiting the "one body" of Christ to the earthly sphere of the Spirit's presence, which is erroneously said to form or constitute that body. Let us speak softly and slowly of God's mysteries, and especially of what relates to the essence of Divinity itself. But we ought to remember that Divinity is not confined to place, though a Divine person may locate Himself positively, and operate specifically within His own appointed sphere. The Son of Man ceased not to be "in heaven" when He spoke to Nicodemus

upon earth.⁵ In like manner the Holy Ghost was sent forth and is come into the world; yet the seven Spirits of God were visible before the throne to John, when rapt in vision into heaven. In his no doubt honest wish to correct, as he says, "the many vague notions" on the subject of the one body which "are in the minds of Christians," Mr. P. has offered as a substitute a notion of his own, not vague indeed, but only too positive and precise, since it is found on examination to be fundamentally unsound.

And here, in a sad though natural connexion, I must notice what strikes me as the most evil of the many unlovely features of this paper. I mean the degradation of the cross of Christ from its proper and eternal pre-eminence to the secondary place of a means merely to some higher end. I acquit Mr. P. without difficulty of any *intentional* disparagement of the cross. If he writes as he does, it is as a natural consequence of his having set out under the dangerous hallucination that the "one body" is "the highest truth of God;" but his teachings are not the less mischievous on that account. In the eyes of angels and inspired men the cross, as the eternal consummation of the love of God to man, is the most amazing and abiding of all wonders. That it "*removes the hindrance*," and is the ground or basis of the whole work," *i.e.*, of the "one body," would seem to be its especial value in the eyes of Mr. P. Paul's glory was not "the *body*," but the "*cross* of Christ." Faithfully and wonderingly unfolding as he did the hidden mystery of the Church, as he preached among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, he never thinks or speaks of it save in subordination to the mightier truth to which it owes its place. To the notion of "glorying" in the one body, or regarding it as the "rest of his soul," he would, I doubt not, have returned a prompt and emphatic "God forbid;" while of gathering or assembling he evidently knows no other "*ground*" than the

⁵ John iii. 13.

name and spiritual presence of the Lord. And in this he is in strict agreement with his fellow-witnesses.⁶ For it is to Him, whom the Spirit glorifies, that a true faith gathers; whether now in the wilderness of this world, or when it changes into vision at the wished-for revelation of its hope.⁷

The body of Christ in its entirety is purely an object of faith, to be revealed to our ripened understanding on the day which manifests *Himself*. The subjective consciousness of our high calling, as partakers of Christ and members of His mystic body, is a result of the revealing power of the Spirit, as He takes these things and shows them to our faith. That we *are* one body in Christ is a fixed and unalterable truth which

⁶ 1 Cor. i. 10; 1 Peter ii. 4, 5; 1 John v. 13.

⁷ 2 Thess. ii. 1. Would that Mr. P.'s writings only bore this evil mark. But it is a distinctive feature of this school of teaching. It could but too easily be shown (were such a task compatible with the immediate object of this paper) that a mischievous spirit of balancing antithetically the doctrines of the gospel is fast leading to a subjective transcendentalism of the most dangerous kind. For whenever truth is thus arrayed against itself, the greater has always in the result the lower place. Thus, to speak generally, what *we* are through Christ is pressed habitually to the diminishing of what *Christ* is for us; and the minds of Christians are industriously led away from Him and from that "blood of sprinkling" unto which the apostle says that as believers we "are come" (Heb. xii. 24) to seek their final and abiding peace in their own Christian state. One of the most offensive instances of this wrong division of the word of truth that I have lately seen occurs at page 7 of a tract entitled "The Salvation of God," where we may read that "the blood of Christ effaces the *sins*, but it does not meet the question of *sin* that is working in the believer after he is brought to God. What does? Do you not know that *you are dead to sin?*" Is, then, it must be asked, the blood of the Son of Man to be no longer "drink indeed" to believers after they are brought to God? The exact contradiction of this rash assertion by the Spirit in 1 John i. 7 will suggest itself to every thoughtful and unfettered mind. To expose fully the objectionable nature of such teaching would require much more than a note. I can here only warn the reader of its direct tendency to foster carnal security in Christians, and to obscure and depreciate the true doctrine of the cross.

already has received its crown in Him who sits now at the right hand of the Father. To confess it here practically, as a part of our common faith, in the fellowship of the Spirit and the comfort of love, is not only our duty as believers, but is the very condition of our social well-being, as well as the true strength of our testimony to the world.⁸ But such a glorifying of Christ in His disciples must result not from their unanimity of self-assertion as "gathered on the ground of the one body," or of "what they are," but by a common refusal to know anything among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, while searching together by the one Spirit those depths of love and wisdom which the cross declares. "To know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death," was the passionate desire of Paul. To "discover what we are and our position;" "to link our souls on to it, cast our purposes, our aims, our all, into it," &c., is published as the passionate desire of Mr. P. and those who accept and circulate his words. But what is this, if not in the strongest sense a seeking of their own?⁹ Paul "lived if his brethren stood fast *in the Lord*."¹ When he beheld their order and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ he "joyed," and exhorted them to walk on still "*in Him*."² But when he found them puffed up with high thoughts of their "position," his feeling was, as we have seen, of an altogether different kind.³

Before proceeding, I may fitly introduce here an extract from a letter addressed to me by one who, regarding with no unfriendly eye the party represented by Mr. P., had read his paper with amazement and regret. After deploring in strong but just terms the evident tendency of his teaching to assign to the cross of Christ a secondary place, and through an inadequate appreciation of His work and its effects, "to prepare the way

⁸ John xvii. 23. ⁹ Phil. ii. 21. ¹ 1 Thess. iii. 8.

² Col. ii. 5, 6.

³ *Ante* p. 10.

for intruding the subjective operation of the Holy Spirit into a sphere which Scripture does not assign to it," he proceeds:—"Where do I find Scripture speak of the Holy Ghost's 'constituting the body?' The word constitute in itself, though not scriptural, as far as I remember, would much more properly express the redeeming work of the Son, of whom it is declared, 'He hath made both one.' 'Who loved the Church and gave Himself for it.' Who gives to His sheep 'eternal life.' Who 'builds His Church,' &c. In distinction from this, the Holy Spirit's work is that of *revealing* and *manifesting*—is subjective and experimental—and being in us, and not for us, is marred by our unbelief; whereas the Lord's work, which is for us, and in which He was alone, and which was towards His Father as well as for us, is complete, infallible, unassailable. The body possesses all its security in the glorified Head; whereas upon earth, sure and precious as are the Holy Spirit's presence and Divine operations, there is through man's failure, imperfection in manifestation, and consequently in unity; leaving room for responsibility to which apostolic admonition is addressed. I believe the unity of the body is in Christ. In Him before God is the body one, and not upon earth. The Spirit's presence, where He is ungrieved, *manifests* the unity which is in Christ before God; and obedient members receive His testimony, obey His leadings, and yielding themselves to Him are enabled, according to the grace given, and according to their faith, to strive after and even witness for what it was God's purpose should be seen—local unity in subjection to the Spirit of Christ." Then, after some further remarks upon another point, he expresses his conviction that the root of Mr. P.'s erroneous teachings lies "in his misunderstanding what the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Scripture is, and in adopting and propagating an unscriptural and easily *carnalized* view of the body's unity on earth—carnalized, in this sense, that it admits of being carried out mechanically and authoritatively by man, and apart

from the workings of the Spirit which are ever gracious and Christlike.”

This witness is surely true, of which sad and sufficient proof must be presently alleged. Meanwhile I hasten to complete my cursory examination of some further doctrinal statements of Mr. P.

Rashness of assertion is not among the instruments of a wise shepherd; and it would certainly have strengthened Mr. P.'s claim to that title had he written less oracularly respecting the final destination of the Old Testament saints. To affirm that “union with Christ” was not “even contemplated” for them “in the counsels of God,” presumes a familiarity with those counsels beyond what any of us who know only here “in part” can safely claim, I think, to have.

In a less offensive tone than in the first edition I find it still broadly and antithetically taught also, that faith does *not* unite to Christ, (though it confers on them a “heavenly position,”)⁴ but that the Spirit *does*; and further, that the same Spirit “*is* the unity of the body of Christ.”⁵ Most Christians, notwithstanding the dogmatic tone of these assertions, will continue, I trust, in the assurance, hitherto common in the Church, that the faith which by the grace of God has received into their hearts His quickening word, unites them to the *Object* of their faith. The text alleged in proof that *not* faith *but* the Spirit thus unites, is entirely without value as a basis for this statement “He that *is joined* to the Lord is one Spirit.” We have here no mention of the *means* of this junction, but a declaration only of its *effect*. The apostle's words describe, as the context clearly shows (with an allusive reference to the original marriage bond), the vital union of the Saviour and the saved,⁶ and it is by faith only that we live.⁷

The effect of faith on a believer varies with the truth which

⁴ Part i. 12-13-16.

⁵ Part i. 13-15.

⁶ 1 Cor. vi. 16-17, *con.* Rom. viii. 4.

⁷ 2 Gal ii. 20.

it receives. "Union with Christ" could not result as a present effect to an Old Testament believer, because the darkness had not passed, and the true light did not shine. But it is different with us. That by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, does not justify the assertion that faith does not join to Christ. That baptism was, as we have seen, Christ's open appropriation of His own. Our having "all been made to drink into one Spirit" expresses, on the other hand, our subjective apprehension by the Spirit of the common grace wherein we stand. But it is in nowise a scriptural idea that we are joined *by* the Spirit to the Lord. Mr. P. appears to have fallen into the error of insisting exclusively on one side of a Divine truth, regardless of the fact that Scripture alters habitually its language, as its doctrinal statements are made with reference to the Giver or the receivers of the grace of God. All true Christians are, for example, "*born of the Spirit*;" but it is not less certain that they are "all the children of God *by faith* in Jesus Christ." What God gives, faith receives; itself withal being first conferred on the elect by Him.⁸

While therefore it is right to distinguish dispensations, and to draw attention to the Spirit's teaching on the mystery of Christ, it is both wrong and unsafe to persuade believers that union with Christ is not by faith, and that the Spirit, as distinct from faith, unites to Christ. The Holy Ghost is assuredly both the witness and power of this, as of all other truth; but union with Him who is our life can be known and realized by faith alone.⁹

So also with respect to the oft-repeated declaration that "the Spirit *is* the unity of the body." It is an abuse of language to speak thus. Christ's body is where His Spirit dwells, but that Spirit is neither the body nor its unity. The body, being one, is its own unity, and of this the vital essence is, as we have seen "in Christ." Of the body, it is true, the one Spirit is the energizing principle, which makes, or should make, that unity

⁸ Eph. ii. 8.

⁹ 1 John v. 13.

a manifested thing, but should not be confounded with it in our minds.

Once more reverting to the important topic which has already so long held our attention, it is perhaps allowable to speak of the formation of the one body by the Spirit, in the sense of His baptism having given to the Church its formal and distinctive character. But God's Church or assembly was and is the company of them that believe, even of them whom the Lord calls forth from darkness into light through a saving knowledge of Himself.¹ Had therefore Mr. P. confined his statement to the forming, or even constituting, of the one body by the Spirit his words, though open to criticism, would hardly have called for active opposition; but by putting this imputed action of the Spirit *absolutely*, as a thing distinct from faith, so that union with Christ is affirmed to be in no sense due to faith, he certainly misrepresents the truth.

I have already taken a passing notice of Mr. P.'s teaching on the Lord's Supper,² but a few more remarks appear necessary. The same tendency to exalt secondary above primary truths, of which examples have been given, is painfully evident also in what he has delivered on this head. The sum of the apostle's doctrine in 1 Cor. x., we are told, is that "it expresses the communion of the one body of Christ, which is here in the world;" and we are further assured that there is "immense importance in this truth." Now the apostle's words are these: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" That a common spiritual participation of the Lord's body and blood is here intended is, and I trust ever will be, the ordinary faith of Christians; but it is quite otherwise with Mr. P. Misled, as I infer, by an imperfect apprehension of what follows in verse 17, he transfers the word "body" (notwithstanding the warning to the contrary

¹ Acts xxvi. 13; 1 Peter ii. 9.

² *Ante* p. 8.

conveyed in the words "we break") from the Lord's *Person* to His *Church*. We have already heard ourselves exhorted in this paper "to link ourselves on" to ourselves. Are we likewise in addition to *break* ourselves? And is the unity of the one body after all a *broken* unity? Yet this is offered, and extensively accepted, as an "immensely important truth!" So entirely has the inferential statement of the apostle in verse 17 supplanted in the mind of Mr. P. the doctrinal appeal in verse 16, that the "bread," or "loaf," is of no other account than as "the symbol of the fellowship of the one body." But if so, Christ's mystic body is broken for itself!

"The ground of the Spirit of God in the body of Christ is the *only* one we can take," says Mr. P., "except in ignorance or disobedience to the revealed will of God." He is here rebuking, in a tone of authority which at least attests the strength of his own convictions, the very erroneous notion which, he says, many Christians entertain, that they can still "come together *as individuals merely* to break bread." "Coming together as disciples," he proceeds, "has been done in ignorance of these divine principles; and the Lord is very gracious and patient with us in our slowness to learn His mind." For ever blessed be His name! He *is* so truly. And may it be our care to avoid laying needless burdens on His grace and patience by ill-considered utterances of our own respecting His most sacred things!

If Mr. P.'s mind, while treating this subject, had been in more complete subjection to the word of God, he would have known, first, that there is no such idea expressed in the Bible as that of the "Church," or "body," gathering together on the ground of its own unity; and, secondly, that the only place in Scripture which describes a meeting for the Lord's Supper, at which Paul was present, contradicts expressly by anticipation his rash words. "The disciples," we are there told, "came together to break bread."³ Now the date of this event coincides

³ Acts xx. 7.

very nearly with that of the first epistle to the Corinthians. Was, then, the inspired writer of the Acts "in ignorance of these divine principles" when he wrote thus of the Supper of the Lord?

In sad truth, an unhealthy pre-occupation of his mind, with "the body" as a paramount object of regard, seems well-nigh to have shut out from the view of this mistaken follower of Paul what the Spirit chiefly sets before us in the Supper of the Lord. Instead of reviewing the Lord's sufferings, and engaging our souls with Him, we are impressed by this new "instructor of the foolish"⁴ with the supreme importance of remembering on such occasions what we really are "as members of the one body." And can this really be his notion of a worthy reception of the cup of the Lord and of the broken bread? Is the end of self-examination to be an inflated recollection of our spiritual selves? or should it not rather be a contrite remembrance, in the presence of these tokens of His death, of the grace of Him who gave Himself for our *sins*? The evident intention of the institution of the Supper was to provide for the frequent recalling of believers' minds to a fresh and special sense of their relation to the Saviour as the fruit of the travail of His soul, lest peradventure a familiarity with privilege should insensibly allure them from the cross, and tempt them to forget, in the assurance of their being dead and risen with the Lord, that we are sinners still, and that our life here in the flesh is *by the faith of Him*. According to the theory of Mr. P., it would seem rather to receive from us its highest honour when we are most completely wrapt in satisfied self-consciousness as saints.

I quote, as a summary of his ideas on this subject, the following short paragraph from page 21 of the first part of his paper:—"1 Cor. x. 16, 17 teaches us what they *are*; they 'are one body.' 1 Cor. xi. 23-26 tells us what they *do*; they *eat* a supper, and *show forth* the Lord's death."

⁴ Rom. ii. 20.

“What they *are*.” Truly so; but is this all? Does not the passage tell also of some solemn acts performed? And when blessing that cup together, and breaking unitedly that bread, is it still of *themselves*, and what they are, that they are thinking? Let us hope that Mr. P. speaks here rather for himself than for his friends. So also if we turn with him to the latter passage. “They *eat* a supper” truly; but *whose* supper? The Corinthians took their *own*; for they were full to overflowing of *themselves*. Paul will not admit in anywise that it is the *Lord’s*. Nor can I think that he would have bestowed much higher praise upon them if *spiritual* instead of carnal self-engrossment had been the prevailing temper of their souls.

It is “simply impossible,” our authoritative guide affirms, to come together “as individual Christians merely to break bread. If done in ignorance, well; but with the knowledge of this unity, to do so would be the *disowning* of God’s highest truth.” The “impossibility” then becomes after all a not infrequent and sometimes even pardonable matter of fact. But to ridicule false logic is no part of my desire. It would, however, greatly comfort me if Mr. P., and such as think with him on this most important subject, could open their minds to the conviction that most “individual Christians” are aware that they are also members of Christ’s body, and that it is by no means a rare thing for such as come together “as disciples,” to remember their Lord’s death, to find Him still among them by His Spirit, and that He is especially made known to them, as to those of old, “by the breaking of bread.” But their joy of discovery on such occasions is not that *they* are what they *are* (though in a full abandonment to this assurance as they behold the manner of the Father’s love), but that *He* is, and ever will be, what He once for all has proved Himself in death for them.

I have found it a truly melancholy task to follow Mr. P. through the rest of the page from whence his references to 1 Cor. have been cited, and at the close of which he discovers,

in exalted tones of self-gratulation, the true "saints' rest" in this most weary world. It is not, alas! a recognition of the Rock that is higher than we, but rather to "have my understanding opened to see what *I am* before God, a member of the body by one Spirit," &c. This is, he continues, "a reality which will keep my soul steady in the midst of every ruin. *It is the only thing that can do this.*"⁵ One knows not how to criticise such words as these.

If a rigid and minute dissection of this paper were my aim, it would be easy to give further evidence of the bold immaturity of thought and rashness of expression by which it is characterized. Regarding it, however, less as the voice of an individual than as an accepted exposition of the distinctive tenets and practice of his party, it is of more importance to pass now to a comparison of the portrait of that party offered to our view by Mr. P., with both the words of Scripture and existing facts.

The spirit which marks, in the mind of their apologist, the community of Christians who are gathered, as they say, "on the ground of the one body," and the principles of its existence, are described by Mr. P. as follows:—"Now in an evil day, when the faithful endeavour, through His grace, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, the *practice* of the fellowship and unity of the Spirit is necessarily a narrow platform, entirely apart from evil, and excluding evil from its midst, while in the breadth of its principles it contemplates *the whole Church of God,*" &c. Further on he adds: "Those gathered thus, in the fellowship and unity of the Spirit, necessarily are jealous, with godly jealousy, lest anything should be admitted, either of doctrine or practice, or witting association with such, that would put those who admitted it practically out of the fellowship of the Spirit."⁶

If self-testimony were not always open to suspicion, there

⁵ My italics.

⁶ Part ii. 8.

would certainly be something alluring in this picture. Whether its fair colours will retain their freshness in the strong light of facts, must presently appear. Let it meanwhile be noticed that according to the estimate of Mr. P. and those who think with him, to be outside the circle of these faithful ones, is to be without "the fellowship of the Spirit of God."

It is justly insisted by this writer that "the Spirit of God is the Spirit of holiness and the Spirit of truth," and that a compromise in practice of either truth or holiness must be equally a grief to Him. That Scripture condemns alike a heretic and those who favour him, is established also by a citation of 2 John 10, on which text, however, he adds the following remarkable comment:—"I would note that a person may be perfectly sound in doctrine and holy in life and practice, and yet be a partaker of the evil deeds of another who brings not the doctrine of Christ." Ordinary Christians would suppose that such participation or complicity with falsehood must derogate in *some* degree from "perfect soundness of doctrine and *holiness* of life and *practice*." But this riddle has its key.

It would require too much time and space, besides the doubtful profit of labour thus bestowed, to discuss at large the views of Mr. P. on the nature and conditions of practical Christian fellowship. I will now only remark that after insisting on "the Divine competency of the saints to carry out the discipline of the assembly, and to keep outside every thing not of the Spirit of God," he devotes himself in a very long and laboured note to the difficult task of accounting for the fact that "perfectly sound" and "holy" Christians are by "the practice of the fellowship and unity of the Spirit" excluded from the company of "the faithful." I shall make no attempt to expose in detail the fallacious special pleading of this note, but shall turn at once to facts.

Mr. P., as a voluntary apologist for his party, must be

credited with a knowledge of its history and customs. If so, he cannot be ignorant that persons have not only been refused admittance from without to what is presumptuously called by them in an exclusive sense, "the Lord's table," but have once and again been "put out" from their communion, as alleged violators of their rule of "discipline," who could not with the least regard to truth be described either as themselves not having the doctrine of Christ, or as partakers of the evil deeds of others really open to that charge.

In the note to which reference has been made, mysterious things are said as to the distinction to be observed between "cutting off assemblies," and refusing to "slip away" after those who are said to have "cut themselves off and put themselves out of the unity of the Spirit." Stress is also laid in another paragraph on the competency of "an individual Divinely gifted with wisdom" to guide the conscience of the assembly in cases requiring such guidance," &c.

The historic solution of whatever may seem enigmatical in these and similar statements in the paper of Mr. P. is to be found in the notorious fact, that the "Exclusive" or "Darbyite" party derives its popular designation from its adoption, as a rule of practical fellowship, of a resolution years ago declared by Mr. D. with immediate reference, not to the *holders* of false doctrine, but to a certain assembly of believers which at one time showed a want of due zeal and alacrity in *dealing* with false doctrine. As a consequence of this, the theory of "defilement by association" was pressed to such utterly unscriptural lengths, that the reception by any other assembly of Christians of any one connected in the remotest way with this offending body was held to disqualify such assembly, and the individual believers who composed it, for communion with Mr. D. and his associates, or, to use the language of Mr. P., was "a cutting themselves off and putting themselves out of the unity of the Spirit."

Such was, and continues still to be, the kind of "godly

jealousy" against anything like complicity with evil doctrine, which is, Mr. P. tells us, one of the distinguishing features of the "practice of the fellowship and unity of the Spirit" on the part of those who are "gathered on the ground of the one body," so far at least as the above-named case is concerned. "Bethesda" Mr. Darby still "rejects as wickedness;" and all who in the fear of God demur to this "discipline of the assembly" as unscriptural, are reproachfully declared to be "upon Bethesda's ground."

In an Appendix to Part i. of his paper Mr. P. has a just remark on the vitiating effect upon a Christian assembly of the "acceptance in their midst" of anything injuriously "touching the person or glory of Christ," or a manifestation of "indifference on such a subject." By our words we must be judged. A necessary but unwelcome duty lies immediately before me—the production, namely, of evidence which plainly convicts this "called and privileged" community of both these evil things.

It is now pretty generally known that some who once were men of note in this exclusive party have within the last few years felt compelled to separate from it, partly on a conviction of the hollowness and unscriptural character of the ecclesiastical position latterly assumed, but principally for reasons of doctrine. It is with the last of these that I have mostly now to do.

As the result of distinct charges made in print (after long and earnest, but fruitless, private expostulation) by several independent witnesses, which charges remain unrefuted to this day, the party represented by Mr. P. lies under the direct imputation of holding or "allowing in their midst" the following among other heterodox views.

1. The mortal sufferings of Christ, at the hand of God, were *in part only* atoning; indignation, wrath, and smiting unto death, having been borne by Him also upon other grounds.⁸

⁸ "Grief upon Grief. By P. F. H. "A Brief Notice," &c. By "Vigil." Houlston and Wright.

2. The "human life" which Christ "took," and "the very nature in which He was responsible and suffered for sin," were entirely abandoned at His death, and "left behind" on His resurrection from the dead.⁹

3. Atonement consists *not* in Christ's death, *but* in His sufferings before death.¹

4. In the resurrection it is "the divine life of Christ" only that is "transferred to another sphere."

That the above is far from a full enumeration of the errors charged upon this party will be evident to any one who reads with attention the publications already cited.² Nor do these citations by any means complete the list of unrefuted witnesses. My present object is not to show to what *extent* things "touching the person and glory of Christ" injuriously are to be found in the bosom of this self-commended society, but to make them rather their own judges of the "indifference on such subjects," which, coupled as it is with an unabated zeal against "Bethesda," is now making them an astonishment and warning to others of their brethren in the faith.

The manner in which these accusations have been met by the leaders who, it is to be feared, do much too positively "guide the conscience of the assembly" is various, but sadly characteristic. The *Bible Treasury* "disdains" them. The editor of the *Present Testimony* charges those who advance them with the guilt of "resisting the Holy Ghost." By Mr. Darby they are stigmatized as the contemptible work of mere ignorance and spite. But sober refutation there is none. Yet it must be allowed that, true or false, these allegations are at least not trivial. On the contrary, they are concerned with the very life-springs of the gospel. They have been gravely made, and

⁹ "Divers and Strange Doctrines Stated and Examined." By "Tertius." Houlston and Wright.

¹ "A Solemn Appeal," &c. By W. H. D. Houlston and Wright.

² See especially the summary given in Appendix i. to "Tertius."

should be gravely met. In the Appendix will be found a more recent example of the authorised teaching of this party on the Atonement, to which I would invite the reader's serious attention.

On "the faithful," individually, their effect has been usually very slight. Naturally, and I would add justly, reluctant to think evil of their guides, they have for the most part neglected and refused to read them, in this disregarding many a warning of the Spirit.³ Of those who *have* read them, few indeed have ventured to *defend* the controverted statements. They are explained away, or at least extenuated, often excused as mere inadvertencies, &c. But, sadder than all else, not a few, while candidly admitting the indefensible nature of this heterodox teaching, yet tolerate it for the sake of the "position." "Will not God come in and work deliverance, as we are on his own ground?" is substantially the question often asked by true-hearted persons, who are at once shocked and mystified by the existing state of things. Others, of bolder zeal and duller conscience, are virtually saying: "Mr. D., and others who have committed themselves to questionable statements, must bear their own burden; what we regard and live for is, the maintenance of *our true position*." In other words, the fascinating power of a false theory of Church-fellowship has in this, as in other instances, been strong enough to blind men's minds to the monstrous immorality of denouncing error under one form, and caressing, or at least deliberately tolerating, it under another.

With no wish to write either cruelly or censoriously, I must avow that I find something *supremely offensive* in this attempt of Mr. P. to commend his position and his party to the Church at large by a mixture of enticement and intimidation, while ignoring carefully these facts. Sincere but unwary Christians are enticed by the specious plausibility of a principle which, though false, as has I hope been proved sufficiently, has an air

³ Luke viii. 18; 1 Thess. v. 21; Isa. viii. 20.

and sound of genuineness which produce their natural effects. Tender consciences again are not unfrequently intimidated, when confidently told that not to belong to this sole true representative of the Church of God on earth, is to be guilty of unscriptural "independency," and to be self-excluded from "the unity of the Spirit."

It should be noticed also that the original appearance of this paper, together with another of similar tenor from a different hand, occurred just at the time when not a few Christians, both of his own party and of those outside, were awaiting hopefully from Mr. Darby a clear and satisfactory explanation of the doctrinal statements to which such grave exception had been taken. Love thinks no evil; but this procedure does seem strongly to invite the inference, that these publications are a bold effort to divert the general attention of the Church from seriously unsound teaching respecting the Person and sufferings of Christ, by attempting to engage it with plausible but utterly fallacious theories of "position" and of "ground."

Things venerable, just and pure; things lovely and of good report, with virtue and with praise, should be the meditation and incentives of God's children.⁴ May He pardon my blindness of heart if these things are manifested, while I fail to see them in the ecclesiastical pretensions or the public "practice" of this self-extolling sect! I say their *public* practice, lest it should be thought that I either disallow or undervalue the large amount of personal godliness which may be found, I am persuaded, within its limits. I delight to own it, and hope still to see it ere long rise up indignantly and break the dishonourable thralldom under which it lies.

Spiritual self-assertion, when it fills its measure, finds a natural expression in impudence of speech. And, indeed, I know not how otherwise to designate the following sentences of Mr. P., which may be read near the close of Part ii. of his paper.

⁴ Phil. iv. 8.

After delivering a very false, though doubtless well-intentioned, explanation of what is meant by endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, of which more will be said presently, and counselling his associates on their obligations with reference to this, he closes his discriminating instructions as to the treatment of those wittingly or unwittingly associated with evil in the following terms: "There is surely a wide difference between those who have been mixed up with an ecclesiastical mistake (as the established systems, &c.), and those who have been associated with *what assumes a divine position as of God, and have been false to it.*"⁵ Each has to be treated as he deserves." The persons here, in the writer's contemplation, may or may not merit this reproach. The amazing thing is, that he should be unconscious of its fatal application to himself. Yet I may be wrong in this conclusion. For it is not faithfulness to *God*, and obedience to His everlasting statutes, that is here in question, but zeal for the maintenance of an assumed "position;" and if this in the present instance be a merit, Mr. P. is, without doubt, entitled to its praise.

I do not wish to dwell longer on these things, nor to enquire how far the rapid growth of this party since their adoption of "the ground of the one body" as their basis of fellowship, is due to the union of bold self-assertion with moral compromise, which is so distressingly noticeable in its "practice." I shall try rather to impress once more on the sincere and true of heart among themselves, and on others who may haply be in danger of accepting their "position," through a sympathetic admiration of the zeal and true Christian devotedness of many of its defenders, the utterly fallacious nature of this "ground" of which they speak.

"There is one body;" which is also called in Scripture, "the Church of the living God." All who are themselves "of God" are of His Church; all who are truly Christ's are of His body.

⁵ The italics are mine.

But believers, as God's worshippers, are not gathered or assembled on the ground of what they corporately *are*, but rather on the ground of what *He* is who is the object of their worship, and in the faith of that *Name* which they confess. The collective aggregate of God's saints are (*locally*, when scripturally gathered, *universally*, always) God's assembly, His habitation and His Church; Christ's body, His epistle and His house. But they assemble severally as *disciples*. Their *ground* is the grace wherein they stand. They keep their footing on it by their faith.⁶ Sheep which hear the Shepherd's voice find one another as they follow Him; but they are not gathered on the ground of their being one flock. They become so by individually obeying the ever-blessed voice in which they trust.

Where the cross of Christ is thrown into the back-ground, as it is in this sad paper of Mr. P., it is natural that we should also find in it an inadequate estimate of faith.⁷ But I entreat my readers to remember that nothing is *real* except to faith, which lives only on its divine Object, and, in a well taught Christian, learns the mystery of the body by holding fast the *Head*. A doctrinal idea, true or false, may beget in those who entertain it an enthusiastic devotedness; but we are warned that though the compassing of sea and land proves zeal, it is no voucher for an ultimate acceptance of the zealot's work. Faith alone purifies the heart; and faith, while asserting and glorying in all that God has given, whether of position or of hope, does nothing with a primary regard to either, but makes the Lord alone the reason of its acts.

⁶ Rom. v. 1-2; 2 Cor. i. 24.

⁷ Yet faith has a positive though woefully unworthy function allotted to it in his scheme. For the approving of ourselves to God in our days, the one thing especially needful is, "faith in the unity of the Spirit,"—"in the body of Christ as existing here on the earth." True faith, however, and such as works by love, is "in God by Jesus Christ." The doctrine of the Church is a "knowledge" to be *added* to our faith. (2 Peter i. 5.)

The last and not the least important of the topics handled by Mr. P. is the question how the endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit is to be attained. His ready and concise reply to this enquiry is "*separation from evil.*" And then, as if presuming an early and complete achievement of this difficult undertaking, he proceeds: "Thus separated, I find myself in the fellowship of the Spirit of God, *associated with the Holy Ghost* here on earth." I confess myself amazed at the self-satisfied easiness of tone in which such weighty and momentous things are treated by this writer. Meanwhile it is necessary to remark that this last expression is, like so many others already noticed, unscriptural both in terms and sense. "Our fellowship," says John, "is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." The Holy Ghost is the *power* of this fellowship, for God's children are they who are led by His Spirit, and we are exhorted to walk *in* the Spirit; but not *with*. As in earlier examples Mr. P. has handled here unskilfully a very important doctrine, that, namely, of the abiding presence and sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

Without further commenting upon the very dubious nature of this presumed "*separation from evil,*"* which, however, on his own showing, must be complete as a preliminary to our meeting him "upon the ground of the one body by the Spirit," let us now ask afresh, at the oracles of God, if this be a sound conception of the apostle's meaning.

His words are these: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye

* To abhor evil, and depart from it, is in solemn truth the necessary condition of our fellowship with holiness, and the Father's chastenings are directed to that end. (Heb. xii. 5-11.) But "evil" means variance from Him who alone is good. It is, therefore, by taking heed to His ways *according to the written word*, and not according to a merely human judgment of God's thoughts, that the young man in Christ may hope to cleanse his way. (1 John ii. 14; *conf.* Psalm cxiv. 9.)

are called ; with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love ; endeavouring to keep (or observe) the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." As to our "vocation" it is "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," for whose "prize" the same apostle ran so eagerly and perseveringly.⁹ The unity or oneness of the Spirit, as a truth of God, needs little explanation. The emphasis of the apostle's language here receives elucidation from verse 18 of the previous chapter : "For by Him we both (believing Jew or Gentile) have access *by one Spirit* unto the Father." The apostle's aim is evidently to impress upon the minds of individual believers, as the multitudinous units which constitute the one body of Christ, the duty of remembering and observing practically this all-important truth. The sort of difficulties to be encountered on the part of those who act upon his words may be easily gathered from the nature of the virtues here enumerated as essential to their success. Lowliness and meekness, long-suffering and mutual forbearance, are none of them requisite for the observance of a "position" or the recognition of a "ground" on the part of those who have already contrived to "separate themselves from evil," but they have much to do with the due and happy maintenance of peace and order in the house of God.

The one Spirit is the seal of God upon each true believer, and by that Spirit were we all baptized into one body. Now that body is, both in its origin and its completeness, "Christ."¹ Originating in its living Head, it grows to its appointed measure still "in Him ;" consisting, as to its membership, of all who at any time have part in Christ by being baptized into Him.² Made sons through the grace of Him who took us from our bondage to invest us with His name and rights, the One Spirit bears us common witness of our place and acceptance in the Father's house. For Christ's mystic body is but the aggregate of those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, and

⁹ Phil. iii. 14.

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 12.

² Gal. iii. 27, 28.

whose common membership in that body results from their several reception of the Son of God by faith. Grace makes them sons of God; and in this parity of filial title and fellowship with the Sanctifier they are *one*—bound in the bundle of eternal life with Him in whom alone life naturally is. Quickened originally through the hearing of faith, and receiving from the Head grace answering to grace, they continue with the faith by which they stand, *kept* thus unto salvation by the power of God. They remain in Christ's body because they continue in the Father and His Son Jesus Christ; and thus preserved, they are the living and precious stones of that building which He calls His own.

Let God then be revered in His workmanship, and Christ honoured and acknowledged in those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren. Differences and inequalities of race and kind, of natural disposition and of spiritual attainment, must to the end exist; and it is in spite of these things that we are to endeavour to observe the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Let the mind then that was in Christ be in His people also. Remembering what unction rests on each, let them not judge one another any more, but wash each other's feet. Let them respect each other's conscience, in a common subjection to the words of God. As partners in a common infirmity as well as joint-heirs of the grace of life, let them lovingly consider one another, and bear each the other's burden, in obedience to the law of Christ.

That this was the tenor of the apostle's thoughts, when writing these much-debated words, I humbly prefer to think, rather than that the view taken by Mr. P. is sound. We are called in one body to God's peace,³ but the unity of the Spirit is disregarded, and the bond of peace endangered, whenever sectarian sentiment operates in force. Let us remember that lowliness and meekness, long-suffering and forbearance, are

³ Col. iii. 15.

things which flourish only in the presence of the Lord; and the Lord *is* present by His Spirit in the house which is His own.⁴ When this solemn but most blessed truth is forgotten or ignored, or, unmixed with faith, is confessed only in the abstract as a point of doctrine, there must follow one or other of these two results: either the disorder and false rivalry of party, or the equally false and unhallowed outward order which is compassed by the will of man. And let it never be forgotten that the *spirit* of Popery is operating wherever human influence is dominant. Let us remember also that an abstract idea, or even an inspired precept, may easily mislead a conscience that is not kept abidingly in God's own light. Love is of God, and is the only bond of perfectness. Its mistakes, if it make any, are self-corrective, since it never quits the boundaries of *truth*. Love edifies, and binds in its own pure harmony the diversities of which Christ's mystic body is composed. It does not act so unseemly as to exclude from God's assembly what God chiefly loves; nor does it think such evil of men "perfectly sound in doctrine and holy in life and practice" as to impute to them a participation in the evil deeds of heretics. It does not vaunt itself in a presumed accuracy of knowledge, nor charge reproachfully with "ignorance" those who gather "as disciples" to their Lord. Nor does it insanely claim to be under the peculiar guidance of the Holy Ghost, while altering the terms of the atonement, or dividing the person of the Lord. As a man, I would not judge my neighbour. As a Christian, I am bound to judge what, in the name of Christ, invites my attention to itself. With personal honesty and zeal I desire still to credit the leaders of this party, but of the love which is of God, I grieve to say, I fail to see in these proceedings any marks. Happily for them and me alike, there is a final and unerring Judge.

The result of a careful study of this paper of Mr. P., and of

⁴ John xvi. 18; Heb. ii. 6.

other acknowledged writings of the same school, is a clear conviction on my own part that what *truth* they hold (and they undoubtedly hold much) they have in common with a multitude of other Christians, while their distinctive theory and rule of discipline are false.

They wrong both themselves and others, not to say the truth itself, when they regard as their enemies those who differ from them in the fear of God. There is truth enough among them, if they did but honour it, to change the present boldness of their countenance,⁵ and bring them in the spirit of a joint confession to the side of those who judge them. The Lord has been, as every spiritual mind but too well knows, long and deeply wronged by the disorder of His house, and it becomes those who know a better way to take it and lament together after *Him*. That a self-constituted ecclesiastical party, by claiming to be “a competent witness to the unity of the body of Christ,” and the sole true representative of “the Church of God on earth”—the faithful and privileged company who alone are “walking in the truth and unity of the Spirit”—should draw attention to themselves at all, must cause regret in every sober mind. When, further, it is noticed that a zealous and persistent effort is made by this party to enlarge their bounds on every side, and writings are freely circulated in which unsettled Christians are entreated as their only safe refuge in a day of trial, to “link their souls on” to an unsound position, and to identify themselves with a body which sustains an assumption of scriptural Catholicity by a rule of discipline of an utterly unscriptural kind, this feeling cannot but be much increased. But when, in addition to this, it is discovered that these claimants of a higher spirituality accept as sound and admirable teaching such heterodox positions as have been enumerated in this notice,⁶ it is impossible but that they who

⁵ 1 Eccles. viii. 1.

⁶ See also the Appendix.

for Christ's sake love them in a better bond should view their course with mingled emotions of compassion and alarm.

In conclusion, I venture to address myself directly to those Christians who have accepted inconsiderately this much-vaunted "ground," and have hitherto contended for it and commended it to others as the true rest of their souls. Is it safe, think you, for yourselves or them, or is it for the Master's glory, to be commending thus yourselves? Even if the doctrinal basis of your "position" were as unimpeachably scriptural and sound, as it has been shown to be fallacious and unscriptural, this preaching of yourselves could never be according to the mind of Christ. What position have you *truly* that is not common to the faith of God's elect? What you and they have, by the grace of God, is solely and equally "in Christ." The exceptional "ground" to which your feet have been allured, and which proclaims so loudly its stability, proves on a nearer view to be no true thing of God at all, but merely a delusive sound. The factitious bond of "discipline" which holds together your assemblies has nothing in common with any known ordinance of God. As I think of your condition my heart turns involuntarily to the apostle's words in 2 Cor. xi., for in truth you have suffered damage at your leaders' hands. Do not mistake me. I judge their writings and their actions, not themselves. I do not think of them as intentionally evil or deceitful workers, but, themselves misguided, they have led you far astray. Besides their much unsoundness as expounders of God's word, of which too many examples have already been adduced, they have, by misleading your conscience, and giving a wrong direction to your zeal, gone far to spoil you of your fairest ornaments of grace. At their bidding you are already putting bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. In obedience to a merely human rule you have shut out, by your own admission, both soundness of doctrine and holiness of walk, while you keep within and

⁷ 2 Cor. x. 18.

honour in the highest place men openly arraigned as teachers of error against the Lord. When I read the self-flattering language of your teachers, and turn thence to look upon your vineyard and its fruits, my heart too surely tells me that "this persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you." It is dangerous always to exalt ourselves, and certainly unwise to claim chief and exclusive places for ourselves at God's great feast of charity.⁸ Remember, my brethren, I beseech you, the stoutness of your words, and that while you speak of your "weakness" you put forward in the same breath assumptions of the loftiest kind. It is boldly intimated, not in this paper of Mr. P. only, but in many others also, that if Christians desire to honour God truly in His ways, they must begin by accrediting yourselves and your "position." But this is difficult to those who desire to eschew evil, and to follow only what is good. In whatever of either faith or love they see among you they rejoice, and would be swift to "the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus."⁹ But your ecclesiastical pretensions they esteem not good, but bad; and the "ground" or "position" where you find your strength they think both bad and false, and dangerous exceedingly. For it does not seem to them the Living Rock, but rather an imagination of your own. Need I say, too, that if our aim is to redress the dilapidations of the Church which is God's house, all spiritual filthiness must first be carried forth out of the holy place?¹ Truth is never more dishonoured than when it is made a shibboleth of party; and this is what your accepted interpreter has been virtually doing with the texts which he has undertaken to enforce. With a defective apprehension of their meaning, he would flatter both himself and you in the persuasion that they are peculiarly your own, putting thus the darkness of spiritual self-complacency before our eyes instead

⁸ Luke xiv. 7. ⁹ Phil. i. 6.

¹ 2 Chron. xxix. 5; 2 Cor. vii. 1.

of the light and beauty of the Lord. God blesses poverty of spirit, but abases pride; and I would end by entreating you to ask yourselves how much of either humility or truth belongs to your publicly asserted claim to have exclusively among yourselves the real "table of the Lord," and that to you only it is given, out of the whole number of His chosen, to acknowledge and possess "the fellowship of the Spirit of God."

I append to my own remarks a few quotations from the apostle on whom Mr. P. seems desirous of casting more especially the responsibility of his opinions, and which seem apposite to the existing situation:—

"What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?" (1 Cor. xiv. 36.)

"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." (2 Cor. x. 12.)

"Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's." (2 Cor. x. 7.)

"Let us not judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." (Rom. xiv. 13.)

"Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates." (2 Cor. xiii. 7.)

Mr. P. has chosen as his motto 2 Cor. xiii. 8, which in his not very reverential way of handling Scripture he pronounces to be "a fine saying of Paul." It is at least a *true* saying of the Spirit, and full of comforting as well as warning force in its bearing on these heart-afflicting things.

APPENDIX.

THE foregoing remarks were already in the printer's hands when my attention was drawn to a paper on the Atonement in the "Present Testimony" for December, 1869, a perusal of which convinced me that some further warning was due to the many Christians who habitually read the publications of this body, on their peculiar doctrine of the Lord's "risen life."

It is loudly and constantly affirmed by many of their leading teachers, that the "risen life" of Christ is something both *distinct* and *different* from the life which He laid down when He died to make atonement for His people. Nothing would be easier than to multiply examples of this, but it is enough that I here review briefly the statements of the latest formal exponent of these views.¹

His paper, like that of Mr. Patterson, is written with the desire of rectifying popular fallacies among Christians. "The error abroad," says Mr. S., "is that the atonement is not seen as setting aside the being under judgment, and consequently there is a sense of needing something expiatory still," &c. But the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews finds quite a different provision for this sense of need. A purged or perfect conscience in the worshipper is, he argues, the effect of a sufficient *sacrifice*, and purging a worshipper sacrificially is not the same thing as setting him aside. The position of Mr. S., as stated in his own words, is that "if the atonement be a perfect one it supersedes,

¹ The article here noticed bears the initial signature of J. B. S.

in the eye of God, the being needing it;" which, if it mean any thing, can only mean that the being who *benefits* by the atonement is a different one from him on whose behalf the sacrifice was offered. But the "being" for whose sake and in whose likeness Jesus died is *man*, and man is certainly not "superseded" or "set aside," because he is redeemed and cleansed. The pardoned sinner is not set aside, but lives to delight for ever in the grace that saves him.

It is needless to waste words on these precise but ill-considered statements, and indeed it may be inferred from the context, by a favourable critic, that "being" carries in this writer's mind the sense only of "state of being," or old and corrupt nature. It would be ungenerous therefore to dwell on such mere verbal slips, if the rest of the paper did not afford the clearest proof that a rudimentally unsound conception of the doctrine of our Lord's death and resurrection has possession of this writer's mind.

His theory of atonement, stated briefly is, that the substitute gives up *finally* His own "unforfeited life for the forfeited one which exposed man to eternal judgment." Thus, what was "unforfeited" on His own account becomes sacrificially "forfeited," by being surrendered without recovery as the price of our redemption.

Before comparing this theory with the true doctrine of the Gospel, it is right to trace its gradual development and varied forms of enunciation, as presented to us in the paper now under review. First, then, on its fifth page we are told that "Christ having so perfectly answered every demand of God, and having borne the judgment on man, pours out His life at the bottom of the altar, and from thence is quickened by the Spirit to establish man in His own life for ever." An uninitiated reader may fail to perceive the distinction of "His life" from "His *own* life," but this difficulty vanishes as we proceed. In the following page atonement is said to be "effected by the substi-

tute taking the man's place and being exposed to his judgment, bearing the whole weight of it, in man's nature; and then, giving up the life, in substitution, for the forfeited life," &c. This passage, if it stood alone, might bear an unexceptionable sense, but a bad meaning is reflected on it from the neighbouring page, where we read: "Having been put in the sinner's place, treated as the sinner in suffering, He resigns that life by which He was able to connect Himself with man's state of suffering. He shed His blood, and then closed for ever the history of man for whom He had atoned."

I confess an unfeigned amazement at this passage. First, the Lord is here made to "resign," or abandon definitively, His human life; and secondly, by dying not only to sever His connection with man's state of suffering, but also to close for ever the history of God's redeemed! Has then man, when atoned for, no further history? And is He of whom the Spirit testifies as our faithful and merciful High Priest no longer "able to connect Himself with man's state of suffering?" These were indeed, if true, but heavy tidings for the poor and afflicted people whom God calls His flock, as they fulfil their pilgrimage, and fight against appalling enemies their fight of faith. But I hope it is not needful to assure my readers of the utter falsity of these assertions. The Lord did not "resign" the life which He laid down, as shall presently be shewn at large; nor did He close, but rather continue on a new and brighter page, "the history of man for whom He had atoned."

I shall pass lightly over the next three pages, since they relate less closely to the subject of this Appendix. Yet I think it necessary to warn both Mr. S. and his readers against the use of equivocal language when handling the weightier and fundamental doctrines of the faith. Thus when he says, with reference to the Levitical sacrifices, "I understand the laying on of hands to imply the attributing of man's state to the substitute." This teaching, if the word "state" is to have its

ordinary meaning, is unsound, because at variance with the main principle of sacrificial substitution. "Man's state" is that of a sinner with an evil conscience. The *cause* is sin; his state is the *effect* of sin.

The people's *sins* were laid upon the blameless Victim, their *state* was changed by the removal of their sins. Levitically, this was temporal only, and inefficacious; a purged conscience is the blessed and lasting effect of the transfer of our sins to Christ. But His *state* was that of one who "knew no sin" while He bore, as His intolerable burden, the weight and imputation of our guilt. The absolute personal distinctness of the Victim from that which is judicially imposed on it is the prime and essential element of sacrificial substitution or atonement.

I decline therefore to comment strictly on Mr. S.'s application of his doctrine to our Lord, since I cannot suppose him to mean really what might be conveyed by the following words: "Thus Christ was placed under all the weight of man's state before He died." He must intend saying not our "state," but what produced our state—the burden of our guilt.

Another example of the same looseness of speech occurs presently after, when on the same page it is affirmed that the death of Christ "ended before God that order of being which had sinned;" which means, in its natural sense, that it brought to an end humanity itself. What he wishes to convey is, I suppose, that the old or Adamic nature is judicially annulled by the expiatory dying of the woman's Seed. When, referring to 1 Pet. iii. 18, he adds, "He was justified in the Spirit, *and not in the flesh*," he goes much beyond his inspired authority.² He was "put to death in the flesh," the apostle says, for thus only could He die. He was "justified in the Spirit" when He took His life again. Flesh dies, but spirit lives; and He who is both by name and nature the quickening Spirit could not possibly be holden by the cords of death, but took back at the

² My italics.

appointed moment the spirit which He had commended into the Father's hands. And had the flesh of Him who in "the days of His flesh" declared *Himself* to be the resurrection and the life no part in this justification unto life? To what end does Mr. S. thus express himself? He says the Lord resigned His human life. Does then His flesh go with this life? And was the hope in which it rested a fallacious hope?³ But I proceed.

Having poured out and given up this life, the Lord, we are told, by thus dying, "surrenders an existence which righteously He had held and lived in, and on which there was no claim, as substitution for that which had been forfeited by man." Did the dying Surety cease then to exist? But not to press this extreme though fair conclusion, the "man's life," as Mr. S. calls it, the "perfect life" which he so justly extols, instead of being, as most Christians think, and Scripture plainly teaches, an integral part of the great mystery of godliness—the Word made flesh—turns out to be a mere adventitious "existence," which might be entered, lived in, and abandoned, without altering or disturbing in any way the truth of the Lord's person; so that with or without "man's life" the man Christ Jesus yet abides the same! Was there ever such a mingling of the wine of God's living truth with the watery inanity of human speculation?⁴ But I must pass on. "In His resurrection," Mr. S. assures us, "He is the quickening Spirit. He can impart life, His life, to those whose death He has borne," &c. But how shallow and derogatory is this teaching! What Scripture predicates of Christ *personally*⁵ is here limited to Christ in a certain

³ It is truly afflicting to have to entertain the remotest suspicion even of heretical pravity in those whom one loves and desires to honour in the Lord. How gladly would I believe that whatever in their controverted writings is verbally wrong, and susceptible of evil interpretation, is an error of word only, not of thought. If this be so, these writers surely have a duty to discharge, both easy and imperative, towards their brethren in the faith.

⁴ Isa. i. 22.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 45.

status or condition. "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will," are the words of Jesus on His way to death. And could He impart no life to those whom the Father drew to Him while in the days of His flesh? To quote passages is needless. The Gospel by St. John is a continuous rebuke of such a thought. That the "despised and rejected of men" was "declared (or determined) to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," is a testimony dear to every believer. But is God's living Truth truth only when vindicated by His hand?

To return. "The atonement," says Mr. S., "required a life not liable to death, and this being delivered up, His life, *as the Son of God,*⁶ asserts its place," &c. But ordinary Christians will enquire, Was it not, then, "as the Son of God" that Jesus died? Most of us have hitherto drawn our best comfort from the Spirit's assurance, that when God sought an intercessor and a ransom, He both found and did not spare His very Son. Again, I say, quotations from Scripture are superfluous in proof of this, which is the very marrow and fatness of the children's food. It must also be asked further, What, on this showing, has become of His life as the "Son of man"? But this unhallowed dividing of Christ's person, and casting an essential part of it finally away, attains its full and undisguised expression at the close of the same paragraph in the following terms: "The glory of the Father requires, I repeat, that such an one should be in life again as a man, *though not in the life which He had poured out;*⁷ but should, without seeing corruption, be raised up in the eternity of His own life." Lastly, on the next and closing page of this strange paper, after repeating that "He has given up His perfect unforfeited life for our sinful forfeited one," he adds, "But He is raised from being the dead man into a living man by the Spirit of God, in the

⁶ My italics.

⁷ My italics.

power of an endless life, and the man is on the highest ground, and in the highest connexion, glorified *now*⁸ in the Son who has done all the Father's will and finished His work."

Of these two quotations I shall notice the last first. That Christ was "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father," is one aspect of the doctrine of His resurrection as stated in the Scriptures. Another and higher one is presented to us in such words as these: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." To say that "He is raised from being the dead man into a living man by the Spirit of God," is so to attenuate the truth as to make the resurrection of the Firstborn no greater or different an event than the quickening of any of His saints.⁹ And when it is said that "the man" is now glorified in the Son, &c., one is reminded of that other "now" which Jesus spake when Judas left the eleven with their Master on the night of His betrayal.¹ For the man whom God approved, and whom He has since openly glorified, was Himself the Lord of glory, then and always; and never did His personal glory shine more brightly than when in act He gave Himself a ransom for us all.² The glory of a giver must be measured by his gift; and what can be ever likened to the giving of Himself? This habit of looking at one side only, and that the lower one, of the mystery of the gospel leads inevitably to a weakening of our apprehension of His personal excellence and grace, who, "when He had purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."³ But it is time to deal now with the previous declaration of Mr. S. that our Lord, though "in life again as a man," is not so "in the life which He had poured out;" with some further notice also of his earlier assertion, that He was justified in the Spirit, *and not in the flesh.*"⁴

Now the life which Christ poured out was His *soul*,⁵ which

⁸ My italics.

⁹ Rom. viii. 11.

¹ John xiii. 31.

² 2 Tim. ii. 6.

³ Heb. i. 3.

⁴ My italics.

⁵ ψυχή. "Life" in the sense of "time," or "state," or "manner," or

travailed for the redemption of His people; a soul which was not to be left in hades, while of his flesh it is written that it was to rest in *hope*. Need I remind the reader of the Lord's emphatic words in John x. 17, 18? But this writer's teaching is utterly irreconcilable with those words. The Lord sets forth His great and ever-blessed work of atonement under many forms of speech. As one who felt to the full the magnitude and paramount importance of the task which He had undertaken to perform, He speaks, in His contemplation of it, not only of *Himself*, but separately of His *flesh*, of His *life*, and of His *soul*, His *body*, and His *blood*. He gives His flesh for the life of the world; He gives His life a ransom for many; His soul is exceeding sorrowful as it meditates the hour of its being poured forth unto death. His body is broken for His people, and His blood shed for many for the remission of sins. The sum of it all is, that He gave *Himself* for our sins according to the Father's will. By means of death the Captain of our salvation destroyed him that had the power of death. The victory was gained by His submission to God's righteous judgment against sin. The proof of its completeness is His resumption of the life which He laid down. He recovers it in righteousness after giving it for sin; for though devoted to the payment of the sinner's ransom, it was not *due* to sin, and could not, therefore, be the lasting spoil of death. When He pleaded for His soul,⁶

"course" of life, is expressed, as these writers know, by *βίος*—a word never used with reference to our Lord. Further, as if to rebuke by anticipation the rashness of the originator of this doctrine (Mr. J. N. Darby), who says that "in the true essential life of Christ He never laid down any life at all," thus making His humanity die only, not *Himself*, we find the Holy Ghost in Acts viii. 33 declaring, in His quotation from Isaiah, that His *ζωή* was taken from the earth. God's mystery is *great*, and we are truly little in His presence. When we cease to be so in our own eyes and attempt to fathom Him, we only make our folly and our shame appear.

⁶ Psalm xxii.; Heb. v. 7.

which had so different a value in His own eyes than it would seem to have in theirs who make it but a perishable thing, He was heard. It was to keep it for ever that He lost it for a season at the bidding of the Father. The soul which had travailed, and was poured out unto death, now rests in the delighted consciousness that its labour has not been in vain. The flesh in which Christ suffered is the visible and tangible witness also of His resurrection from the dead. The body, once prepared for death, is the same that is entered into glory. His blood has been shed, and our redemption is its price. But we may not apply to the Son of God in His humiliation words which define the value or estate of mortal man or beast. Of such it is written that the blood is the life. Of Christ this is true, but less than the whole truth. "Because the children are partakers of flesh and blood, *He* also *Himself* likewise took part of the same," &c. Now "flesh and blood" is God's description of His mortal creature. Christ suffered in the flesh, and shed His blood for the remission of our sins. Truly His life was in His blood; for it is the blood of the Living and the Just One. But His blood and His life are not commensurate things. The Lord speaks not of recovering His blood once shed, but does speak of taking again the life which He laid down. The blood was truly human, and atones for human guilt; but the life is *Christ's*. While, therefore, the shedding of His blood was the sacrificial condition of atonement, and what is paid thus at God's altar is the accepted price of our souls, to be held and kept for ever in the memory of Him who judges righteously, the Victim's LIFE returns to Him who gave it, and who carries in His flesh for ever the tokens of His mortal strife.⁷

In two distinct but equally impressive forms this mystery, which cannot be measured by our intellect, presents itself to our *faith*. The Lord eats and drinks with His disciples, after

⁷ Luke xxiv. 39, 40.

His resurrection, upon earth.⁸ It was not an *altered* Lord whose presence turned the sorrow of His chosen into joy.⁹ So too in heaven, when John's eyes are opened to discern the Lord, he sees Him in the likeness of a slaughtered Lamb. The Lamb's blood had been shed—its life had been poured out; but the *Lamb* is alive again and lives on still to lead His ransomed to the fountains of eternal rest. Precious and affecting figure of Him who by the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, not by so doing to cease from what He was and change "His order of being," as Mr. S. speaks, but to win for those, whom loving once He loves for ever, an endless participation of His joys.

Jehovah's arm is neither shrunken nor enfeebled by the effort which it made. Plucked forth from His bosom, and made bare before the nations, for the showing of His righteousness and the making known of His salvation, it has returned in its native vigour to its rest. He that liveth and was dead is now alive again—the same to-day as yesterday, in life or death, and so on from His incarnation to eternity. But all this is spoiled and nullified if the teachings of this party are allowed. The victory, if such it can be called, is purchased by a lasting *loss*. The so-called "unforfeited life" is forfeit after all, and paid away as if it were sin's due. What once was Christ's—Christ's "human life," is His no longer. He has given it up, resigned it,—it is *gone*, as a thing not reclaimable when once laid down. But is this Christian doctrine? Others must judge. I am far from charging the author of this paper with a witting disregard of what is written, but his words, taken in their natural sense, appear to me a high offence against the personal majesty of Christ, and fraught with danger to the souls of all who may accept them as a sound exposition of the truth.

To speak of the "risen life" is perhaps allowable with

⁸ Acts x. 41.

⁹ John xvi. 22, xx. 20; Luke xxiv. 41, 42.

reference to Christians, as through faith quickened and raised up with Christ. But it is wrong to reason at any time on *Christ's* risen life as a distinctive thing. In Him was "life" *absolutely*, and He *is* "the life." His dying or rising alters in no respect what He essentially is. Jesus of Nazareth is the resurrection and the life, the beginning and chief of the creation which God owns, the Head also of His body the Church. The Lord Himself is best entitled to tell us of His life, and He does so in such manner as to keep constantly before our minds the essential truth of His unchanging vital *sameness*. It is our life and safety to abide in Him, and if we love Him we shall keep His words.¹

Before laying down my pen, I would once more appeal to the heart and conscience of the community which is represented by these teachers. Your boast of doctrinal exactness threatens loudly to become your shame. Your tacklings are loosed, and the mast on which you fly your standard of exclusive fidelity to Christ will soon refuse to bear your sail.² My brethren, these things have surely a voice for you and for us all. God forbid that I should glory over you by using these facts and evidences as an enemy might use them. But I call earnestly upon you all, and especially on those who have more recently been drawn to your communion by the illusion of your false ecclesiastical pretensions, to re-consider well your ways, to compare your words with those of God, and to judge righteous judgment in your Master's cause.

¹ John xiv. 23.

² Isa. xxxiii. 23.



