Operations of the Spirit of God
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I would desire to say a few words on the operations of the Spirit of God — the connection of His working in us with Christ; and the separateness too of the operation of the Spirit in us, from the work of Christ as wrought and perfected for us already.

I do not assume, by any means, to give a full or adequate view of the operations of the Spirit — "Who is sufficient for these things?" I see enough, indeed, to see the paucity and dimness of what has appeared to my mind, compared with the glory of what is still shewn to be onward. Blessed that it is so — most blessed — eternal blessings! Still I would speak of that which the scripture seems to make clear. If others have learned more, they can be led forth to communicate it; if less, they will not begrudge what I do: what I hope is, that it may lead into more searching and attainment of the power of these things.

Christians, and real ones, are too apt (though this may seem a strange assertion) to separate, and too apt to confound, Christ and the Spirit. That is, they separate Christ and the Spirit in operation in us too much; and they confound the work of Christ for us too much with the Spirit. The consequence of both is, uncertainty, meagreness of judgment, and doubt.

The work of the Spirit of God in me, in the power of life, produces conflict, labour, discoveries of sin, and need of mortifying my members which are on the earth; and the more what "Christ is" is revealed in my soul, in the comparison with the discovery of what I am, the more do I find cause of humiliation — the more do I find, by the contrast of Christ looked at as in the flesh here sinless, God condemning this evil root of sin in the flesh in me. And much more, by the discovery of what my blessed Lord is, as glorified, do I see through the Spirit, how short I am of "attaining," though I may be still changed into the same likeness, from glory to glory. Hence, though at peace, hope, perhaps animating hope, and joy betimes filling the soul, yet there will be exercised self-judgment and sorrow of heart at the discovery of how every feeling we have towards God, and every object spiritually known, is short of the just effects they should produce and call out; and hence, too, in case of any allowance or indulgence of evil, deep self-abasement and utter abhorrence. Hence, when the fulness and finishedness of our acceptance in Christ is not known, anxiety and spiritual despondency arise, and doubt, sometimes issuing in a very mistaken and evil reference to the law — a sort of consecrating the principle of unbelief, putting the soul (on the discovery, by the Spirit, of sin working in it) under the law and its condemnation; and not "in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."*

{*The sabbath (i.e., the rest of God) was connected with the manna (Christ) sent down (see John 6); conflict, with Amalek at the waters of Rephidim. Every Christian will more or less painfully have to learn his own heart; for that is the separating, sanctifying process. The great object is to separate this from our justification; and that it should be a matter of judging ourselves, not of expecting God's judgment on us. When this discovery of sin in us is made previous to any clear knowledge of the work of Christ, it is habitually accompanied with terror or despair — a very intelligible effect; when after that knowledge, the sin is perhaps more deeply abhorred, but it is not with terror as to our condemnation, but characterised by a loathing condemnation of the sin itself.}

74 We hear of God hiding His face from us, and the like language, which faith never could use; for faith knows that God ever looks on His Anointed, never hides His face. And if we have such thoughts, they are to be treated as pure unbelief, and dealt with accordingly. Every believer must
acknowledge that it is not true, if he believe the full and perfect acceptance of the saints in Christ; and therefore to account it true is the lie of his own heart, and unbelief.

The Spirit of God judges sin in me; but it makes me know that I am not judged for it, because Christ has borne that judgment for me. This is no cloak of licentiousness: the flesh would indeed always turn it to this, it would pervert everything. But the truth is, that same Spirit which reveals the Lord who bore my sins, as having purged them, at the right hand of God, and which therefore gives me perfect assurance of their being put away, and the infiniteness of my acceptance in Him — that same Spirit, I say, judges the sin by virtue of its character as seen in the light of that very glory; and when this is not done, the Father (into whose hands the Son has committed those whom the Father has given Him to keep) as a Holy Father chastises and corrects, and purges, as a husbandman, the branches. Here, moreover, the discipline of the Church of God, as having the Spirit, comes in, the disuse and neglect of which has much ministered to the distrust of the full and happy assurance of the believer. For the body of the Church, as such, ought necessarily to assume itself (for such is the portion of the Church according to the word) as a sacred people — a manifested sacred people; and then, through the Spirit dwelling in it, to exercise all godly and gracious discipline for the maintenance of the manifested holiness of that sacred people. The Church is the dwelling-place of the Spirit. The Spirit reveals the condition of the Church in Christ, and of the individuals who compose it ("In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you"), and effects, maintains, and guards the character of Christ in the Church in grace and holiness: "Ye are the epistle of Christ written by the Spirit of the living God."

75 If my soul rests entirely on the work of Christ and His acceptance, as the One who appears in the presence of God for me, that is a finished work, and a perfect infinite acceptance — "as He is, so are we in this world": so that "herein is love made perfect with us, that we should have boldness in the day of judgment." Now, what men substitute for this is, the examination of the effects of the Spirit in me: the effects of regeneration are put as the ground of rest, in lieu of redemption; whence I sometimes hope when I see those effects, sometimes despise when I see the flesh working; and having put the work of the Spirit in place of the work of Christ, the confidence I am commanded to hold fast never exists, and I doubt whether I am in the faith at all. All this results from substituting the work of the Spirit of God in me, for the work, victory, resurrection, and ascension of Christ actually accomplished — the sure (because finished) resting-place of faith, which never alters, never varies, and is always the same before God. If it be said, "Yes, but I cannot see it as plain, because of the flesh and unbelief," this does not alter the truth. And to whatever extent this dimness proceeds, treat it as unbelief and sin, not the state of a Christian, or as God hiding His face. The discovery of sin in you, hateful and detestable as it is, is no ground for doubting, because it was by reason of this, to atone for this, because you were this, that Christ died; and Christ is risen, and there is an end of that question.

But it will be said, 'I fully believe that Christ is the very true Son of God, one with the Father, and all His work and grace, but I do not know that I have an interest in Him this is the question, and this is quite a different question.' Not so; but the subtlety of Satan, and bad teaching, which would still throw you back off Christ. God, for our comfort, has identified the two things, by stating "that by him all that believe are justified from all things." In a word, to say, "I believe, but I do not know whether I have an interest," is a delusion of the devil; for God says, it is those who believe who have the interest — that is His way of dealing. I have no more right to believe that I am a sinner, as God views it, in myself, than that I am righteous in Christ. The same testimony declares that none is righteous, and that believers are justified.

76 I may have a natural consciousness of sin, and a Spirit-taught consciousness of sin, and what
it is. If I rest in this, I cannot have peace: in Christ's work about it, I have perfect peace. But am I not
desired to examine myself, whether I am in the faith? No. What then says 2 Corinthians 13: 5:
"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith?" etc. Why, that if they sought a proof of Christ
speaking in Paul, they were to examine themselves, and by the certainty of their own Christianity,
which they did not doubt, be assured of his apostleship. The apostle's argument was of no value
whatever, but on the ground of the sanctioned certainty that they were Christians. But I have dwelt
longer on this than I had any purpose; but the comfort of souls may justify it. It is connected with man's
seeking, from the work of the Spirit of God in him, that which is to be looked for only from the work of
Christ.

If my assurance and comfort or hope be drawn from the experience of what passes within me,
though it may be verified against cavils thereby, as in the first epistle of John, then it is not the
righteousness of God by faith; for the experience of what passes in my soul is not faith. I repeat, that by
looking to the work of Christ the standard of holiness is exalted; because, instead of looking into the
muddied image of Christ in my soul, I view Him in the Spirit, in the perfectness of that glory into the
fellowship of which I am called; and therefore, to walk worthy* of God, who hath called me to His
own kingdom and glory. I forget the things behind, and press towards the mark for the prize of the high
calling of God in Christ Jesus; and my self-examination becomes, not an unhappy inquiry whether or
not I am in the faith, never honouring God in confidence after all that He has done, but whether my
walk is worthy of one who is called into His kingdom and glory. But the disconnection of Christ from
the operations of the Spirit is an evil, and tends to the same point, though the application be not so
immediate.

{*Whenever this is not the case, our standard is apt to be — as little of the fruits of the Spirit as
we can ascertain ourselves to be Christians by: and then to go on, after the examination, as we went on
before, being satisfied with ascertaining that.}

77 In the teaching of ordinary evangelicalism, a man is said to be "born of the Spirit," its need
perhaps shewn from what we are, and its fruit shewn, and the inquiry stated — Are you this? for then
you will go to heaven. These things have a measure of truth in them. But are they thus presented in
Scripture? There I find these things continually and fully connected with Christ, and involving our
being in that blessed One, and He in us; and consequently not merely an evidence by fruits that I am
born of the Spirit of God, but a participation in all of which He is the Heir, as the risen man (in the sure
title of His own sonship), as quickened together with Him — a union of life and inheritance, of which
the Holy Ghost is the power and witness.

It is thus expressed in the epistle to the Ephesians: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his
power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in
Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.
And you hath he quickened . . . even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,
and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." So in
Colossians 2: 13: "And you hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."
"If ye then be risen with Christ."

The operation of the Spirit of God, while acting in divine power, is to bring us into living
association with Christ. His operation in us is to make good in us, to connect us with, to reveal to us,
and to bring us into the power of, all that is verified in Christ, as the second Adam, the risen Man, in
life, office, and glory — "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." We are "heirs together,” "suffering
together that we may be glorified together," and thus finally "con-formed* to the image" of God's Son,
in that God "hath quickened us together," and "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together," etc. (Eph. 2: 5, 6). And the Spirit of God works in us thus in life, and in service, and suffering, and lastly in glory, in the resurrection of our bodies also.

{The word 'together' is found here also in the structure of the Greek word.}

78 I would trace, briefly, the testimony of this through Scripture. It may be seen there, both individually, and besides that, also corporately, as in the Church. The Spirit is spoken of first, as quickening; and secondly, as indwelling. We are born of the Spirit. As regards individuals so quickened, as indwelling, it associates them with the glory of Christ, as it sheds abroad also God's love in the heart, and with the power of Christ's life, as having eternal life — life in Himself as Son of God; and it also reveals and makes them, according to His good pleasure, instruments of the revelation of His glory as Son of man: this consequent upon ascension, as the former is declared and witnessed in resurrection. The special subject of which He is witness in the Church corporately, constituting the Church the present faithful witness, is, that Jesus Christ is Lord, which is immediately connected with the glory, "to the glory of God the Father."

John 3 first brings the subject of the operations of the Spirit before us at large. "A man must be born again," born of water and of the Spirit. But while this is generally taken simply that he must be regenerate to be saved, the passage states much more. He cannot see nor enter into the kingdom of God, a kingdom composed of earthly things and heavenly things, of which a Jew must be born again to be a partaker (however much he fancied himself a child of the kingdom) even in its earthly things, which Nicodemus, as a teacher of Israel, ought to have known, as from Ezekiel 36: 21-38; and to the heavenly things of which the Lord could not direct them then, save as shewing the door, even the cross, a door which opened into better and higher things: wherein (as, in the Spirit's work, being prerogative power, "so was every one that was born of the Spirit," and Gentiles therefore might be partakers of it; for it made, not found, men what it would have them) the Lord declared that God loved not the Jew only, but the world. In this passage itself, then, we have not merely the individual renewed, and fit for heaven, but the estimate of the Jew, a kingdom revealed, embracing earthly and heavenly things, which the regenerate alone saw, and into which they entered — to the heavenly things, of which the cross, as yet as unintelligible as the heavenly things themselves, formed the only door wherein was exhibited the Son of man lifted up, and the Son of God given in God's love to the world. "In the regeneration," of which the Spirit's quickening operation in the heart was the first-fruits as His presence was the earnest of the heavenly part, "this Son of man would sit on the throne of his glory."

79 The principle, then, on which men dwell, is true; but the revelation of this chapter is much wider and more definite than they suppose. It is not merely that the man is changed or saved; but he sees and enters a kingdom the world knows nothing of, till it comes in power; and, moreover, that such a one receives a life as true and real, and much more important and blessed, than any natural life in the flesh. It is not merely changing a man by acting on his faculties, but the giving a life which may act indeed now, through these faculties, on objects far beyond them (as the old and depraved life on objects within its or their reach), but in which he is made partaker of the divine nature, in which not merely the faculties of his soul have new objects, but as in this he was partner with the first Adam, the living soul, so in that with the second Adam, the quickening Spirit. And we must add, that the Church, in order to its assimilation with Him in it, is made partaker of this, consequent upon His resurrection, and therefore is made partaker of the life according to the power of it thus exhibited, and has its existence consequent upon (yean, as the witness of) the passing away (blessed be God!) of all the judgment of its sins; for it has its life from, and consequent upon, the resurrection of Christ out of that grave in which, so to speak, He buried them all. It exists, and has not its existence but consequent upon the absolute
accomplishment and passing away of its judgment.

This, then, is the real character of our regeneration into the kingdom, where the charge of sin is not, nor can be, upon us, being introduced there by the power of that in which all is put away. The life of the Church is identified with the resurrection of Christ, and therefore the unqualified forgiveness of all its flesh could do, for it was borne, and borne away. The justification of the Church is identified with living grace; for it has it, because quickened together with Him, as out of the grave, where He buried all its sins. Thus are necessarily connected regeneration and justification; and the operation of the Spirit is not a mere acting on the faculties, a work quite separate from Christ, and to be known by its fruits, while the death of Christ is something left to reason about; but it is a quickening together with Christ out of my trespasses and sins, in which I find myself indeed morally dead, but Him judicially dead for me, and therefore forgiven and justified necessarily, as so quickened. The resurrection of Christ proves that there will be a judgment, says the Apostle (Acts 17). It proves that there will be none for me, says the Spirit by the same blessed apostle; for He was raised for my justification. He was dead under my sins; God has raised Him, and where are they? The Church is quickened out of Jesus's grave, where the sins were left.

80 Then, as to the power of this life and the other operations of the Spirit, I find, in the Lord's account of his own testimony, the statement of communion and displayed glory. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." He testified that which He knew in oneness with the Father, which He had seen in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

The operations of the Spirit, in giving us life in the Son, and revealing the glory (ours therefore withal) into which He has brought His manhood, and which consequently is revealed in it, answer just to this statement of the Lord concerning Himself. Our communion — living communion with Him and the Father — and our apprehension and expression of the glory which is His; of these two John 4 and 7 speak. In these chapters and elsewhere we have to remark, that we are taught, not of the Spirit's operating on, but dwelling in us. The Spirit of God does operate on (whether in mere testimony, for the reception of which we are responsible, as in the case of the rulers of the Jews and Stephen — "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye"; of which I do not speak now at large or efficiently), in convincing, renewing, and quickening us. This being done by the word, it is by faith wherein (that is, in the reception of the word) we are quickened (that is, the revelation of Christ). "We are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." These are sufficient to shew the manner of the operation: how, being a testimony, the natural man rejects it, though guilty for so doing, for it is God's testimony; and how it is effectual, in the quickening power of the Spirit, but is by faith in consequence of the instrument employed. The power of it I have already spoken of; whence we see, while they that believe not make God a liar, they that believe have the witness in themselves; for they are made livingly partakers, in communion, of what they believe.

81 But the work (in virtue of which they are thus made partakers of life and fellowship with God) being a perfect work, the Spirit, who takes up His abode in the believer, is a spirit of peace and joy, a spirit of witness of all that Christ is and has done, and, we must add, of the Father's perfect acceptance of both.

That the natural man rejects these things and receives them not, we shall see; but the conscience being awakened, and peace made, the Spirit is witness to the renewed soul of them.

Now, in John 5 we have the Spirit's operation, wherein, as to the manner, the dead hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear live; and though, by the Spirit, it is still the Son speaking from
heaven (as before on earth, i.e. on Mount Sinai, which was by angels, as far as mediately, not by the Spirit). As to the manner and character of the testimony, I would speak more when I come to John 7, where it is the witness of the glory of the Son of man, as thus given and present among believers.

I turn now to the instruction which chapter 4 supplies, where it is compared to the living water; and we see at once the stupidity and incapability of the flesh to receive the things of the Spirit in the repeated replies of the woman to the statements of the Lord, which, one would have supposed, must have awakened her to something beyond her ordinary thoughts. It is not the capacity of the flesh to receive it, but the revelation of the Lord concerning it, that I now refer to. It is not as a quickening agent He now speaks of it, but as a gift — that which was given by Him. Here, we must remark, Christ is the giver, not the gift. "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him" (it is spoken of as indwelling), "it shall be in him a well of water." Given as the energy of indwelling life, divinely given — the gift of God (as afterwards) that I shall give him — it springs up into everlasting life. It is divine life from the Son, enjoyed by the power of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; not as the Spirit of God revealing His glory; but the power of life, having its communion and result in the eternal source from which it flows. Whether Jesus were in humiliation, or whether Jesus were glorified, this power was in Him; and though the expression of the power may be different, still it was the same power. He had life in Himself, as the Son of God. He might raise to natural life, or He might raise in resurrection life, and hence the difference; for now it is in the latter, being, in ultimate purpose, that in which power conforming to Himself is, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. It is life more abundantly, even if they were alive before.

82 With this new life withal, specially the Spirit dwells and bears witness. He might communicate the life then 7 but it could not be in the revelation or character which belonged to Christ as risen, or as the Head of the body. It was this great truth that was breaking through the clouds all through the Lord's discourse to His disciples; while He was affording to the nation to which He came, not only this, but the most ample evidence of every prophecy fulfilled, and power exercised, which left them without excuse as to His actual reception, whether we regard His character or Person. Through this operation of the Spirit, so indwelling, with our new man, it is that God is specially known and enjoyed; but being the Spirit of the Son, in that we are quickened of the Son, God specially enjoyed and worshipped as the Father. This is the great result of the revelation of the Son, and our life in and by Him. And herein is eternal life; John 17: 2. God was known in a measure to a godly Jew; but if He were sought in an especial manner of relationship, it was as Jehovah. To us the special manner of relationship is, "My Father and your Father, my God and your God."

We know Him as sons; but it is God who is known and enjoyed. This we find hinted at in this fourth chapter of John: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth": but it is said just before, "shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." This communion with and knowledge of God is matter of exceeding joy — I mean, knowing Him and enjoying Him as God. There is a depth in it which, in that we do it in the peace and communion which is the result of all question of sin being laid aside, is, perhaps (it is hard to compare things in these subjects), beyond all other of our thoughts, and lasts through and beyond the actual covenant blessings which are our portion to enjoy as children. These chastenings may remove for our need: "If needs be, we may be in heaviness through manifold temptations." But though the joy may be weakened, the spring of righteous confidence in God is there; and, indeed, we are thrown more abstractedly and essentially upon God. We should joy in God at all times; but we are apt to turn to the blessings conferred, and in a measure to forget the Blesser. See Psalm 63. Hence the deprivation, that we may remember Him. But properly, this well of water springing up into everlasting life is that
partaking of the divine nature in which ("having escaped") we joy in God, repose in Him, delight in Him, are filled into His fulness, know Him indeed in the blessedness of actual revelation; but still in the name of God, as such, the power of this communion is conveyed, being rooted and grounded in love, knowing God, and known of Him, it supposes all the rest of truth, and it is found in Christ. "He hath given us an understanding that we should know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, that is, in his Son Jesus Christ: he is the true God and eternal life." Of this we have the perfect exhibition in Jesus, in spite of all trial; for how should the Spirit, which dwelt in all fulness in Him, even as a man, be grieved with divine perfectness? "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ." "That the love [says the Lord, speaking of the converse, and therefore the power of this] wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them"; and so, as to the form of it, as it were with us: "In that day, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." But now we speak of it as specially knowing God. I think, if the Psalms be studied, what Christ's Spirit passed through and teaches us will be deeply learnt in this — there, of course, among Jews it is Jehovah, when He speaks of covenant-blessings, as we have more specially to say, "Father." But not resting here on this distinction, if the Psalms, and parts of Psalms, in which Jehovah is used, and in which God is used, be referred to and compared and studied, the deepest practical instruction will be derived as to this power of communion from the Spirit of Christ itself. Only we must remember that, for us it is founded on an accomplished work, and that which He passed through, as accomplishing it, is to us the fellowship of His sufferings, or loving chastisement. We may look to Psalms 42, 43, as an example of this. But, further, if we turn to our Lord's personal history, and note the difference between that word, "Father, let this cup pass from me, but not my will, but thine be done," and "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" we shall see the deepening entrance into another character of communion, in which the whole power and character of God were called out, borne indeed by Jesus our most glorious and blessed Head; that to us in that day, that power and character might become infinite and eternal joy; and is now to us all as sons, through the consequent gift of God by virtue of His resurrection; for such is the power of eternal life to us consequent on Christ's death.

84 O that the Church more entered into these things — walked more in the power of unseen communion with God! I say not this, as though I did; but I say it only as so knowing the blessedness of it in Him, as to pray and desire it for the Church, in the sense of the lack of it often.

Hitherto I have spoken, either of the quickening power of the Spirit of God, as introducing us into the kingdom; or, as dwelling in the individual, as the power of eternal life, through which his communion with God is carried on: this there must be where there is life according to Christ Jesus. There remains a wide field to treat of, on which I feel almost deterred from entering; not because I fear there is not boundless joy in passing over, and learning it in one's own soul, entering into it; but because it is boundless, and that I feel deeply my inadequacy to do so properly, even to satisfy my own mind: and I will add, especially when one considers the responsibility of being a communicator, and, as it were, teacher of these things to others. The deep interest and importance of the subject is my excuse: I would not have done it if it had not been pressed on my own mind. It is the largeness of the subject which deters me.

There is one thing I feel it important to notice ere I pass on: though the Spirit is life, and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, and Christ as quickening Spirit is our life, yet the Holy Ghost is also spoken of as personally acting in power on our souls — acting in blessing; for He is God; and while we are made partakers of the divine nature, and have this life of God in us as born of Him, yet this is not the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Ghost is God. Therefore we read, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs"; and therefore, the scripture speaks
of the inner spiritual man being strengthened, renewed, as "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the
inner man." Though our outward man perish, our "inner man is renewed day by day"; so "the washing
of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ
our Saviour."

85 The next point, before I pass on to its character and operation, is to advert to the fact of the
special indwelling of the Holy Ghost: I mean in individual believers. I do not speak of this as if it were
new to many who read this paper, but because I daily find it is new to many who inquire: and it puts the
subject in entirely a different light. We shall see that it is connected with, and consequent upon, the
ascension and glorifying of Christ; but we must remember that, while the coming down of the Holy
Ghost is witness of ascension-glory and divine righteousness, and that our association in it was
consequent (in the necessary course of the divine ministrations) upon Christ's entering into the glory,
yet was it withal the power to us of all that whence it came, and into which, and association with
which, it brings us; and so we shall see in the texts to which I shall refer, closing with the one which
more especially introduces me into my present subject; "In whom" (we read in Ephesians), "after that
ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance
until the redemption of the purchased possession." I know that this has been referred to gifts merely. To
these I hope to refer before I finish this subject: but that it is not confined to these is manifest, however
these may display it, because, in that case, where there were no gifts, there would be no earnest of the
inheritance: but the Comforter Himself was to abide for ever. Besides, gifts are not spoken of here, but
the Holy Spirit itself as the earnest; but to confound them, is to confound the Giver and the gift; for the
Spirit distributes of these to every man severally as He will, and they are only the manifestation of the
Spirit given for profit; and confounding them (unconsciously perhaps) undermines the personality and
deity of the Holy Ghost, and confounds the power of witnessing to others (which may be with no vital
or sanctifying power) with the blessed and sanctifying communion with, and anticipation of, things
hoped for and treasured up in Christ as ours, and to be displayed in that day. In a word, the Spirit which
distributes the gift is not the gift He distributes, though He be displayed in the gift; nor are the things in
which the given power is displayed necessarily any earnest of the inheritance at all; as in the gift of
prophecy, as in Balaam's case, and as Paul states the possibility that a man might preach to others, and
he himself be a castaway. And though their characters in some instances are indicative of the
dispensations, and their number and circumstances may be different, yet the existence of extraordinary
powers and acts in themselves were not characteristic of this indwelling and earnest of the Spirit. Many
and remarkable miracles were wrought, and great power exhibited in service, before this came, before
the Son of man was glorified. But these did not constitute the indwelling of the Spirit in the Church, for
there was none such; nor in the individual as an earnest of the inheritance, for they might be there, as in
the case of Balaam, already adverted to, and the individual not be an heir. The Spirit in them might
search, and find the things they administered were not unto themselves. I propose to return a little to
this, and would now pursue my more immediate subject.

86 In the Galatians we find — having shewn that they were sons through faith in Christ Jesus,
not servants — "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts,
crying, Abba, Father"; clearly distinguishing between the regenerating power and indwelling of the
Holy Ghost, and speaking of one as a consequence of the other — that it dwelt in an individual who
was (and because he was) a son of God. We also see its distinction from a gift, for it is put in the heart
to cry, Abba, Father. Further, we see that, as in such sort, there, it is proper to, and characteristic of, the
dispensations. For it is not the portion of the heir when an infant, and as a servant, under tutors and
governors, which they, even if heirs, were previously, not in immediate communion with the Father
personally. They had not the mind needful for it, not having the Holy Ghost thus. But it is their portion
when they take properly the place of sons, which they do in this dispensation; and though they do not as yet enter upon the inheritance, yet are they to have the mind renewed in knowledge concerning it, and enter into the full interests of the Father's house.

Again, says Peter, "We are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, which is given to them that believe." We find it in similar language in Ephesians, and Romans 8: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and if Christ be in you," etc.; and in Ephesians: "That ye may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." These are connected with communion, and mark it as an individual thing in which the heart has its portion by faith.

Again, where the connection of things hoped for, and the power of communion in which they are enjoyed in the certainty of God's love, are brought together, "hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us." Again, in 2 Corinthians 1, "For all the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" — a very full and blessed passage: God, the great Author of it all and power by which it is wrought, establishing us in Christ, our glorious and blessed Head, in the communion of all like glory with Him; in the communion of that in which, by the fulfilment of all the promises in their amazing blessedness in Christ Himself, God is glorified: and this, while we are assumed in grace into a portion with Him, we being the very subjects of the blessing, not merely in consequence but in association, and therefore having all the consequences. It is ours, the promises being in Christ, to the glory of God by us. Now God stablishes us in this portion: how do we know it? How is it marked? How enjoyed, and the earnest possessed, while we have it not, when the glory is not yet come? God hath established us in it: that is the assurance and security. He hath anointed us with that unction from Himself — the Holy One — whereby we know all things (compare the whole of 2 Corinthians 1: 7 to the end, where this is fully explained); but then the having the Spirit is the seal or mark whereby we are significantly denoted as belonging to God, as His heirs: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"; but being given us to dwell in us, in that we are heirs, we have it as an earnest in our hearts; abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; knowing that we are sons, and delighting in the thought of the inheritance, and of being like Him who is "the firstborn among many brethren"; and in this joy of the Holy Ghost, filled (it may be in the midst of much affliction) with all joy and peace in believing, the soul entering, as associated with Christ (and in this lies much, and that of the very kernel of the joy, though not all), into all the glory in which the promises of God are fulfilled in Him. I say, not all the joy; because it is not only (with what riches are we endowed, yea, beyond all thought!) "As my Father hath loved me, so have I loved you": a blessing known, had communion with by the Spirit, as our portion, of which the glory is the display, as enjoyed along with Him; but "that the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me"; and therefore they are not only companions with the Son of man in the glory, but in adoption sons of God, as brethren, being brought into this joy, as in the Father's kingdom, more properly the Father's house, where the place is prepared for us by the great Firstborn. Thus the Son's rich and unjealous love (for it is divine), in giving us the glory which was given to Him, displays us in the glory, which approves before the world that the Father has loved us as He loved Him. Was ever anything like this in love? Does it not, in its very conception, prove it altogether divine? None could deal, act, or know in such sort but God; and the very possession of these things in our hearts is the witness that God is there, if they be known in love, holy love; for "he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." And these things we have now, not in possession indeed, but in (the earnest of the) Spirit; as the same Spirit by the apostle speaks: "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full," "that ye also may
have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."
This is a very holy place to dwell in, one that becometh saints — one that nothing but the blood of
Jesus could purchase — none but God by His wondrous work in Christ present us faultless in the
presence of. Yet, blessed be His grace (and the more blessed because it is holy and enjoyed), in that we
have the Holy Spirit revealing it, giving us a divine spiritual communion with it, sealing us as heirs of
all of it and the power of our joy in it; -this is our place, our portion: O my soul, dwell there in joy —
joy with Christ. You will note, He says, "His Son Jesus Christ"; which is not only the expression of
faith, but presenting our blessed Lord in that character — the Saviour, the anointed Man — in which
He has brought us into fellowship, and associated us with Him in this sonship, and given us fellowship
moreover with the Father as sons; ourselves sons, though in Him. And the converse of this is met in
that expression, "I say not that I will pray the Father for you [as if the Father did not Himself love you];
for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from
God." This they had believed, but knew not yet in its fulness, known thus by the Holy Ghost (the Spirit
of sonship given), namely, that He came forth from the Father. In this they were dull: it is the life of
the saints. And this it is that makes the notion of sonship in Christ only when incarnate so destructive to
the very elementary joy of the Church, and abhorrent to those who have communion by the Spirit in the
truth.

89 But the joy and blessedness of which I speak leads me at once to the statement? "He that
believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Here
again, you will remark, it is an individual matter — the believer's portion, however it may be
ministered. "This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy
Ghost was not yet [given], because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Now this statement (as I think we
shall see) is one of extreme importance, and connected with the whole character and state of the
dispensation, as being that of God's blessings, which are beyond all dispensation, except the fact of
giving the Spirit as the power of divine life and worship, inasmuch as they lead into communion with
Himself.

John 4, of which I have already spoken, though it involves, does not rest on dispensation; but
that, on the passing away of "this mountain," or even of that on which Jerusalem stood, the living
power of communion with the Father everywhere, even with God as a Spirit, should take place. Hence
it was a quickening power, shewn in humiliation, as well as in glory; yea, according to love in gift
proved in humiliation: and the hour then was, as well as was coming. Not so, though they may include
these things, chapters 3, 7. Chapter 3, as we have seen, contains the kingdom, and shews what must
belong to a Jew to enter into its earthly portion, the quickening which alone could bring even the
nominal children into the kingdom, because it was God's kingdom.

But here, in chapter 7, we have the gift of the Spirit consequent upon the ascension-glory — on
the glorifying of Jesus. His brethren, representing in their unbelief the Jews, had proposed at the feast
of tabernacles that Jesus should shew Himself to the world. Jesus' reply was, their time was always
ready, His time was not yet come. On the eighth day of that feast, and peculiar to it (the day of
resurrection, the feast of the new week, the beginning of a new scene), the great day of it, Jesus stood
and cried. And as the water out of the rock (and that rock was Christ) followed and supplied the
children of Israel through the wilderness, they came to keep the feast of tabernacles as at rest in the
land; so Jesus, His people being united to Him their glorified Head, would so fill them with the Spirit,
that out of them should flow — not merely out of Him to them, but out of them should flow — rivers
of living water, even of the Spirit which believers should receive. But it is said, "out of his belly." Now
this is to me a blessed expression: the use of it for the thoughts, feelings, condition, of the inner man, is
familiar in Scripture. On this the peculiar blessing all rests; and herein the essential difference of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost as now, and when operating on prophets before. The possession of the Holy Ghost rested now on union, and consequently was a constant thing, and an earnest to the person in whom it dwelt of his own interest in the things it communicated. He was brought into communion, as united to the Head, in all the things in which that Head was revealed; and he had the Spirit by virtue of his being so united — the necessary witness therefore of his interest in them. And as this union was connected with a divine nature communicated, the mind, thoughts, feelings, joys, sorrows, interests, consolations, fears, hopes, and streams of love which that nature entered into, were now the portion of the saint, and that, withal, according to the power of the energy of the Spirit, which, though indwelling, still acted independently (i.e., as regards us), though, according to the order and revelations of the dispensation of which He was the power, speaking what He heard. I am not now speaking of the conflict still, and therefore, existing with the flesh (and, I must add, with the world, for both are the consequence of this very thing), but of the thing itself. This earnest of the Spirit is in connection with the glory of Jesus, therefore full of victory and full of hope. And yet (as it was the glory of the man witnessed, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in those not yet glorified, though sanctified to God) it became, on the one hand, the complete witness of the highest possible assurance of understanding, because Jesus was on the throne who had entered into the whole conflict, and of the Father's acceptance of Him in divine righteousness: yet withal, on the other hand, it entered into all the circumstances through which that righteous Man did pass; so giving the pattern and formation of knowledge, the tongue of the learned, in all the trial through which the saints as led of the Spirit had to (and must) pass — their portion — and therefore a Spirit of perfect sympathy, the sympathy of the Spirit of Christ, as knowing the glory, and therefore sensible, according to God, of the extreme misery, and sorrow, and degradation, into which, as to circumstance, those in whom (as the witness of Jesus) He dwelt were plunged; and what their trial on the way to that glory and the path of patience towards it. Also was it witness of the Father's love as shewn in the glory; and hence it passed, as the river of that divine refreshment in the wilderness, through them, as flowing in their hearts, for they were united to Jesus, to refresh all to whom its heavenly and blessed streams came; that drinking in this as the parched ground, a desert land, they might spring forth in green and refreshing fruits, which the great Head of the Church might find delight and joy in; while their joy was full in communion with that from which it flowed. For wherever the river is received, it is the river still.

91 Doubtless, not shewing Himself as amongst the Jews, His natural brethren, to the world, any individual amongst them, believing then, took the place of substituted and anticipative blessing then proposed; but, being a matter of faith, it is, if "any man thirst" — and thus it is the portion to any man of faith. Then we have to enquire, on what this depended, whence this flowing stream came. It was sent from the Father by Jesus glorified, and becomes the witness of all the acceptance, which the glorifying of Jesus, the great responsible Man under our sins, declares; and of all the glory to which He is entitled, and all that is displayed in His Person, as there sat down (which is our hope, for we shall see Him as He is, and be like Him); and, moreover, of communion with Him, not according to that glory in which He will appear to earth (for I know not that that will need the Holy Ghost, though communion vitally with Him in any way does and will, but of this in the previous chapter); but according to the glory in which He sits on the Father's throne, in which we who are sons shall know Him in that day, and the Church knows Him now as sitting on the Father's throne. There is a glory which He will take — His own glory as visible Lord and Son of man, in which every eye shall see Him: but there is a glory in which the Spirit now reveals Him, in which the Church knows Him, in which, though Son of man, He is one with the Father; a glory which He has taken as man, a glory with the Father (John 17: 5), and which in itself He had with the Father before the world was, but which He has now taken as man, and
which the Spirit communicates to us who are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and
gives us communion with Him; and which forms the power and object of hope to our minds. As it is
written, "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness through faith." That righteousness is
established for us in Christ upon the throne; for He who bore our sins is gone to the Father in glory.
The reward and end of that righteousness is this glory. Hence we see that this is our portion in hope, for
the righteousness is ours. And as in Christ, the glory is ours too, although the oneness with the Father
(which gives Him the place in which the glory is now) is His only, yet is not this without its blessing,
for the Church knows it in Him; and the full divine source of the glory is manifested. As now Christ is
in the Father, and we in Him, and He in us; so, in the day of His appearing, shall it be Christ in us, and
the Father in Him, that we may be made perfect in one.

92 But this is not all of these streams of living water, though it may be the great source and
fountain, the glory of the Man on the Father's throne. For, as the feast of tabernacles was on the
accomplishment of the promises held in the land, and as Solomon spoke of it on the great typical
celebration of it, "The Lord hath performed with his hand all that he spake to David my father with his
mouth"; so to Christ Himself all the promises are made, as Heir of all things, as Son of God, as Son of
man, and Son of David. As many as are the promises of God, in Him are they Yea, and in Him Amen,
to the glory of God by us. Now as that which we have spoken of is for the glory of God manifested in
Him, so, as it is by us, He takes the promises as man, that, having purged and sanctified the children by
His blood, He might introduce them in witness of the Father's love as co-heirs. Hence as to them also,
that which He is heir of as the glorified man (in title as Son of God) is, in knowledge and communion
by the Spirit, part of these living streams. Therefore it is there added, "Now he which stablisheth us
with you in Christ is God, who hath anointed us, and hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the
Spirit in our hearts." It not only then reveals the glory of Jesus as now on the throne of God as man, but
also that which He takes when He appears in glory, when all shall be blessing, we being called to
inherit a blessing; and therefore the moment the earth comes into blessing, it becomes a portion of our
inheritance in Christ. "The Lord shall hear the heavens," etc. Whatever there is promised to Christ as
the seed and great purpose of God (see Gal. 3); whatever things there are in which the glory of God is
displayed, and is the furniture, and reflection, and exhibition of that glory by Christ (and all things are
for Him); is to that glory by us. Of this — in its wide and fullest blessedness as second Adam, Lord
from heaven withal, the witness in blessing, evil being conquered, of all the Father's love unfolded in
and on the creature taken into the inheritance — of this, I say, the Spirit is the joy to us in hope. And, as
the promises are to us in Christ, and we see Christ, though all things be not yet put under Him, crowned
with the glory and honour, in which He is the secuer of them all (sustaining all things), the firstborn of
every creature, as well as Firstborn from the dead, and Head of the Church — we, being in Christ and
partakers of the Spirit, have all these as abounding in hope; for they are witness of the Father's love and
blessing, contributing to these rivers of living waters (that is, the knowledge of the glory of Christ as in
them), enjoyed within by the Spirit; and, where so enjoyed, flowing over; for no human heart ever,
when so enjoyed, could contain them.

93 And this surely is a joyous thought — for now we must take the promises in the widest sense
— all things in heaven and in earth, all are Christ's as heir; for indeed He made them all, and all are to
be reconciled in Him; and if reconciled to God, how full the blessing! Well may the streams flow
through the desert when Israel is there passing, for desert it shall be no longer when Israel is owned: the
streams were not indeed thence, but they were there for the firstborn when the firstborn were there. A
most blessed picture this of divine favour and exalting hope! The wilderness shall flourish and blossom
as the rose, when in divine favour Israel obtains its inheritance: so, when Israel passes through it, for
Israel (though the wilderness be unchanged by it) the streams which would renew and gladden it flow
— refresh Israel blessedly through it. Thus beautifully does the song of Moses, when he would as his God prepare Him a habitation, and as his father's God exalt Him, declare, on his emergence from the Red Sea, "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed; thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." To God they were already brought, so we. Afterwards: "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." The place of Israel, as the redeemed tribes in hope, was Canaan, and Canaan strictly within Jordan — so that Moses chode with the two and a half tribes when proposing to stay without; and the rest only are then called the children of Israel. So of the Church. But the promises to Abraham were all from the river of Egypt to the great river; and there was a day coming when the wilderness and the solitary place would be glad for them, and the desert would rejoice and blossom as the rose, and see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of their God; yet still the sanctuary which God had prepared for Himself to dwell in was the place where they were to be brought in. Blessed portion! So with the saints now: they have their place in heaven, and they know it now in spirit and in hope; know it as theirs, though evil spirits may yet for a very little season be to be resisted there, and have their hold till the great conflict comes which shall exclude them for ever. Thus they have their place, their seat in the heavenlies beyond Jordan; blessed inheritance, where to them Christ has set the glory — the glory of the Father, and His own!

94 Yet though it be thus, the world and all things are theirs, though it be a wilderness and they strangers in it. The moment they are redeemed, though they be not in the rest of Egypt, nor have the leeks and cucumbers, and the onions, and the bondage; and though the world be a wilderness to them, a dry and barren land where no water is, they are called out into it as theirs — theirs, yet only as a wilderness — but called out to hold a feast to the Lord there. And be it so, that they have holden a feast to the golden calf, while Moses is in the mount to receive the given law, it does not alter what it is to the heart of faith. They have been led forth, and not only do they know in spirit that they have been brought to God (so in spirit to be in the heavenlies), but they find, and it is because they find, Jesus there; and finding Him they find all things theirs, even where they are; and they can be fed only from heaven, guided only by what is heavenly, drink only thus from the rock, or rather have the river of God flowing in themselves; but in Jesus they know their inheritance. "All things are theirs, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's." The wilderness is now only to pass through; there is nothing in it for them, yet all is theirs. But when Israel is in the wilderness, when the Church is thus passing through the world, which is its inheritance, the river is there, yea, it is in their hearts; and they sing (for the redemption-work is complete in title, though not accomplished as to the creature in power), "But you hath he redeemed . . . reconciled"; "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation." When the water revives the wilderness itself, when the Son of man actually takes the world as His inheritance, and the Spirit is poured out, shall it not then be glad, and rejoice and blossom? Well, it fills the heart of God's people, of him that believeth in Jesus now, and does so because he is in the wilderness: and shall he not rejoice and blossom? Yea, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; and though often the heartless sand may drink it in and give no return, but be parched, and arid, and fruitless as before, yet wherever the earth of God's hand and the seeds of God's planting are, there shall they also be refreshed and spring up through it.

95 I feel it very important to remark here the individual character noticed before, because it is the saving principle in the midst of desolations and evil, whatever common good it may produce. It is not, They shall drink of the river from the rock, or drink of some common river, but, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"; it is the personal possession and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. So the
gospel of John (which gives what is essential and uniting, and not consequences) continually treats of it.

There is another point of view in which this indwelling of the Spirit has its peculiar feature and character in this dispensation. It results from the exaltation of Christ. The position in which He is the witness of all things being accomplished; and He Himself is personally in possession of the result of that accomplishment, and we united to Him in it, He being there continually. Consequently, it is as different as possible from any previous testimony of what was to be, let it be ever so blessed; as indeed the mystery was not fully revealed, nor (as I have already remarked as to the fact) had the testimony they had any necessary connection with enjoyment of the things witnessed, no, not even where the witnesses were saints, as 1 Peter 1 shews. It was as different also as possible from any operation of the Spirit producing fruits, even as the living Spirit of Christ (though this was ever surely saving), because it never witnessed, and never could witness, a living Christ and glorified Man in the heavens, with whom they were one, who had accomplished all the things they were to enjoy, and which gave the title to, and ground of, their enjoyment of them. This could only exist when Jesus had accomplished them, was in the glory, and thence sent down the Holy Ghost, the power of communion to those united to Him. The thing itself did not exist, the work was not accomplished, and Jesus, as a man, was not in the glory. Therefore we read, "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The fact is, the union of the Church with Him as one body was not yet even revealed, but was a mystery hid in God (as Christ now is), known therefore and enjoyed only by the Holy Ghost given to them which believe. It was not, of course, that there was any different work by which man could be saved (a believer knows this is impossible), nor another Spirit, for there is but one. But that Spirit could not then testify that the believer (to whom He witnessed and whom He influenced) was then in union with the risen Jesus, with the Man who was actually glorified as a present thing, as He does now to a believer's soul; for the thing did not exist to be testified of. If it be said, It was true to faith; I answer, It was not as true to faith that they were in union then, and knew Jesus as now glorified; for Jesus was not glorified, and therefore the Holy Ghost had not, on the footing of this union, taken up His abode in a believer's heart — "was not yet," in the sense of dwelling as the witness of the glorified Man, in those who were united to Him. This made all the difference between being free, and hoping to be free on the certainty of a faithful man's word, who never lied, and was able to perform. Both were certain; but they were not the same thing. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." This was the better thing reserved for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. This is that which made the least in the kingdom of heaven greater than the greatest born of woman — this presence of the Holy Ghost with and in believers, as the result of the accomplishment of Christ's work and the witness of their union with Him. This, too, I apprehend, is the difference between the general assembly and church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect. The children of Israel might have believed the Lord's promise, and did, as Jacob shewed — as Joseph shewed, when he gave commandment concerning his bones (Gen. 50: 24): but, however surely this faith was exercised, they could not say, "Thou, Lord, in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation"; for the work of their redemption was not accomplished. They could sing that when they were brought out of Egypt through the Red Sea, though they were only brought into the wilderness where there was no way, nor food, nor water; for they were redeemed. I now take in the whole course, not any particular type.

97 I dwell thus much upon this, because many find it very difficult to understand how, if the way of being saved is the same, the state of those that are so can be different; whereas "the heir, so long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors," having no free and immediate intercourse with the father's mind, nor understanding of the
father's interests.

Known sonship with the Father, and union with Christ, seeing what Christ's title is, are primary characteristics of this indwelling of the Spirit; and though we see not yet all things put under Christ, yet we see Him crowned with the glory and honour, so that we rejoice in the prospective title, knowing that "He is not ashamed to call us brethren."

Thus, in Romans 8, where this presence of the Spirit as the very character of this dispensation is much brought out, after shewing His moral operations (i.e., as life in the soul), and the quickening of the body, then spoken of as personally dwelling in present witness with us, He bears witness that we are children, therefore heirs, "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together." Now, in this we have the whole case — children, the assembly of the firstborn, put, as Israel, was in the wilderness. Israel is My firstborn. Next, Canaan before us, heirs of God; for that was His land, and His title in Israel reached from river to river — Canaan and the wilderness, heaven and earth: "joint-heirs with Christ," as they of Immanuel's land; and "if so be that we suffer," they must pass through this world as a wilderness simply. Now the Holy Ghost takes up all this, and in its two great characters — the glory and the suffering; the glory belonging to us as children and co-heirs; and this we have in hope. When our prospect is dimmed, we become careless about it, and profane in our minds; when bright, we need nought but manna, and the water, and patience for the wilderness, longing for the rest, submitting to the will of God concerning it. And when our souls are really dwelling as in the glory, when the grapes of Eshcol really fill our souls, there is deadness to all, save the savour and brightness of the hope: what is heavenly is heavenly to us, for we are heavenly minded, we see the glory of the Lord, and it is in a place where His eyes are continually — a land not watered by the foot, but by rivers that run among hills and valleys, the very dwelling-place of the Father's kingdom. The Spirit in the revelation of God (for it is God) causes us thus to dwell in the fulness of God; and from hence we estimate the inheritance, the fellowship with Christ in it, and the glory. We dwell in it in the sweet savour of divine delight in Jesus, who fills all things, and will in very deed do so, and is now revealed so to us by the Spirit. His presence, as actually taking it, shall fill and gladden heaven and earth, banishing evil. But then, now it is, "if so be we suffer"; for the very dwelling in this glory, and seeing in spirit the whole creation reconciled, brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (it cannot be of their grace), waiting for the manifestation of these sons, make us the more and distinctly sensible how it groans and travails together in bondage until now; and our body too being part of this, it becomes sensitive and sympathetic groaning. Now we know this groaning of the creation by our dwelling in the glory, but it becomes sympathetic because we are connected with it in our body, and that as unredeemed. But then it is not merely the selfish feeling of evil. The intercession of the Spirit in us is according to God. The Spirit, as dwelling in us, estimates the evil not according to mere human pain in it, but in the divine estimate of it, as interested in and dwelling in them who are in the midst of the evil, and partakers of it as to their bodies; and all their groans, which take up the known groanings of the creation (for it is as to the body which is of it), are not from selfish pain, but the Spirit's sense of the evil as dwelling in us; and though we, as to the mind and intelligence, cannot tell what to ask for, yet He that searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit who dwells there is; for He makes intercession according to God. Thus the Spirit, that other Comforter, in and through our hearts, feeling in the nonadoption of the body that it dwells in a world groaning under the bondage of corruption, not only teaches from the glory, so that we say, "We know," but expresses (in sense of it all, yet according to God) the need according to God, to be met in the saints now by more enlarged and deeper communion, and that glory in hope which shall put it all away.

99 As regards our own exercise on these things, I would say a very few words. As in the Spirit,
our joy is full, the savour of heavenly things is fresh, our path easy. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," there is communion which makes all light, and we walking and dwelling in it, and everything shines in it. The Holy Ghost is the communicating power of all fulness. But when we come to the wilderness, there is exercise, difficulty; the heart is proved; all is opposite; it is a wilderness; and rest in a wilderness only keeps us in a wilderness still, and indeed will be found going back soon in heart after Egypt. For rest we shall find it a wilderness, and bring the chastenings of the Lord of faithfulness upon us. Now even where trouble is, if the heart be right in the sight of God, God is known through it all; it is not that the trouble will not be felt — far from it; the more perfect the faith, the more it will be felt: the more I know, the more my heart and thought is in Canaan, the more I shall understand what the wilderness is: yea, the very worship of God, blessed as it may be, will be and savour of the wilderness; my mercies are mercies of the wilderness; my food, food for the wilderness; the cloud may guide me to Canaan, but in Canaan I shall need no cloud for the way — still, where the spirit is bright through grace, though it feels all this, it has rich and deep experience of God, which works hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us. In that patience of spirit which is learnt only in the wilderness (what patience shall we need in Canaan?) the deeper parts of God's character are learned. If faith had to bear six hundred thousand rebellious ones, as if it had begotten them, how would it learn, through cultivated communion, the depth of God's patience, the wisdom of His purposes, the extreme perfectness of His love, uncaused by anything it found, bent upon blessing! How He knew the end from the beginning, and while we were travelling in heart about present circumstances, God was using them for bringing forth to that heart the certainty of future hopes, or forming it for the enjoyment of them! And how in us would the moulding of heart in this intimacy of God's ways intrinsically form us for the estimate of the glory in breaking the links (which seemed strange to those occupied with present things) which tied us to those things, that the life in us might grow up into unhindered association with whatever was heavenly! It requires the wilderness (not to give a title which would bring us to God, but) practically to put God instead of Egypt within us; I do not say it ought, and that we ought not to be as Caleb and Joshua ready at once to go up, and the grapes of Eshcol be our encouragement in going onward, rather than the sons of Anak our fear; for they bear the stamp of the beneficence and power of Him who called us there — they were the grapes of His land, and this Lord was well able to bring us in. But it is God's way habitually with us. But when our faith tastes those grapes, when our hearts are thus, we can rise over trouble, however felt; and when we are spiritual, all trouble is the instrument of the blessed experience of God.

100 God's purposes are not ours, and He always works for His own, which are our perfect blessing, the making of us conformed to the image of His Son, co-heirs, "the glory of God by us." Now in our blessed Master, as learning obedience by the things which He suffered, we see this path in the wilderness in perfectness, feeling as none else felt, but seeing (even then in perfect submission) the divine perfectness of the Father's ways, and the end too they led to — His glory — enjoyed as joy set before Him, as a river of sure and blessed water too thus to give rest and refreshment. "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not." Here was true grief, and thoroughly felt as grief. There is no true grief but where there is no resource around; and around Jesus had none. "Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted because they were not" — the word to her was, "There is hope in thine end."

But let us look to Jesus. "In the same hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the
Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." How did the rivers of water flow forth here from this heart-smitten rock! There was none indeed without: but how did they flow from the revealed depths within! The waters gushed forth, His own soul full, "All things are delivered" — I can reveal the Father — "Come to me." How did His pent soul burst forth from the "Then have I laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought!" and in vain, as to present circumstances, to spread these living streams in the wilderness, which have, blessed Lord Jesus! refreshed the Church, and shall refresh it through the wilderness, till it need nothing but Thyself in Canaan. And are we not sons? poor indeed, but still, in exaltation of His fulness, "he that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And where the Spirit of God really is, there is no breaking, no smiting, no operation of patience through the word, but brings forth more of them; for we are associated with infinite fulness now in Jesus. Because all perfectness was there, it all burst forth at once, and "I thank thee" was in one hour with "Woe unto thee."

101 In us often, that these streams may flow and flow pure, there is much process; and when the flesh is at work, and our will is at work, then, till laid low, there is no perception of the brightness and fulness before us, yea, with which we are in communion (for the flesh hath no communion with it, the will no part or portion in it): until we are brought to say, "I thank thee," "I glory in my tribulations," there is no "All things are delivered," as they are ours in Jesus — no real "Come to me," though in our mere judgment we may say, There is the place where it is to be found. And this is deep work; but it is God's work. Thus much for the flowing of these living streams in us: they are all heavenly; and only as we are simply heavenly will they run. Wretched me, that we should need so much to make God's blessed refreshing streams flow! Wondrous love, that He should patiently do so much! May we be enabled to say always, though not callous, "I thank thee!" Still, in all this bondage of corruption though the will by which it came in was in man, not in the creature without (therefore Jesus's was pure sorrow, because it was all according to God — ours not), though this will yet working in us must be subdued; yet, where the Spirit is, God, seeing it in love (i.e., towards us), and putting in action the special process in love, that this will may be broken, every groan which does come (when we know not what to ask for, nor how) is the perfect intercession of the Spirit, whose mind is known to Him who searcheth the hearts, so that we may be comforted; and resting in God, God will shew us the brightness beyond. A true groan to God, however deep the misery, however prostrate the spirit, however unconscious that we are heard, is always received above as the intercession of the Spirit, and answered according to the perfectness of God's purpose concerning us in Christ. Therefore the charge is, "Ye have not cried unto me, when ye have howled upon your beds": and there is no consequence of sin which is beyond the reach of this groaning to God, nothing indeed but the self-will which will not groan to Him at all. This is a blessed thought! such is our intercourse with God in joy and in sorrow; and I doubt not that in us poor, but blessed creatures, the truest, the most blessed (what will shine most when all things shine before God), are these groans to Him: they cannot, indeed, be in their fulness but where the knowledge of the glory of blessing is. I can see them precede the greatest works and words of Jesus. The sense of the wilderness, taken into His heart, made but the streams which could refresh it flow forth in the sympathy of the Spirit which it called forth; and now the Spirit is in us. I believe I must for the present close these thoughts. This has touched but upon one point (and, oh! how narrowly and poorly! what muddy water!) — the presence of the blessed and heavenly Spirit in the desert, as in our hearts, with joy for the things He gives in union with our Head, and refreshing for the scene He passes through, where God's poor pilgrims are; the Messenger of all their sorrow according to His estimate of it, who knows, loves, and effects the blessing of the portion of Christ in His people, as dwelling in them —
their blessed Paraclete. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

102 Hitherto we have seen the blessed Spirit generally, in His characteristic living operations, and not so much ecclesiastically, if I may so speak. The third, fourth, and seventh chapters of John's gospel have given us clear instruction in this:

103 Firstly, as quickening or giving life.

Secondly, as given; and thus a well of water in us springing up into everlasting life — thus, too, as manifesting, or connected with the riches of grace, making us know the Father as seeking such to worship the God of love, and enabling us to worship Him in spirit and in truth, as thus known in the grace that has sought us — brought in by faith to fellowship with Him, fellowship with the Father and the Son, out of every nation: in a word, the dispensation of the manifested Son, manifested to faith as One with whom we are in union through the Spirit — this by the gift of grace.

Thirdly, as flowing forth from us, a river of refreshings, and this in connection with the glory of the Son of man; and therefore not so much the power of worship as the earnest of glory, and the power of refreshing, and glorious testimony that man in Him prevails and has the glory; though yet he must wait for it till He be manifested to the world set right indeed by His presence in that great feast of tabernacles.

The first of these chapters (John 3) closed proper Jewish intercourse, shewing that they must be born again to enter into the kingdom of God: and so was every one that was born of the Spirit (the cross, or the lifting up of the Son of man, closing all present earthly associations, and introducing heavenly things as yet unknown). In the second (John 4), the Lord, having thereon left Judea, going into Galilee passes through Samaria, and there, with one of the most worthless of that reprobate race, shews the gift of God, and the consequence of the humiliation of the Son of God, thereon introducing the Father's name and spiritual worship by grace. Thus the gospel dispensation is introduced by it, and its worship, sonship, and joy. In the third (John 7) we find it flowing forth from filled affections to the world, the witness, though not the accomplishment, of that day when Jesus shall appear in the glory witnessed of, and it shall be as life from the dead: and that, indeed, through His then unbelieving brethren here below. Chapter 4 (that is, the second of those alluded to) is more large and general, as the power of all living communion with God, and thus is specially the saints' place. It identifies itself more especially with the present prayer of Ephesians 3, founded on the title, "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," though that goes farther. Chapter 7 (or the third here alluded to) identifies itself more especially with the former part of the prayer of Ephesians 1, the portion of the Church also, it is true, but more its hope than its communion, and founded on the title, "God of our Lord Jesus Christ"; looking thus at the Lord as the Head of the body — the Firstborn among many brethren, the Firstborn from the dead, the Head of the body the Church, as is plainly seen in the testimony of the apostle which follows — not in the nearness of the divine nature as Son, but in appointed, though righteous, headship as man, the appointed Heir of all things: both indeed hanging on His being the Son, but one connected with His nearness to God, even the Father, which is indeed oneness; the other His manifestation in glory according to divine counsel, when He takes His place with the Church toward the world; though, of course (and necessarily), the Head of it — she the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

104 That I may not omit the intervening chapters of John, but that we may see what a summary of divine theology it is, as a testimony to the Person of the Lord Jesus in its height above all dispensation, I would here observe, that chapter 5 contrasts the entire incompetency of any restorative power connected with the law (because it required strength in the patient, which was just what the disease of sin had destroyed, as well as his righteousness which would not have needed it), in a word,
the entire futility of all remedial processes, with the absolute life-giving power of the Son of God in union with the Father; and shews, in addition, on His rejection (the rejection of His word, for so that power wrought), the judicial power put entirely into His hands as Son of man to execute judgment on all that rejected Him, that all men might honour the Son, even as they honoured the Father.

Chapter 6 shews what was proper to Him — His place and that of His disciples — as rejected. First, it shewed Him (who fulfilled that word, Psalm 132: 13-15, "He shall satisfy her poor with bread" — the Jehovah of Israel's blessing in the latter days, when Zion shall be His "rest for ever") as prophet, refusing to be king, and thereon going up to exercise His priesthood of intercession apart on high. In the meanwhile, the disciples were toiling alone on the sea, and the wind contrary, aiming but not attaining. Immediately on Jesus (who could walk on all the difficulties) rejoining them, they were at the land whither they went. This blessed little picture of the order and circumstances of the dispensation having been given, the humiliation of Jesus, as the portion of the Church during His priesthood, is then shewn as affording its food and strength of life. First, His coming down and incarnation — the manna, the true bread that came down from heaven; next, as sacrificed, and giving the life He had thus taken as man — believers thereon eating His flesh and drinking His blood, thus living by Him; then, closing by the question, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" This, as we have seen, is followed by the instruction of chapter 7, where the time for the manifestation of the Son of man to the world was not yet come, and the gift of the Holy Ghost as the intermediate witness of His glory as Son of man is spoken of. This point has been spoken of in the former part of these remarks; I revert to it now, merely as shewing the beautiful order of the instruction of the Spirit in the gospel of John.

105 There is another point connected with the operations of the Spirit of our God, which remains to be touched upon — His corporate operations, or His operations as acting in connection with the body of Christ, both as maintaining, and the very centre of, its unity; and also as ministering in the diversity of His gifts; and also the distinction between this and His individual presence in the believer.

This last difference will be found to be important, and to flow from, and be connected with, the whole order of the economy of grace, of which the Spirit of God is the great agent in us, and though not received there, still in a certain sense in testimony in the world.

This difference depends on the relative character which Christ stands in: first, with the Father, as Son, and us by adoption made sons with Him: and, secondly, with God, as the Head of the body, which is His fulness the Church. We shall find the Scriptures speak definitely of both, and distinctly: in one, the Lord Jesus holds a more properly divine relationship with the Father, and introduces us by adoption into something of the enjoyment of that nearness; in the other, a relationship (though all be divine) yet more connected with His human nature and His offices in that, and therefore God is spoken of as His God. The distinction and reality of these two things are expressed by the blessed Lord going away. Having accomplished the redemption, which enabled Him to present His brethren along with Himself as sons to the Father, in His (the Father's) house, spotless, and sons by adoption, and to assume His place as the Head of the body, the Church, He did not yet allow Himself to be touched and worshipped as in bodily presence in His earthly kingdom; for He was not yet ascended to His Father, so that He could bring forth the fulness of His glory, and that that kingdom should be manifestly of the Father, and have its root and source in that higher glory; but putting His friends, and that for the first time, into the place of sons and brethren, He says to them (thus setting the saints, and Himself for them, in their place), "Go, tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God"; thus establishing these two relationships, and His disciples along with Himself in them.
106 Then the Lord ascended up on high for the accomplishment in power of what He now spoke of, in the truth and efficacy of the work which He had accomplished, and the value of His presented Person before the Father, as well as the blood by which sin was put away.

On this statement in John hangs in fact the distinction to which I have alluded, followed up in Scripture by many other passages. It is the definite revelation of the characters in which Jesus Christ was going away, and which He was to sustain in our behalf on high, placing us in fellowship with God and the Father in them. There was another point, however, connected with this, involved in the position which Christ assumed: He is the displayer of the divine glory, His Father's glory. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He shall appear in the Father's glory. He was on earth "God manifest in the flesh," seen too of angels: again, "the brightness of God's glory, the express image of his person." His glory too was sonship, as of the only begotten of the Father, as again, "the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell; and, as afterwards stated, in fact, as in good pleasure, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Thus we see the Person of the Lord Jesus, the place in which divine glory is in every sense manifested. But He is now hid in God: that is the position which He has now taken. And thereon the Holy Ghost is sent down into the world to maintain the witness and manifestation of His glory (not brought out yet visibly on earth, but personally accomplished on high, "crowned with glory and honour"), and to be the earnest and testimony of His title to the earth. The Church on earth is the place and depositary of this. "He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

107 Now, the Holy Ghost, as thus sent down from heaven, is the witness of what Christ is there for us towards the Father; and what His title is as of God towards the world and specially therein what the power of the hope of the calling and inheritance of God in the saints is. The enjoyment and testimony of these things may be much blended in the operations of the present Spirit; but they are distinct. As for example, the display of my portion in Christ as the Son before the Father may fill my heart and make me a witness and a testimony of it, to the blessing and comfort of the Church, if the Lord accompany it with the suitable gift of communication; and the power of it in my soul in joy is intimately blended with the thing to be expressed; because so the Holy Ghost acts in this work. It is therefore said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Still they are quite distinct: for a man may have these things shewn to his soul, and enjoy them, and yet not have the gift to communicate them to others; though they be the deep (possibly, I suppose, the deeper) joy of his own: so that, though connected when both are there, they are distinct things. I suppose that those who have gift of testimony have often found as much (or more) joy in hearing the blessed things of Christ, as in uttering them; though the sense and joy of the blessed things may have ministered to their capacity of utterance. I would speak then distinctively of these two points, though their blending, if the Lord will, may be noticed.