

PROVE ALL THINGS ; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.

A printed paper, in the form of a letter, dated June 7th, 1892, having been freely circulated, it is in the interest of truth that the following letters are printed. The letter referred to and marked "A" is given in the appendix to this paper for reference. The reader will notice that it is marked "private," but as the concluding paragraph is an accusation against those who refuse Mr. Raven's teaching, of shifting their ground "until there is no tangible accusation left," the claim of privacy, if admitted, places the author in the position of privately accusing those who do not agree with him.

The accusation of bad spirit brought against all who refuse Mr. Raven's teaching by those who support him, is no new thing; still in saying what I now have to say about those teachings I trust the Lord may not only keep me from saying anything in an unchristian spirit. but also from any unchristian thoughts regarding either him or his followers. I trust too that all who read this paper will refer to Scripture, and to what Mr. Raven has himself said and printed, and judge thereby without partiality all that is said.

Mr. Dennett begins by speaking of those who refuse Mr. Raven's teaching as having "gone out of fellowship." What meaning he attaches to this expression, we must leave to him to explain. The fact is simply that they refuse to have fellowship with evil doctrine, and, in obedience to Scripture, they stand apart from it. What that doctrine is will be seen further on.

He then asserts his discovery of error in "a report" sent him by two brethren "of what took place at the brothers' readings in London," which "compelled" him "to refuse their views," and which led him into "an exhaustive discussion with a brother whose papers had been condemned," and which ended in his "agreement

with him on certainly every material point." He then says that he wrote to myself urging me to seek an interview with this brother (Mr. Reynolds) to ascertain if I had rightly understood him in assailing his views, and that I "positively refused to do" so, and that had I done so "division would have been avoided," he "cannot but think."

The letter marked "B" in the appendix is the one he wrote me. It was in reply to a paper I had written for the "Christian Friend" called "Remarks on John xvii." Letter marked "C" is my reply. The views in question were those put forth by Mr. T. H. Reynolds in the "Voice to the Faithful" for July, 1888. Letters "D" and "E" and "F," refer to those views; letter "F" referring to Mr. Bevir's "Word of Warning," and to my paper on "Possession and Experience." The other letters explain themselves.

Whatever the report may have been by which he says he was misled, these letters show plainly enough Mr. Dennett's estimate of the teaching from his own personal knowledge of it. My object however is not to fix blame upon him, but to show to others how, by disregarding Scripture, one, once clear and decided as to erroneous teaching, may fall into the very thing he condemned. An interview, to discuss, verbally, printed and published error with its author, may seem gracious, but Scripture warns us to avoid evil, to touch it not, and to stand apart from it. To discuss it with its author is to accredit oneself with power to discern, expose, and refute—one is really running into danger, and, in self-confidence, courting defeat. How much this has been the case with leading brethren in all this matter, does not need pointing out.

Mr. Dennett further asserts that he "never at any period of the controversy, saw any ground for division," but claims "to canvass and to discuss public teaching," "if need arises, strongly," and that it "never entered" his "mind that there were fundamental errors of doctrine," or "any departure, indeed, from the truth to justify the unrighteous charges that have been made." At one time he thought the difference "radical" (see letter F), and that silence would be "fatal," that the new teaching was "destructive of the teaching of John," "a revolt against the teaching of J. N. D." (letter G), that "men are now more than the truth," and that "nothing is withdrawn at Greenwich," where the teachings of Mr. T. H. Reynolds in the "Voice to the

Faithful " " have full sway," after they had been professedly apologized for and explained !

To meet all this he "claims to canvass and to discuss public teaching, and to do this, if the need arises, strongly," urging that "it has been in this way that the truth is preserved." One may well ask why did he ever leave the Baptist, or any other religious connection in which he may have been, for according to this he might have preserved whatever truth he had among them by discussing and canvassing what was said ? It is the way truth is lost, not the way in which it is preserved. What becomes too of the Scriptures which insist on separation, such as 2 Cor. vi., 17, 18 ; Rom. xvi., 17, 18 ; 2 Thess. iii., 14, and many other passages ? Paul, too, instead of withdrawing the disciples from the influence of evil, Acts xix., 9, ought to have contented himself with canvassing and discussing, and would thus, according to Mr. Dennett, have preserved the truth !

I do not trouble about the term "unrighteous charges" ; of course to him they are unrighteous, as he does not see the ground for their being made, although there must have been something to canvass and discuss, or he would not have found it needful to assert his claim to do so. But let us see how far his remedy has been successful in what he calls "preserving the truth." To begin with, we may note that the truth as to separation from evil teaching, as incumbent upon believers, is given up, and public discussion is declared to be sufficient to preserve the truth amongst them. Has it done so ? Has there been, and is there now any ear, or opportunity for such public canvassing of the new views, as he claims ? Let Mr. Dennett's own report of his "unpleasant incident at Plymouth" answer ; (see letter G in appendix). And what is to be done when "The saints are grieved beyond measure, but are helpless ?" What if there is no one to publicly canvass and discuss the ministry, and all the brothers go with it ? Is a poor God-fearing sister, seeking to walk by the word of her God, to remain in association with what the word and her conscience show her to be evil, waiting for someone to discuss it in public ? And after public discussion, if the same teaching is persisted in, what is to be done ? Mr. Dennett's remedy is no remedy at all—it is a mere excuse, and a shallow one too, for remaining in association with persons, with liberty "if need arises" to discuss "strongly" their

teaching ; separation from it he condemns. And see where his private discussions of "radical" differences, and teaching "destructive of the teaching of John" by his own showing, has landed him—he finds himself in "agreement," he tells us, with the author of them on "certainly every material point"! , Letter A.

In the last sentence of his letter Mr. Dennett so far from proving that the truth is preserved by canvassing and discussing public ministry, shows how contaminating the influence of evil is. He says, speaking of our Lord, "That He ever has been—ever was, is, and will be—the true God, that down here on earth He was God manifest in flesh, and that, *as glorified, He is the divine and heavenly Man*, we will hold with all our hearts." The reader will note how all reference to the false teaching on eternal life as well as to other doctrines which have been objected to is omitted here. The sentence I have put in italics is however sufficient to show how fully these errors, and this form of teaching have been imbibed. Mr. Dennett's sentence is in perfect accord with the new teaching, viz. : that our Lord "*as glorified* is the divine and heavenly Man." But was He not the Divine and heavenly Man from the incarnation onward—always and fully that, and nothing short of it? Was He not always the Lord from heaven, "the Son of man who is in heaven." Has being glorified made Him Divine and heavenly? We need but to read the record of the life of Him whom God presents to us as "My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," to shrink with horror from such a notion. There was a time when Mr. Dennett felt that to "obscure a bit of the truth" was to "obscure a ray of Christ's glory." How much, alas! is obscured by this, and under the guise too of bringing out what is thought to be especially heavenly! The blinding influence at work is terribly manifest in all this, for such writers fail even to see how that if it is "*as glorified*" our Lord is the Divine and heavenly Man, it detracts from what He ever was as Man here on earth, upon whom the heavens opened, and upon whom the Spirit descended as a dove and remained, and to whom the Father said with infinite satisfaction; "Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I have found my delight." That our blessed Lord is the Divine and heavenly Man is most surely true, but it is not in His being glorified that He is so, for He was ever it, and nothing less, when here on earth in the days when He

offered up supplications and entreaties, and was heard because of His piety. It is a qualifying of His Person, and therefore an unholy surmise to say that "*as glorified*" He is the Divine and heavenly Man. He is the Divine and heavenly Man *now glorified*—He was the Divine and heavenly Man when humbled here—He is not more it now that He is glorified than He was before. No possible change could take place in His Person, nor could His being the Divine and heavenly Man depend upon, or result from His being glorified. Take Mr. Dennett's sentence as it stands, and it comes to this (one shrinks from penning the words) that He who was God manifest in the flesh was human and earthly when down here, and that He is now "*as glorified, the divine and heavenly Man*"—a conclusion one would hope he would shrink from with horror. But it is just where all this unholy and speculative teaching leads. It may perhaps be said Mr. Dennett only means that our glorified Lord is the Divine and heavenly Man; his words say more than this, for they assert that His being so is the consequence of His being glorified. The use of language of a kind adapted by its ambiguity to convey error while preserving the mere semblance of truth is the most subtle form of deception.

We may now turn to Mr. Raven's Lectures on Colossians delivered in Park Street, in June, 1891, where, speaking of chap. ii. 11—15 he says: "What is actually true in Christ "is morally true in us. What I mean is this; that for Him "circumcision has actually taken place in the cross, and that "He is actually cut off from everything after the flesh, in "order that He might be exclusively unto God, 'In that he "died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he "liveth unto God.' He is no longer known after the flesh. "Then He is risen, that is, the bands of death are loosed; "that is what I understand by resurrection. And more "than that, He is quickened; that is, He is raised again from "the dead in what I may call actual suitability as man for "glory. Not but what even when here after the flesh "He was morally suitable to glory; it has often been "said He might have retired from the mount of trans- "figuration to glory; the glory saluted Him; but He "was raised again from the dead in a condition of power "and glory suited to the place He was to take as man on "high," (pages 45, 46). There can be no mistake as to the

author's meaning here : it is just what Mr. Dennett says in his creed. According to this, our Lord's circumcision took place actually in the Cross, where He was "actually cut off from everything after the flesh, in order that He might be exclusively unto God." Rom. vi., 10, is then quoted as applying to our Lord personally, as if it meant He was actually cut off from His own flesh, in order to be exclusively unto God. Was not our Lord always "exclusively unto God?" Did He not through the eternal Spirit offer Himself without spot unto God? Did His "flesh and blood condition," of which Mr. Raven speaks elsewhere, in the smallest degree hinder His being "exclusively unto God?" Was there anything in His flesh, or "after the flesh" in Him that needed to be cut off from "in order that He might be unto God?" Was not all in Him, and all about Him always exclusively unto God? At the supreme moment, on the Cross, when He was made sin for us, and when God hid His face from Him, was there anything in Himself but what was perfectly and absolutely acceptable to God, and "exclusively unto God?" How could He otherwise have been made sin? What He was then and there made for us was hateful to God most surely; but had He not Himself been wholly apart from it all in Himself, He could not have been made it.

It may perhaps be said Mr. Raven does not mean this. But what he says is plain enough and the meaning clear enough too. He says of our Lord, "in order that He might be exclusively unto God," "He is actually cut off from every thing after the flesh," which in the passage he quotes (to sustain his doctrine) is called "sin." And he says that this is "actually true in Christ" and "morally true in us." He says "in order that He might be exclusively unto God"—exclusive of what? And see how he proceeds, he says our Lord when here after the flesh was morally suitable to glory. Was that all He was? According to Mr. Raven His actual suitability came to Him through death, and that He is in that state of suitability only as raised from the dead. He says: "He might have retired from the mount of transfiguration to glory;" but according to him, He must, even so, have passed through circumcision or death "in order that He might be exclusively unto God." Mr. Dennett says our Lord "as glorified is the divine and heavenly man." He may try to excuse

himself by accusing those who refuse Mr. Raven's teaching with having "time after time shifted the ground of their attack, until there is no tangible accusation left," but here is a sample of what he is himself in fellowship with, and of what he himself now holds. For myself, I can only say through grace, I would rather sit alone for the rest of my days than go along with such Christ-dishonouring, soul-defiling teaching, and can only thank and praise God for His marvellous and undeserved grace and mercy that has kept me out of it.

The first part of Rom. vi., 10, refers solely to the time when He who knew no sin was made sin for us. To refer it to any other period of His blessed life, or to any thing in Himself, or state down here, is blasphemy, *i.e.*, an impious defamation, or speaking evil of the Person of the Lord—no matter by whom or in what connection it may be uttered. "The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him"—"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always"—"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again"—are passages that refute Mr. Raven's notion, without going further. It is a revival, in a more specious form, of the old Newtonian heresy exposed and judged half a century ago.

It is possible that refuge may be sought for these notions in the Synopsis, I will therefore quote from it on the verse in question. "Dying, He died *unto* sin. He went down "even to death rather than fail in maintaining the glory of "God. Until death, and even in death, He had to do with "sin, though there were none in Him, and with temptation ; "but there He has done with it all for ever." "Thus He "has nothing more to do with sin. He lives only perfectly "without reference in His life to any thing else, unto God. "In that He lives, His life is in relationship to God only. "This is a wonderful expression. As to faithfulness His "life was spent for God, He lived to God. But now His "life knows nothing but God" (edit. 3, vol. iv., p. 169). It will be observed that Mr. Raven says "that He might *be* "exclusively unto God." And again, Synopsis on 2 Cor. v. "Christ, so far as in connection with this world below, is "dead. He might have been known as the Messiah, "living on the earth, and in connection with promises

“made to men living on the earth in the flesh. The apostle no longer knew Him thus. In fact, Christ, as bearing that character was dead; and now, being risen, He has taken a new and heavenly character.” The reader will note the difference between our Lord’s taking “a new and heavenly character,” and Mr. Dennett’s assertion that He is “*as glorified, the divine and heavenly man,*” also Mr. Raven’s interpretation of our Lord’s not being known “after the flesh” as he says.

That various points (for alas! there are many of them) in these new teachings have been taken up by different persons is true enough, but the ground of objection to them, one and all, has been and is the same—they are unscriptural and Christ-dishonouring. New and further developments of the teaching have been put forth by its propagators and defenders, as in the case noted above, and as is too clearly visible in Mr. Raven’s printed Lectures above referred to, and his “Blessings, earthly and heavenly,” October, 1891, and his “Lectures on the first Epistle of John,” 1891. I will therefore quote from them that those with him may see what it is they are in fellowship with, and that so far from canvassing and discussing having removed, or even checked the evil, it has only grown and widened into proportions sufficient to alarm and arouse the most callous. But before doing so, I will briefly repeat what Mr. Raven taught more than two years ago—teaching which remains to the present hour unwithdrawn and unqualified. It was written and maintained that it is monstrous to speak of the Babe in the manger being the exhibition of eternal life. In December, 1889, Mr. Raven wrote “The key to almost all that I have said lies in my objection to apply in an absolute way to the believer in his mixed condition down here, statements in Scripture which refer to what he is, or what is true of him, viewed as in Christ.” This remains precisely as when first printed, and supplies, in an unmistakable way, the manner of his handling of Scripture—that he assumes to himself the right and capacity to decide what Scriptures apply to the believer in an absolute way, and what do not do so. A more audacious assertion of heresy could not well be. Heresy, as has long been well known, is the choosing what one will have of the word of God, and what one will not have. It is derived from the Greek word *hairesis* which means “to choose.” He has further main-

tained, again and again, that eternal life is not Christ personally, but "the blessedness in which as Man, He was with the Father," and that "for us it is the heavenly relationship and blessedness in which, in the Son, man is now placed, and lives before the Father." These remain as when first put forth, in spite of all the discussion of and objection to them. No honest mind will accuse those who point out the advances made in the same line of error, with shifting their ground. Alas! the grounds for refusing this teaching are more than they ever were, as may be seen by the papers above referred to, and indeed Mr. Dennett's own letter of June 7th, 1892.

In his paper on "Blessings earthly and heavenly," Mr. Raven tells us that reconciliation is our being apart from the flesh. Here are his words: "We are placed "before Him, constituted holy, and we have liberty to enter "into the holiest. There is no place too holy for a Christian; "what can be holier than the holiest? *If I think of myself "now with God, I see there is nothing whatever contrary: every "bit of contrariety is gone in the death of the Lord Jesus "Christ; there is not only expiation, but I am before God "apart from the flesh, so that I can be with Him in perfect "happiness, liberty, and peace. I am constituted holy, "unblameable, and unreprouable; it is really what God "Himself is, and that is what we are constituted before Him."* The italics are mine. According to this view, it is God who sees me "apart from sin," and who is thus reconciled to me, not I reconciled to Him. But he goes further and says that if he thinks of himself now with God he sees there is nothing whatever contrary. What is this but self deception, and self satisfaction? How differently Scripture speaks; "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us:" "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am" (not "I was") "chief;" and many other passages. Scripture says we are "reconciled to God by the death of His Son," not by looking at ourselves with satisfaction, and finding nothing contrary there. Indeed, Mr. Raven's notion of reconciliation is wholly false, and opposed to the simple and plain statements of Scripture. According to him a man is reconciled when he can look at himself, and see nothing contrary there; according to Scripture when

he does so, he deceives himself and the truth is not in him. Who can look upon himself now, either with God or without God, and say he is unblameable and unproveable? Col. i., 21, says: "You, who were once alienated, and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight, if indeed ye abide in the faith founded and firm." The object of His work is here stated, and it is to so present the believer, who is already reconciled to God by the death of His Son. It is not our being thus presented to God that reconciles us, but that being reconciled He will so present us to Him. Moreover, reconciliation has to do with our sins, our acts of sin which we had committed. We were "once alienated, enemies in mind by wicked works," not by our state, albeit that our state was one of enmity—a state of enmity produced by our own wicked works. What reconciles us to God is not our change of state, but His taking our sins—the very things which made us enemies to Him—and laying them upon the head of His own beloved Son, saying to us, in so doing, "Be ye reconciled unto Me"; see 2 Cor. v., 19, 20. But what is worse than Mr. Raven's false teaching about reconciliation is his speaking of God as holy, unblameable and unproveable. He says: "I am constituted holy, unblameable, and unproveable; it is really what God Himself is, and that is what we are constituted before Him." A more irreverent statement was never penned. Mortal man, presuming to speak of his Maker as "unblameable and unproveable"! In whose sight, and in whose judgment? All sense of who He is is lost indeed.

On the next page, Mr. Raven says our Lord "is heavenly, because He is out of heaven." But He was, is, and ever will be heavenly in Himself, not because He is "out of," or comes from heaven. The notion of His being "heavenly because He is out of heaven" is really a denial of His Person, and makes His heavenliness depend upon the place from which He came, instead of what He is in Himself. It is an insult to His saints to speak to them thus of their Lord. It is all a tampering with the Person and glory of our Lord, in order to support his own preconceived notions. So on p. 15, he says: "I have often coveted the ability "to present Christ in glory to the saints; I should like to be "able to minister to the saints what Paul spoke of when he

“said, “I determined to know nothing among you save “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” Who has an adequate “idea of the greatness and glory of that risen Man”? This may sound well, but it is all worse than folly. No one ever had or could have any knowledge or sense whatever of the greatness or glory of Christ, or indeed that He is the risen Man at all, save as revealed by the Holy Spirit in the written word. To covet the ability to present Christ in glory to the saints is mere self-laudation, and coveting to go beyond what Scripture says of Him. If Mr. Raven will read his Bible simply, he will see that 1 Cor. ii., 2, which he quotes, has nothing whatever to do with Christ in glory at all, but refers to the Apostle’s determination, in ministering to the Corinthians, to know nothing of party or party spirit, but Jesus Christ only, and Him in the lowest place of self-abasement, the Cross, Phil. ii. He talks (p. 2) of taking “divine ideas out of the connection in which they are set in Scripture,” and (p. 58), of getting “your ideas from the fountain head.” Scripture, however, does not give us “ideas,” but imparts Divine knowledge to us by the Holy Ghost. All that God would have us know about the risen Man is revealed in the written word; see 1 Cor. ii., 10 to end. Was it the Holy Spirit who fully “knoweth the things of God” that led Mr. Raven to covet the ability he speaks of? If he fails to discern the source of his desire, others can do so, and refuse it as mere fleshly mind which leads into every extravagance and error. He gets “ideas” and then weaves out a theory upon them, and perverts all Scripture that refutes them. As a sample of this, see his Lecture V. on the first epistle of John; he says (p. 71) “The living stone” “was Christ as made known to Peter by the Father as the “Son of the living God. Peter confesses Him thus, and the “Lord says to him, ‘Flesh and blood hath not revealed it “unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven;’ which “means, I judge” (says Mr. Raven) “that *the flesh and blood condition even in Christ had not in itself revealed it.*” This is simply the denial of Jesus Christ come in flesh. If the flesh and blood condition of our Lord did not reveal Him as “The Christ, the Son of the living God” (the words Peter used—he said nothing about “a living stone”) what did it reveal? Peter did not apprehend it of his own natural capacity of course—man’s apprehension is never the measure of what is revealed by God—but to say our

Lord's own "flesh and blood condition" (one shrinks from the use of such words, in speaking of Him) "had not in itself revealed it" is nothing less than the denial of His Person, and, as I have said, is really the denial of "Jesus Christ come in flesh." I pass over his assertion (p. 73), "Let the sun shine as brightly as it may, if all the people in the world were blind the sun would not be manifested." It is foolish. But, to try to reason from man's apprehension upwards is false and ruinous; if you begin with man you end with man (for, after all, man is but a finite being) and the conclusion at which you arrive is that if you do not see the sun, or feel its heat, there is no sun manifested at all. All is made to depend upon man and his fancied powers of apprehension, his fancied capacity and feelings, and the next step will be that what man does not see or feel has no existence. Can folly go further?

But the solemn part of this reasoning is that God is arraigned before man, and man sets himself up to judge of God. So (p. 72) Mr. Raven says: "Eternal life was not what "was outwardly expressed in the flesh and blood condition, "for that condition was for God's will to come to an end "in death." So that, because our Lord "became obedient unto death" and laid down His life that He might take it again, eternal life was not outwardly expressed by Him in His "flesh and blood condition" down here! "It was not what the Lord was as seen on the surface," (p. 73.) "It was really the Person of Christ, but in a sense apart from what He took in partaking of flesh and blood," (p. 72). "They" (the Apostles) "knew Christ distinct from what He was as man here after the flesh. They saw "that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us," (p. 72). How "the Word of life" could be handled (1 John i., 1) apart from "the flesh and blood condition" of our Lord, Mr. Raven does not stop to explain. It upsets his theory, and therefore reference to it is omitted. But what imagination, what folly it all is! Scripture (Luke xxiv., 39) distinctly tells us of our Lord's presenting Himself to His poor, unbelieving disciples in His condition of flesh after death, inviting them to handle Him, and eating before them. Acts i., 10, says they saw Him go up bodily, "and a cloud received Him out of their sight." How does Mr. Raven know the Apostles saw eternal life distinct from the Person of our Lord as man here after the flesh? Scripturo

says they did not, but that they heard and saw and handled Him as the Word of life—Mr. Raven says they discerned it apart from Him as Man. Nothing more clearly shows the morbid, imaginative reasoning of all these notions than this. It is a flat denial of Scripture, and makes our Lord's humanity a mere incumbrance to Him, for he says our Lord's flesh and blood condition did not reveal to Peter that He was the Christ, and that eternal life was apart from His flesh and blood, and had to be so discerned by the Apostles, and that our Lord is by death "actually cut off from everything after the flesh in order that He might be exclusively unto God." We may remark, in passing, that at the time when he says the Apostles so discerned what he says they did, they had *not yet* received the Holy Ghost. He tells us elsewhere that "to talk of having eternal life without the Holy Spirit is an absurdity;" see printed letter of December, 1889.

I will here quote for the reader to judge of Mr. Raven's basis of teaching, a sentence on p. 50 of his Lectures on the Epistle of John: "If you desire to understand Scripture, your minds must be capable of grasping the thought of moral being as something distinct from our present actual being as men upon earth, an inner man." Thus you must mentally abstract yourself from yourself, and then you arrive at the inner man! And this is put forth as godly and heavenly teaching! Where is there any such thought in Scripture? Conscience is left out and an effort of the mind is put in its place, in order to understand Scripture. And now see where this mental culture leads him. On p. 34 he says: "Speaking about myself in flesh down here I could not say I have passed out of death into life." P. 35. "No person can rightly say they have got eternal life except as having passed out of death into life." This last sentence is hardly grammatical, still the meaning is clear enough, and shows why Mr. Raven has all along been unable to say that he has eternal life. The mental culture he insists on in order to form or arrive at the moral being or inner man has so clouded 1 John v., 13 to him ("These things have I written unto you which believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life,") that he makes it conditional upon 1 John iii., 14 which he cannot say about himself "in flesh down here," albeit Scripture says "We know that we have passed from death into life, because we

love the brethren." Scripture says: "*We know that we have passed*"; Mr. Raven makes it a process to be gone through, which can not be said to be accomplished, speaking about ourselves in flesh. Our Lord's own words too, in John v., 24 (He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life) cannot, according to Mr. Raven, be said of any believer whilst "in flesh down here." He adds: "Speaking of myself in the glory of a child of God, I say I have passed out of death into life; that is, faith has passed into a new place and relationship before the Father, where it is totally impossible for death ever to come." But Scripture says "We," not "faith" has so passed; that we do so by faith is true enough, but it is we who do so and not faith—we down here in flesh—so John v., 24, "He that hears" etc.; it says nothing about "the glory of a child of God." It is simply a matter of God's word and belief of it. The reader will no doubt notice here Mr. Raven's estimate of eternal life, as being a place and relationship where death can never come; he will not allow that it is Christ* but a place and relationship beyond the reach of death—as low an "idea" of eternal life as can well be. Mr. Raven's theory is (for it is but theory) that the believer has in one sense passed out of "death into life," and that in another sense he has not done so. Scripture says the believer is dead in the one case and alive in the other, and has so to reckon himself. It is not "the glory of a child of God," but the fact of his being so.

He then says, (p. 55) speaking of our Lord: "Death could, when God so willed it, touch His life as a man down here upon earth, what He was after the flesh (though there was no liability to death), but death could not touch His relationship as man with the Father." This is essential to his "idea" of eternal life being a place where death cannot come, and denies our Lord's being Eternal Life when down here. It is wholly opposed to Scripture and goes to the very foundation of the Atonement. He says, "Death could, when God so willed it, touch His life as a man down here upon earth," Our Lord's words are: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Infinite value attaches to our Lord's death in that it was

* See concluding note, page 34.

an act of obedience which He and He alone could render. He, and He only, could lay down His life, just as He, and He only, could take it again.

It may be said that Isaiah liii., 12. "He hath poured out His soul unto death," lends colour to Mr. Raven's teaching; but when compared with verse 10, it will be seen at once that our Lord's obedience extended even unto death, see Philip-
 pians ii., 8. So "He hath put Him to grief"; the consequences of yielding Himself up to God that God's glory might be maintained, and our Lord's perfect obedience in them all can never be confounded without losing the sense and the glory of His blessed Person. God's dealing with Him even when made sin for us did not annul or touch, even remotely, His perfect obedience. It will be noted it is not "thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin," but "If His soul," etc. Again, Psalm xxii., 15, may perhaps be referred to "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death"; but this does not in any way touch the fact of His obedience, full and perfect obedience to death for the maintenance of the glory of God, nor does it in the least degree teach that death had power over Him when God so willed it. He yielded Himself as Man completely unto God, and He alone as Man could so to yield Himself, for He was ever perfect—we ever failing. To man, naturally, this is incomprehensible, for man's life is already a forfeited life, and death reigns over him, no matter how he may struggle against it. The message of God to the godless man in Luke xvi. was "Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." With our Lord, and with Him alone, life was laid down by Himself an act, the supreme act of obedience. It can, in no wise, be said that as Man He was subject to death, for "death is the wages of sin"; He went into death voluntarily, and He alone had power to do so. Nor can it be said that His Godhead preserved His Manhood; His reply to Satan (Luke iv., 3, 4) is full evidence of this. All such thoughts destroy simplicity, and lead the soul into subtle reasonings of the human mind. In the detail given us in the Gospels of His wondrous and blessed death for us, it is always specially noted that His strength remained to the end; see Matthew xxvii., 46, "Jesus cried with a loud voice"; Mark xv., 34, "Jesus cried with a loud voice"; and Luke xxiii., 46, "When Jesus had cried with a loud voice"; while in John xix., it is said, "Jesus said, It is finished: and bowed His head and gave up the ghost."

I will here quote again from Mr. Darby "On the
 "humanity of Christ:" "When God was no longer
 "pleased to sustain in this world, man becomes mortal and
 "his strength is exhausted : in fact, according to the ways
 "and will of God, he attains to the age of near one
 "thousand years when God so wills, seventy when He finds
 "it good. Only God would have this terminate, that one
 "should die sooner or later when sin enters, save changing
 "those who survive to the coming of Jesus, because He
 "has overcome death. Now, God was in Christ, which
 "changed all in this respect (not as to the reality of His
 "humanity, with all its affections, its feelings, its natural
 "wants of soul and body ; all which were in Jesus, and
 "were consequently affected by all that surrounded Him,
 "only according to the Spirit, and without sin). No one
 "takes His life from Him ; He gives it up, but at the
 "moment willed of God. He is abandoned in fact to the
 "effect of man's iniquity, because He came to accomplish
 "the will of God ; He suffers Himself to be crucified and
 "slain. Only the moment in which He yields up, His
 "spirit is in His hands. He works no miracle to hinder
 "the effect of the cruel means of death which man
 "employed, in order to guard His humanity from their
 "effect ; He leaves it to their effect. His divinity is not
 "employed to secure Himself from it, to secure Himself
 "from death ; but it is employed to add to it all His moral
 "value, all His perfection to His obedience. He works no
 "miracle not to die, but He works a miracle in dying.
 "He acts according to His divine rights in dying, but not
 "in guarding Himself from death ; for He surrenders His
 "soul to His Father as soon as all is finished."

Mr. Raven may think to guard his statement by saying
 "though there was no liability to death ;" but this does not
 really meet the point at issue. What he says is that,
 although there was no liability to death, yet death could
 touch, when God so willed it, our Lord's life as a Man down
 here, what He was after the flesh. His assertion *as to the
 power of death* is wholly without warrant from Scripture, and
 although he may insert "though there was no liability to
 death," his doing so shows how open to question his
 assertion is when it needs such a reservation to be made.
 But, as I have said his reservation as to there being no
 liability does not touch the point, for it really contradicts

his statement. If there was (and blessed be God it was so) no liability in Him to death, evidently death could never have touched His life, save as He, *in sovereign power*, permitted it to do so, by subjecting Himself to it. The reservation shows that Mr. Raven is at least aware of the peril of his unscriptural statement, but he is powerless to resist what Satan is seeking to present through what he says. The enemy ever seeks to insinuate error, and when once a writer is launched on, to say the least, a doubtful course, he finds himself powerless to resist the evil, although conscience may impel him to try to guard what he says from what he still feels to be wrong. Moreover, why should any assertions or suggestions be made that go beyond what Scripture says, or that need such special reservations as to evil? Do they not in themselves show the power of the masterhand in deceit and evil behind the poor human vessel? Mr. Raven's reservation may at a hasty glance seem to cover any suggestion of evil in what he says, but it does not do so. Had our Lord been *liable* to death He would have been *liable* to the wages of sin—a most horrible blasphemy. We can thank God that, so far at least, Mr. Raven refuses such a thought. But what he asserts is that our Lord's life as a Man down here, was under the power of death when God so willed it. This precludes obedience on our Lord's part, and in its place puts the will of God and the power of death. And note the especial evil of the notion, for he says, "death could not touch His relationship "as man with the Father"—he contrasts our Lord's life with His relationship, just as if His blessed life was not always and ever one of perfect relationship with the Father. The Lord Himself tells us His death was His own act of obedience, and presented ground to His Father for loving Him. Of this Mr. Raven knows nothing; if his view of our Lord's death could be true, our Lord's words have no meaning. Instead of His obedience affording ground for His Father's loving Him, He had to be resigned to the power of death and the will of God. What too becomes of "I delight to do Thy will, O God"? Phil. ii. says He "humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death." Dear reader, we cannot afford to admit any thought or suggestion that infringes upon our blessed Lord's perfect voluntary obedience unto and in death, no matter how it may appear to be guarded and gilded over by admissions of His not

being liable to death. The whole train of thought and teaching is evil. Mr. Raven confounds our Lord's yielding Himself unto death with the power of death and the will of God. He argues from what man is as man upon earth to what he conceives our Lord must have been in becoming Man. Had he been content to say our Lord yielded Himself unto death for the maintenance of the glory of God, suffering the Just for unjust, to bring us to Him, none would have objected, and there would have been no need for his reservation, "though there was no liability to death." He forgets too, or ignores, that it was only on the Cross that our Lord addressed God as "My God," and that elsewhere it was always "Father," His words too were "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me"?

So estranged by wicked works is man from God, that it is beyond his power to conceive the thought of the sinless perfection of our Lord as Man down here; naturally he judges of His humanity from the standpoint of his own human condition, and thus talks about our Lord's having "links after the flesh" &c. (p. 75). The truth is that our Lord's perfect humanity is as much beyond man's mind to apprehend as His Godhead. All that He did as Man down here was for the glory of God, notably shewn in John xi. Man, alienated from God by wicked works, seeks to be independent—he is an enemy and a rebel, and the last thought he has is to be obedient to God. The law, and the old Testament has fully proved this. Our Lord Jesus had no thought but that of obedience to God, let it cost what it might, and He fully proved this in voluntarily going into death, that God might be glorified, and vindicated in the very place of sin.

If death had power, even when God so willed it, to touch His life, then His death was an act of resignation, and not of obedience; and His own power to lay it down was no power at all, because when God so willed it He had to die. It is all beside the mark, a mere throwing of dust in the eyes, to say "death could not touch His relationship as man with the Father." It had nothing to do with that relationship. He was in that relationship fully when He laid down His life, and He tells us His doing so was ground for His Father's loving Him, and was in obedience to His Father's commandment. Mr. Raven's assertion saps the very foundation of the faith. Accept it, and Atonement is gone. "Who through the eternal Spirit

offered Himself without spot unto God," is swept away by it—for if death had power over our Lord's life down here then He had none, but was subject to death and obliged to be so "when God so willed it."

In keeping with this is the repeated assertion that (p. 90) "Faith was perfect when Christ was down here, and thus "He was ever in spirit with the Father," and (p. 75) "In Christ faith was perfect, so that the communion proper to what He was was perfectly unhindered." Thus our Lord's being in Spirit with the Father depended upon His faith, and His communion likewise was unhindered because His faith was perfect. But He said "I and my Father are one," "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," "I am in the Father and the Father in me." Mr. Raven ignores all this, and makes our Lord's communion with the Father contingent upon His faith. But apart from this, it is a false principle to lay down, that communion depends upon faith. Of course we have none apart from faith; but Scripture plainly states that it depends upon walk. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." He adds: (p. 75) "He had His links after the flesh, but they did not interfere with that"—as if any one but himself ever thought they could. Our Lord's "links after the flesh" as he calls them (a far from reverent way of speaking of Him) were perfect, and were in full communion with the Father; "Wist ye not I must be about my Father's business;" "Woman behold thy Son," and to the disciple "Behold thy mother." Mr. Raven speaks of our Lord's "links after the flesh" as if they *could* have interfered with His communion, but did not do so. And note, he says "after" not "with" the flesh. This is all part of his unholy system that our Lord should "bring to an end *in Himself* the moral condition of man being made 'a sacrifice for sin'" (p. 17) and that "He is actually cut off from every thing after the flesh, in order that He might be exclusively unto God."

As a further sample of Mr. Raven's system of reasoning, and arguing out mentally what God says, I will quote from p. 83, of his Lectures on the first Epistle of John: "Eternal life is in the Son; and I have the Son, and having the Son I have what is in the Son, I have the eternal life in Him." Let us hear what Scripture says as to this: "And this is

the witness that God hath given to us eternal life ; and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life : he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God " that ye may know that ye have eternal life. If we take Scripture simply as it speaks, the meaning is clear enough. " He that hath the Son hath life." He is Himself the life that we have in having Him. " And this life is in His Son," is in regard to us—the life that we have is not in us but in Him. He Himself is the life which we have in Him. And this is of vital importance, for Mr. Raven's argument is that in " having the Son we have what is in Him ;" not Himself, mark, but what is in Him. We lose Himself thus, and in exchange get what Mr. Raven tells us is something in Him. Take Col. iii., 4, as God gives it to us—" when Christ appears who is our life"—according to Mr. Raven's teaching it must read " when Christ in whom we have the life appears." Perhaps he may see no difference in the two renderings of the verse, but I think every one who has the Person of our Lord before him, and our blessed prospect in regard to Him, will refuse Mr. Raven's version, and will hold fast what God says so simply and plainly.

It would be wearisome to go into every detail of these worse than erroneous lectures ; one or two more statements however should be noted. On p. 15 he says : " It is a great thing to accept the judgment of the world ; scripture gives it. I accept it, and my experience verifies what scripture says : ' The world passeth away and the lust thereof ; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.' " This thought of " verifying what Scripture says," is not an isolated one in these lectures ; on p. 81 we find : " For the " witness is, that God has given to us eternal life, and this " life is in His Son. How is this verified ? The Spirit is in " the believer, and the Spirit is the truth, and what the " Spirit witnesses is that the believer answers before God to " Christ in glory. I am according to Christ, because the " Spirit is the Spirit of Christ ; and if the Spirit of Christ is " in me it is proof that before God I correspond to Christ, I " am constituted according to Christ in glory." P. 90. " The " burden of all the first part of the epistle is the calling to " mind by the apostle of what had been manifested in Christ " as a man here upon earth : verified I doubt not in the

“resurrection.’ ’ Now the thought of verifying Scripture by experience, is simply infidel. Scripture is the Word of God, and rests upon itself. If it could be verified, or need to be verified by our experience it would cease to be the Word of God to us. Its authority would be in question, and our experience would qualify all its statements. Nothing can well be worse or more destructive than this. Further, the assertion on p. 81 is wholly false, and is an entire perversion of Scripture. It says that the truth “that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” is verified by the Spirit of Christ being in us, which is proof that before God we correspond to Christ. Now the gift of eternal life is always in Scripture connected with new birth, and not specially with the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. I am aware Mr. Raven maintains that “to speak of a believer having eternal life without the Spirit is an absurdity.” But it is one of the root errors of his teaching as to eternal life that he connects it with the presence of the Holy Ghost, and not with the new birth, making it thus a more or less conditional thing, or the result of progress, as we have seen in what he says above (p. 35). “No person can rightly say they have got eternal life except as having passed out of death into life.” Scripture says eternal life is the gift of God; “gift” in the original is a very strong word, and means “the act of favour.” “He that believeth hath everlasting life”—to this Mr. Raven adds, if he has “passed out of death into life.” This is a sample of what his “key” to his teaching produces, viz. : his “objection to apply in an absolute way to the believer in his mixed condition down here, statements in Scripture which refer to what he is, or what is true of him, viewed as in Christ.” Our Lord in John v., 24, says “Verily, verily, I say unto you that he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, liath life eternal, and does not come into condemnation, but is passed out of death into life.” Mr. Raven says no one can rightly (in whose judgment we may ask) say he has got eternal life except as having passed out of death into life. And how is anyone to know that he has so passed, save that the Lord says so of those who hear His word, and believe on Him that sent Him? Our Lord says, “He that heareth . . . and believeth . . . *hath* eternal life . . . is passed out of death into life.” Mr. Raven says, “No one can rightly say

this except as having passed out of death into life," so that, according to him, one must pass out of death into life *before* one can say what the Lord says about us; he puts as a previous process what our Lord puts as an accomplished fact, and the assurance of our not coming into condemnation; Mr. Raven says it is the assurance of having eternal life. Our Lord states it as a fact about us. Mr. Raven makes it a process we have to go through before the fact can be rightly said to be true of us.

And we may ask where in Scripture does it say that the presence of the Holy Spirit in us is proof that we "correspond to Christ." The Spirit occupies us with our unlikeness to Him, in order that we may judge, and confess, and avoid that which is not according to Him; see Gal. v., 17. "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." Rom. viii., 13, 16, 26, &c., &c. The Holy Spirit bears witness to us of what Christ has done, and of what He is, and of His present glory, and that all believers are one in Him, and other like truths; "Shall take of mine and show it unto you." But correspondence to Him is always looked at as a future thing—"predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son"—"being made conformable to His death." In what he says on p. 81, Mr. Raven asserts that the presence of the Holy Spirit in us witnessing that we correspond to Christ, is the proof of our having eternal life. So that our possession of eternal life is not based upon the word of God, and faith in it, but on our own experience—our verification of what God says, by the sense of our correspondence to Christ which, he says, the Spirit witnesses to us. This may suit his system of teaching, his speculative theories, in order to assure himself that what God says is true, but it is wholly opposed not only to the letter but to the Spirit of the written word. As to what he says on p. 90, how what was "manifested in Christ as a man here upon earth," has been "verified in the resurrection," he does not tell us. Was anything needed in order to, or could anything verify God manifest in flesh? Did not all that was manifested in Christ as Man here verify itself? Scripture speaks of the resurrection of our Lord in two ways—as the assurance that our sins are forgiven, 1 Cor. xv.—and the certainty of the judgment of the world in righteousness, Acts xvii, 31. In Rom. i., 4, He is declared to be the Son of God in power, by resurrec-

tion from the dead ; it says nothing about the resurrection verifying what had been manifested in Christ as Man on earth—it would be the denial of the completeness or perfection of what He did so manifest.

There is much more in these lectures of Mr. Raven that is erroneous and subversive of the truth. One statement especially needs to be noticed ; and I would beg all who identify themselves with his teaching to ask themselves before God, if it is possible to accept it without denying God. He says. p. 23, Lectures on Colossians, “ As God created man, man “ could never have gone into the holiest. “ The first man is of “ the earth, earthy.” The earthy man could never go into the “ holiest even as God made him ; and to make a heavenly “ man out of an earthy man, would hardly be consistent “ with His glory.” Mr. Raven evidently can see no difference between “ earthy ” and “ earthly ”—that however is not the point. He says : “ As God created man, man could never have gone into the holiest.” But what is, or ever was the Holiest, but the immediate presence of God, whether on earth or in heaven ? Adam, as made of God not only could go there but actually was there, in perfect innocence, and enjoyment, and peace, not knowing good and evil. To deny this is to make out God’s work imperfect and faulty. It may be said that Mr. Raven is speaking of reconciliation, and so he is—but Adam did not need to be reconciled ; he was as man on earth, perfectly innocent, and at rest in God’s presence. It was only when sin came in and he was guilty that he fled at the sound of God’s voice. God’s presence is the Holiest, and there is nothing holier than His presence. That the believer is now through the blood of Christ brought into the Holiest, the immediate presence of God in another way than that in which Adam as made by God was placed there is surely true, but to confound the state of the person who is there, and the way in which he is brought there, with the place itself is simply to have no sense whatever of what the place is. And see where this unholy rambling leads—to denying the perfection of God’s own work, and then saying God could not alter it consistently with His own glory ; just as if it was needful that He should do so. To complete this “ idea,” he says (p. 24), “ Sin has come in, and in the death of Christ God brought in death upon the first man’s state.” But Scripture says death came in before Christ died, and came in too by

sin, "by the offence of one, death reigned." Through the death of Christ God brought in not death on man's first state, but life and incorruptibility to light through the Gospel, and the privilege and blessing to the believer to reckon himself to be dead in the death of Christ and alive unto God. But it is only another sample of Mr. Raven's perversion of the truth, and at the expense of our Lord's Person.

APPENDIX.

[PRIVATE.]

A

Lansdowne Road, Bromley, Kent,

Beloved Brother,

June 7, 1892.

Enclosed is the copy of a letter of mine, which has been widely circulated by those who have gone out of fellowship, and concerning which you make some inquiries. A few words of explanation will suffice.

As you will observe, it was written three years ago last February, about sixteen months before the sad division which we so deeply deplore. It was written, moreover, in the intimacy of private correspondence with one, not then residing in this country, who had shown me much kindness, and whose hospitality I had often accepted. We were in the habit of corresponding in a private and confidential manner on questions of truth and doctrine, and hence in an unreserved way. I cannot well conceive, therefore, how my letters should have been made public. Not that I have anything to conceal; still I am sorry that confidence in one another's uprightness should be so rudely shaken.

When I wrote this letter, a few months after the Witney discussions, not only was I not myself clear upon some of the points involved, but also I was not accurately acquainted (as I have since discovered) with what had been actually said. What, indeed, led me to see certain brethren for myself, and to ascertain from them what was actually taught, was the discovery I made, that two brethren who sent me a report of what took place at the brothers' readings in London were in error on the subjects on which they had written. Compelled thus to refuse their views, I found, on the other hand, that after an exhaustive discussion with a brother whose papers had been condemned, that I was in agreement with him on almost every point—certainly on every material point. I communicated this result to my correspondent in a letter or two; but these

letters have not been made public, as they should have been, forming, as they did, a series. More than this, I wrote to the brother whose pamphlet may be said to have commenced the controversy, urging him to seek an interview to ascertain whether he had rightly understood the brother whose views he had assailed. This he positively refused to do—though had he done so, division, I cannot but think, would have been avoided.

It was this brother's pamphlet that occasioned the unpleasant incident at Plymouth, which I refer to in my letter. That a grave mistake was made there—and one tending to division—I cannot but feel as strongly now as then. It was a time of difficulty, and should have been, therefore, a time of patience and forbearance, and not one for the imposition of unscriptural tests.

I ought to add, that I had no thought, when the letter was written, that those agitating were contemplating division. I never, at any period of the controversy, saw any ground for division. Indeed, writing to another correspondent about the same time, I said: "To speak of division is to be an enemy of the truth." But I did claim, as I still do, to canvass and to discuss public teaching, and to do this, if the need arises, strongly; for it has been in this way that the truth is preserved. It never entered my mind that, if mistakes had been made, there were fundamental errors of doctrine—any departure, indeed, from the truth to justify the unrighteous charges that have been made.

The question indeed arises, whether those who have left us really believe that we are heretics. Time after time they have shifted the ground of their attack, until there is no tangible accusation left. We sorrow much over them, for they are our brethren; and no greater joy could be given us than to hear that they saw the groundlessness of their charges. In the meantime, our consolation is that the Lord knows the truth of the matter, and He believes us when we avow that we have no hope—no hope, whether for time or for eternity—apart from the truth of His Person and His work. That He ever has been—ever was, is, and will be—the true God, that down here on earth He was God manifest in flesh, and that, as glorified, He is the divine and heavenly Man, we will hold with all our hearts.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

EDWARD DENNETT.

B.

Lansdowne Road, Bromley, Kent, 5—9—1889.

Dear Brother,

Rightly or wrongly, there is so much feeling abroad at the present moment, that I do not think it would be wise to print your paper* now. If you will allow me to keep it, I will gladly insert it in happier times; but should you prefer I will return it. All unholy speculations upon the person of the Lord, as well as all attempts to draw back the veil that conceals His youth, I as resolutely refuse as you can do. Concerning eternal life, becoming very unhappy at the state of the controversy, I sought an interview with T. H. Reynolds; and I was immensely relieved to find that, excepting on one point, I was in material agreement with him; and that I had imputed to him (perhaps his sentences were not clearly expressed) what he really did not hold. I was led to the conclusion that had you first seen him, you would not have written your pamphlet.† If you will allow me to say as much, I could much wish that, on your return to England, you would arrange to see him. It might be the means of clearing away misconceptions, and of producing, at the same time, a more united testimony to the truth. With love in the Lord,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

To P. A. Humphery.

EDWARD DENNETT.

* *The above letter was in reply to a manuscript paper, Remarks on John xvii., I had sent Mr. Dennett from Switzerland, according to promise, for insertion in the "Christian Friend."*

† *This refers to a pamphlet I wrote, called "Possession and Experience."*

C.

Dear Brother,

Ste Croix, Sept. 9, 1889.

I am in receipt of your letter of the 5th. I have no sort of sympathy or fellowship with time-serving. When error is published, I should, on principle, refuse all private and verbal explanation. You say that, whilst differing with Mr. Reynolds upon one point (which you do not specify) you are otherwise "in material agreement with him." But it is not a question of agreement, material or otherwise, but of the truth or error of published utterances, tested by the

Word of God. You urge me to follow your course on my return to England, in view of "a more united testimony to the truth"—you accepting Mr. Reynolds's published errors as explained by him verbally to yourself! So long as published error stands unretracted, any attempt to produce "a more united testimony to the truth" is futile, and rests on a false basis—a covering up of error for the sake of outward appearances—this is as unholy as the "unholy speculations" to which you refer, and of which there can be no real refusal whilst consorting with those who propound them, and accepting their teachings. Please return my M.SS. to Bath. I enclose stamps to cover postage.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,
P. A. HUMPHERY.

To Mr. E. Dennett.

D

Lansdowne Road, Bromley, Kent, 17—12—1888.

My Dear Brother,

Thank you much for the copy of Pinkerton's letter. In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established. I cannot but hope that his decisive testimony also will avail much. The explanatory regrets in the "Voice" * this month do not seem to me to touch the real point at issue; and I am credibly informed that the new doctrine is still persistently pressed at Greenwich. The danger now is covering up in public, and teaching in private. This is ever the way with new views.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
EDWARD DENNETT.

To P. A. Humphery.

* *This refers to Mr. Reynolds's paper on eternal life, and his so called regrets, published in the "Voice to the Faithful."*

E.

7—1—1889.

My Dear Brother,

I return the paper* with many thanks. Instead of sending it on, I copied it that it might not be lost in transmission, as it is your only copy. The saints will soon lose all perception of the truth, and this of necessity will give C. E. S. and his party an advantage. Remarkably enough,

* *A second letter from Mr. Pinkerton.*

I received a letter, in which almost the very phrases you mention are used of J. B. S. It has come to this now that men are more than the truth. One thing however is clear, that nothing is withdrawn at Greenwich. The doctrine of T. H. Reynolds's papers in the "Voice" have full sway in that meeting. This I know; and every point of the new teaching was re-asserted to me in a communication I had from a brother there. It may seem to be withdrawn, from what appeared in the "Voice," but the leaven will be the more active now that it is hidden.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
EDWARD DENNETT.

To P. A. Humphery.

F

Dear Brother,

Can you spare me two or three more copies of E. L. Bevir's paper on the article in the "Voice"? Several, to whom I have lent it, have found it so helpful, that I should be glad to have more copies. I should be thankful also to have copies of your paper* if you have had it printed—as I hope you have. There is a great effort being made to show that the difference is only one of expression, although there is great activity in spreading the new views. The difference, I think, is radical, and it would be fatal to fold one's hands and suffer this new propaganda to go on unchecked.

Believe me, dear Brother, yours affectionately in Christ,
EDWARD DENNETT.

To P. A. Humphery.

** This refers to my paper "Possession and Experience," which Mr. Dennett had read in manuscript and approved.*

G

6, Sussex Street, Plymouth;
February 22, 1889.

"As far as I understand the Scripture, the new Birth gives nature, and hence it is that in John iii., eternal life comes after, showing also that its gift is connected with the Cross and the revelation of the Father and the Son. But in this dispensation *the two things cannot* be separated; i.e., every one who is now born again has also eternal life, though it does not assume its proper character until the

Holy Ghost is received, because until then relationship is not known. Hence it is that in John Eternal Life always supposes the possession of the Holy Ghost. This may be seen in the Epistle (e.g., 1 John ii., 20, iii., 24, &c.) as well as in the Gospel (ch. viii., 31, 39, xx., 22, &c.). The order is as you state it—born again, forgiveness of sins, and the Holy Ghost, only we must ever insist that the life received together with the new nature is eternal life (for there is none other in this day of grace) though, as I have said, until the sealing it does not pass over into its true state. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, that is, in Christ risen from the dead, is again the same life (for it is life in the power of the Spirit in Christ risen) inasmuch as it is our life, only here it is presented in connexion with deliverance. All these expressions—Christ our life—the spirit of life—the life of Jesus (2 Cor. iv., 10) spite of recent contentions, are one and the same life—and the same as eternal life. It is one of the sad features of the present controversy that eternal life is being discussed as an abstract thing, and the result is philosophy—metaphysics instead of exposition—logomachy instead of edification—Thus last Tuesday, I am told, Schlotthauer told the brothers at the reading that it was all “fog,” and not for edification at all. The last three brothers’ readings, so I am credibly informed, have been very controversial, though the major number have been firm in rejecting the new views. The worst is that like Jerusalem of old, none of “her sons” can guide her any more. And as a consequence the enemy triumphs. Thus here in Plymouth a moral division prevails. On the eve of my coming a partisan of the new doctrine wrote to demand my judgment of P. A. H.’s “evil tract,”* as a condition of fellowship in my ministry. Put in that way I refused to express my judgment to my interrogator. Thereon he read my letter at a brothers’ meeting and was backed up by other partisans. On my arrival I saw the leaders and absolutely refused the test imposed. In two or three days they withdrew the test *in word*, but maintained it in fact. To vindicate the principle I preached on Sunday, but have done nothing else, and now leave to-morrow for Taunton, then, after Sunday, home. Schlotthauer wrote proposing a visit here. The test imposed to him was, did he sympathise with Pinkerton’s

* *Possession and Experience.*

endorsement of P. A. H. ? He, like myself, refused to say, and now will not come. The saints are grieved beyond measure, but are helpless. The Lord alone can preserve us from worse evils. In effect this new teaching is a revolt against J. N. D.'s teaching. A well known sister recently said:—"J. N. D.'s was not the teaching for this day." One of the leaders here said to me yesterday, "J. N. D., you know, is not infallible, and the Spirit of God is still amongst us"—which means what the sister said. "Buy the truth and sell it not"—"Hold fast that which thou hast" are words for this day."

EDWARD DENNETT.

H

"The event of the month (December, 1888) is the apologetic explanations in the "Voice," but they leave the subject just where it was before, as the main points of the controversy are untouched. When pressed in argument, the reply is, "Of course all believers have eternal life"; when further pressed it is elicited that the meaning of the phrase is, that all have it as the gift of God, and then the old error crops up that it is only the "fathers" who are in the enjoyment of it. Only a week or two since, I had a letter from a Greenwich sister—Greenwich is the main centre of the new views—asking if I thought it possible for a "babe" to be in the enjoyment of fellowship with the Father and the Son.

All this is destructive of the teaching of John; for in his Epistle this fellowship is the normal place of the believer—yea, of every child of God, whether "fathers," "young men" or "babes"—and it is lost only by falling into sin, and it is restored by the advocacy of Christ.

The second root error is the importation of experience into 1 John iii. Of course a "babe" should not remain a babe; but this is not John's doctrine, he merely points out that the whole family is made up, as it ever will be, of the three classes he names.

But this mistake goes further back, namely: in confounding Ephesians with 1 John. Now, as far as I can see, neither J. B. S. nor T. H. R. in their "regrets" touch on that grand error, so that the new teaching—and I know it is still taught zealously—is yet existent, and must therefore be encountered.

You have doubtless seen ——'s pamphlet. It meets with the severest condemnation, on account of its "bad spirit." When I read it, I did not notice this, as I was only occupied with the truth in it, and, saving some expressions, I liked it; ——'s paper equally condemned, being described as "unfair," and twisting T. H. R.'s words. But we are not to be daunted in this way, and should continue to seek grace to refuse the new teaching wherever we meet with it. J. N. D. taught me that every bit of truth is a ray of the glory of Christ. He is the Truth. If therefore you obscure a bit of the truth you obscure a ray of His glory. This is the way I look at it.

The fact, however, is that the reputation of a certain brother is thought more of in some quarters than the glory of Christ in the matter."

EDWARD DENNETT.

As a further development of Mr. Raven's teaching the following letter is given, as shewing that Eternal Life is not Christ, but a state or condition of blessing, and that the believer only has it now "as passed out of death into life," and this is defined as "in having received by faith the relationship of children." John v., 24 says "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath life eternal, and does not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life." It will be noticed that Mr. Raven, denying this, i.e., hearing His word and believing on Him that sent Him, makes eternal life depend upon the reception by faith of the relationship of children, that is, when I know I am a child of God I know I have passed from death unto life, and know I have eternal life. Scripture says it is hearing Christ's word, and believing on Him that sent Him is the sole ground, and therefore says "hath eternal life," and "is passed out of death into life."

I

Oct. 31, 1891.

Dear Sister in the Lord,

I have had your letter of the 14th Sept., and should be very glad to be able to satisfy your mind as to the questions you have put to me—but the subject is a large one for a letter. Scripture says that Jesus Christ is "the true God and eternal life"—by which I understand that "eternal life" is revealed in Him (not given to Him), as man in glory. To speak of "eternal life" being a Person is nonsense—for were it so that Person would be eternal life and no more—Christ is "the true God and eternal life." Eternal life stands in Scripture in contrast to death (see

Rom. v., 21, vi., 23); and is presented to us as a state, or condition of blessing for man. On earth in the millennium those who have been born again will have it in being freed from death by the power and presence of Christ who has the keys of death and hell; the law being written in their hearts. *We* have it, as passed out of death into life, in having received by faith the relationship of children to God—for which relationship Christ has become the life of our souls—living in us, by the Spirit which He has given—a well of water springing up unto eternal life. Scripture teaches that *the Spirit* is in the believer, but it does not speak of eternal life being in us. It is in the Son—and in having the Son we have it. If I had eternal life in me, I should have it in my dying state—as it is, I have it in the heavenly relationship of a child of God, which is mine by faith, and which death cannot touch. The Spirit is the witness of this, and it involves my being like Christ when He appears. I trust the above may help.

Believe me, faithfully yours in Christ,

F. E. RAVEN.

In concluding this paper one cannot but remark how when man acts in Divine things according to his own mental capacity, and lays down a line of teaching to suit himself, God first warns (and in what patience He waits on His warning!) and then, if the warning is unheeded, He allows the teaching to more fully develop itself, and exposes the root and source of the system; for teaching what is not according to the Word of God invariably grows into a system, when the warnings as to it are unheeded. Scripture is forced, and the simplest passages are perverted in order to make them do duty on behalf of the teaching, no matter how contradictory they may be in reality. Thus, a system is developed and maintained, and the more it is pursued the more blind do its votaries become. On p. 16 of his "Lectures on 1 John," Mr. Raven says: "If people go out on principle they ought to keep clear of those they have left." If any go out on principle they act rightly, and would and surely ought to seek the welfare of those left behind in the snare from which they have, through grace, got clear. There has, however, been no "going out" at all on the part of those who refuse Mr. Raven's teaching—it has

indeed been all the other way. It may be asserted that the majority in this country are with him, but no majority, however large, can hide up or justify departure from Divine ground. There can be no denial of what has occurred. On Lord's day, May 25, 1890, a brother from Greenwich went down to Bexhill, and presented at the Lord's Table there a letter of commendation signed by Mr. Raven personally. The brethren at Bexhill declined to accept this letter, having grave convictions as to Mr. Raven's teachings and the position of the Greenwich Assembly in regard to them. The brother left the room in temper, and the next Lord's day, June 1st, presented himself at the Table at Folkestone, where he was received approvingly, a brother from Bristol being present, and acquiescing. No communication of any kind was made by those at Folkestone to those at Bexhill, although fully aware of what had taken place there. Were it admitted, for the sake of argument, that Bexhill had been wholly wrong, the slightest desire to maintain the unity of the Spirit would have led to at least enquiry being made by those at Folkestone of those at Bexhill as to the cause of their action, instead of thus overriding it. Here was a breach of the Spirit's unity, which no subsequent act can obliterate. On Lord's day, June 15th, the same brother was approvingly received at Tunbridge Wells, likewise without any communication of any kind with Bexhill. Thus, we have Bexhill acting distinctly on responsible ground to maintain a clear conscience as to the teaching at Greenwich, promptly ignored the next Lord's day at Folkestone for so doing, and two Lord's days after at Tunbridge Wells. Mr. Dennett and Mr. Raven may speak of some "going out of fellowship," but clearly the breach was caused by those at Folkestone, followed by those at Tunbridge Wells, and every where else where this course is accepted. It is not, however, the mere use of the term "gone out of fellowship" that signifies; it is that a principle is insinuated with regard to it, which those who refuse Mr. Raven's teaching are accused of violating. What is intended to be conveyed is that those who refuse these teachings have violated a Divine principle, whereas it is abundantly manifest that the principle of unity, professed and acted upon up till then, was wilfully ignored and violated at Folkestone on June 1, 1890, and perpetuated by those who follow them. No

Divine principle can be violated with impunity, much less that one which is the very basis of our gathering together to remember our Lord, and to show forth His death until He come.

To a superficial reader or one that gives heed to those who may seek to throw dust in the eyes of the saints, it may seem that the statement on page 14 lines 19, 20 "he will not allow that it is Christ" is inconsistent with what is quoted on page 12 lines 26, 27 "It was really the Person of Christ;" but any one who reads Mr. Raven with careful attention will find that seeming admissions of this truth on his part are almost always explained away by the context (as here), and are always quite irreconcilable with what he makes eternal life to be, when the question he debates is that of the Son's Person. The fact (alas, that it should be so) is, that Satan by Mr. Raven's voice and pen, aims at this very thing, the reduction of the truth of the Person of Christ to an unsubstantial figment of the imagination, which the soul will not think worth holding against the openly apostate pretensions of the man of sin. Fellow christian, heir of glory, we beseech you, by all you hold dearer than the things of time and sense, purge yourself from those who dishonour your Lord by fellowship with these soul-deluding doctrines. They lead directly to the denial of the Father and the Son.

May the Lord in His mercy open the eyes of those who have fallen in with these new and evil teachings, and in His rich mercy and grace recover them. We have, none of us, anything in ourselves to boast of, most surely. The time is short, and the days are evil. May each one, without considering persons, but only the deep gravity of what is at stake, weigh what is said in the reality of soon seeing face to face the Lord who died for him.

P. A. H.

October, 1892.
