

SOME OF THE
MYSTERIES
OF
GOD'S KINGDOM
DECLARED

AS THEY HAVE BEEN REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT
THROUGH FAITH

BY
FRANCIS HOWGILL
(1618–1668)

EDITED BY JASON R. HENDERSON

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FORWARD BY THE EDITOR

Francis Howgill (1618–1668) was a prominent early member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in England. The collected works of Howgill were first published in 1676, eight years after his death, in a large volume entitled, “The Dawnings of the Gospel Day, and its Light and Glory Discovered.” A significant abridgment of this lengthy volume was published in 1832 by James Backhouse, which contained, among other writings, an abridged version of the essay entitled, “Some of the Mysteries of God's Kingdom Declared, etc.” The document you have in hand is not the Backhouse version of this essay, but a less abridged version that I transcribed from a photocopy of the original 1676 publication. Because the style, punctuation, and spelling used in early modern English differs considerably from the English of today, some editing was unavoidable in preparing a readable manuscript. Nevertheless, I believe this publication represents a more accurate and complete rendering of Howgill's essay than any other currently available.

Jason R. Henderson
July, 2015

TO THE READER

Reader,

In times past, in the night of ignorance, since the days of the apostles, many have groped in the dark as blind men, and out of thick darkness they have spoken darkly of the things of God, and of His kingdom. These have written about the things of God, and His kingdom, and have fed the dark minds of many who are unconverted to God. Many are therefore confused in their minds, and err in judgment, and have lost the key of knowledge which will open their hearts, and give an entrance into the mysteries of God's kingdom. Therefore, in compassion to those who are thirsting after the Lord, and for the sake of those who have no place to rest, these things I have written as they were revealed to me, and in me, by His pure Spirit. If you will wait in that light through which God reveals His mind and manifests His knowledge in man, and come out of the nature of the world, you will see these things to be truth, though they be hidden and veiled from the world that lies in wickedness.

I have not written to please men of corrupt minds, who glory in words, outward appearances, natural capacities and sounds, and who are erred from the Life; but rather to the simple-hearted, and for the strengthening of the weak, and for the understanding of the simple. And if there be something in the following discourse which you cannot accept, let it alone, and judge nothing before the time—in your wisdom that is earthly, or in your own reason. Rather, wait to judge by that which is of God in you (in and by which I desire to be approved, and by nothing else), and it shall be made manifest in the Day of the Lord that is dawning in the world (which many have seen appearing in power and glory). Wait then, in your own particular, that you may feel your own condition, and see your own state. And then that light which lets you see your own condition will also let you see the Lord, and you will know what I have declared of Him to be true.

I am your friend in Truth, and wish good to all men,

Francis Howgill

1658

SECTION I.

Some of the mysteries of God's Kingdom declared.

The Lord God of the whole earth, who lives forever, even the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose throne is established in righteousness, and who rides on the heavens and shines forth in His eternal excellence from the firmament of His power, is manifesting Himself as in the days of old. He is now revealing His righteousness as in the years past, and is pouring out His Spirit on His sons and daughters, according to His promise, and His blessing “of the precious things of the everlasting hills.”¹ The Lord, who appeared at Sinai in the burning bush unto Moses His servant, who rose up from Mount Seir, and shined forth in His brightness from Mount Paran, and comes in ten thousands of His saints; even He from whose right hand went a fiery law, so that the people could not behold His glory, this One has now appeared in this the Day of His power, and is yet appearing. His glory shall dazzle the eyes of the

¹ Deuteronomy 33:15

world, and His brightness shall make dim all the world's glory, and stain the world's wisdom, shutting it up in utter darkness, so that it will seem to have no existence or being. The shadow of death will flee away, and all the haughty and lofty princes of this world shall be horribly afraid. The beasts shall go into their dens when the Day appears, and the lambs of the everlasting fold shall come forth, and be fed in the fat valleys, where the springs of life compass about all the banks, and the lambs shall rejoice in their Shepherd, and say: "The Lord is my Shepherd." For who has seen His wonders and noble acts from the days of old, of which the fathers (who are fallen asleep and are at rest in the Lord) have told us? But now God is bringing many to see what they witnessed to be true, and to have the same thing fulfilled in themselves. Honor and praise to Him who is the stay and strength of all His people forever.

The Day of the Lord has dawned, and the light has appeared that manifests all things which are reprobable. The Day Star is arisen in the hearts of many, and they have come to see that fulfilled in their hearts which Peter exhorted them to wait for.² These have taken heed unto the more sure word of Prophecy, until the Day appeared and did dawn in their hearts. And this Day (when it appears, and to whom it appears) discovers all things, and makes all things manifest, as is declared by the Spirit of Truth in the Scriptures of Truth—"and

² 2 Pet 1:19 "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."

every man's work shall be tried, of what sort it is, of what nature it is.”³ Praises be unto the Lord, for this Day has appeared to many who have waited for it, and now they see everything according to its source and increase, and every tree and fruit is seen according to its kind, whether good or bad. For every man's work is obvious to those who are in the Day, and upon whom the morning of righteousness has appeared and the sun of righteousness has shined. Thus it can be seen by all (in the Light which is truly called Day, and by the Lord who causes it to spring from on high) what is reprobable and condemnable, and also what is justifiable and unreprouable. All is seen by the Day of the Lord appearing in the heart.

SECTION II.

What the Day of the Lord is, how it is seen, and to whom it has appeared.

God is a spirit, His Day is spiritual, and is seen with a spiritual eye. It is pure light, pure brightness, the pure shining forth of the Lord in His glorious excellence. It is the shining forth of eternity. It is life manifesting itself in brightness. It is holiness shedding itself abroad in its glory and purity, spreading itself in its immeasurable excellency, and it can only be seen as it is by the children of light that are born of it.

³ 1 Corinthians 3:13

There is a natural day and there is a spiritual Day. The natural day receives its brightness from the sun; the spiritual Day receives its brightness from the Sun of Righteousness (who is the Fountain of Life), by whom it is brought forth, and without whom nothing is made or brought forth. The natural day receives its clearness from the natural sun, and is discerned by the natural eye of the natural man, and all things natural are seen and discovered by and in the natural day, and are clear and obvious to him that has natural sight. Even so, the Day of God receives its brightness from the Sun of Righteousness, the Lord of glory, light, and purity. It issues out from Him by the rays of His brightness and is discerned and seen only by the spiritual eye of the spiritual man who is of the image of the Father, brought forth in His life and in His own nature and quality. This is the birth which is from above (from God the Father of life, by Jesus the life of men and the light of the world). Only he who is of the nature of the Father and the Son, and of their Day, comes to behold this Day, and to discern all things of the Father's kingdom by it. Such can discern all the hidden things of dishonesty, and the works of darkness which are brought forth by the prince of darkness—who is shut up in eternal and utter darkness, which is his residence and dwelling place forever, and will be the eternal residence of all workers of iniquity that bear his image.

Objection: But some may be ready to say, “But all things are not yet made manifest, nor has that Day come, nor has it appeared to any in this age!”

Answer: What if a man that is naturally blind says there is no light in the natural day or in the sun, simply because he sees none. Is there therefore no light in the day or in the sun? And what if all things seem alike unto him, both day and night, because he can distinguish nothing? Does this therefore make void the seeing, or hinder the discerning, of those who indeed see with the natural eye both the sun and the day? Likewise, what if they who are spiritually blind, and are children of the night, say they can see nothing of the Day of the Lord, nor discover the things of God, or His glorious appearance, which many others do witness? Does this therefore make void the spiritual sight of those who have seen into the things of God's kingdom? May God forbid that the unbelief of some make void the faith of those that do believe.

SECTION III.

What the Day of the Lord is, and what it will be to the wicked.

The Day of the Lord is pure light and brightness in itself, and does not mix with the night, which is of a contrary nature. The Lord separated these two in the beginning, setting their bounds and habitations, and establishing it as a decree that will last unto all eternity. But though the Day of the Lord is pure, and keeps its purity, property, and nature, (being consistent in itself,

for nothing can alter its purity), even so, it is a Day of blackness and gloominess, and a terrible Day unto the wicked who hate its appearance and its light. For unto the children of falsehood and deceit, whose deeds are evil, the Day makes manifest both them and their deeds, and it is unto them just as it is written, “For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death.”⁴ The appearance of the Lord frightens them, and they seek to run from it. For they are like a thief who digs through a wall and breaks into a house in the night when deep sleep is upon men. But when the day appears, it discovers his actions, and he is afraid because he can then be seen.

Now, unto all that live shamelessly upon the earth, whose hearts are set to seek after wickedness as for hidden treasure, the Day of the Lord will come upon such as a thief. And because they are children of the night, and bring forth the fruits of darkness (which are contrary to the light), they will have their portion in utter darkness, and eternal vengeance will surround them as a wall, and with fury the fire will devour them like fuel. So shall the ungodly perish, and have their portion with hypocrites.

Consider then and repent, all you who revile and rail against the light and the appearance of God! For the wild donkey who is accustomed to the wilderness follows her desires, and those who seek her will not weary themselves in searching; yet her time surely comes when she will be easily found and taken.⁵ Even

⁴ Job 24:17

⁵ Jeremiah 2:24

so, all the ungodly, though they may run like the wild donkey, and pursue their way as the swift camel, yet the time comes, the Day comes, when they will be overtaken in the midst of security, and they will not escape. And though the children of this world, teachers of this world, and professors of Christianity (who profess the Scriptures), have prayed for the Day of the Lord, nevertheless, when it comes, it will be as a hot burning fire, a devouring fire, and they will fall as stubble, and as a burning mountain before it. They will not be able to abide, for whatever is reprobable is manifest by the Day, by the light which is eternal, in which God appears. And this Day shall appear even to the wicked and ungodly, and they shall be made manifest (for that which is made manifest is no longer hidden, but is seen and brought to light and beheld).

Therefore, all you hirelings who preach for hire, and you people that love to have it so, you will not be hidden. All who oppose the truth, you will be found out, and will be convinced of your ungodly deeds and hard words, and that which makes you manifest will be the Day, and indeed it will convince you. For even the wicked shall see its appearance, though unto condemnation, shame, and contempt. "They shall see Him whom they have pierced."⁶ For even in the wicked God has a witness which is pure, which checks them often, though they do not regard it, because the god of the world has blinded their eyes. Yet when Christ the life appears, He will make that eye to see which the wicked have put out,

⁶ Zechariah 12:10; John 19:37

and which the god of the world has blinded. By His power, the Lord will open even the eyes of the wicked, and they shall see Him and His coming in dread, and His pure appearance will make them horribly afraid, and His Day and appearance will be to their sorrow. Though they would not see, they will be made to see, and to hear that which they refused to hear, when God sounds His trumpet and gives notice to all, that the dead (both small and great) must arise, “some unto everlasting life, and some unto shame and everlasting contempt.”⁷

Therefore, put this warning not far from you, all deceitful workers, adulterers and idolaters, who worship your own imaginations, and all careless people who live in carelessness and pleasure, who are man-pleasers, vain talkers, foolish jesters and despisers of those who have come out of the pollution that you wallow in. Indeed, the Lord's appearance will be to their great joy, but to you it will be shame and eternal misery, except you speedily repent.

SECTION IV.

What the Day of the Lord is to the righteous, and how He appears to them, and whether any are to look for it while still in the body.

The appearance of God (who is eternal life) in His Day, in His immeasurable light, is a great joy and a

⁷ Daniel 12:2

source of rejoicing to the righteous. For He is, to His people who behold Him, an everlasting light, and in His light they come to see light. And in His Day He reveals the secret mysteries of His kingdom within them, that is, in those who see the Day appear in their hearts.

This Day makes all things manifest, even the secrets of the Lord and His hidden treasures, which never rot nor rust, but are always fresh, and keep their pure image and impression, and are always the same. By this light, all the righteous who have waited for God's appearance, come to see Him, even as it is written, "This is He we have waited for, let us rejoice and be exceedingly glad."⁸ What? Has the One you have waited for indeed come? Yes, He has come, "and His reward is with Him."⁹ They that see Him find contentment in Him, and in His reward. And what is the reward? It is joy, gladness, peace of conscience, assurance of God's love sealed in the heart by the pure Spirit of the Lord. It is the streams of life flowing forth continually from the great deep which refresh and keep cool in the greatest extremity of heat and temptation. This is enjoyed by those who have waited, and who do wait for it, even now in the body—these can bear witness of Him and His coming.

For what was the witness of the disciples? Was it not, "The Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding."¹⁰ An understanding of what? Of God, of

⁸ Isaiah 25:9

⁹ Isaiah 40:10; Isaiah 62:11

¹⁰ 1 John 5:20

His Day, of His appearance, of His power, of His wisdom, of His kingdom, of hope, faith, assurance, peace, joy, comfort, and consolation. What, in this life? Yes, in this life! A cloud of witnesses I might bring from former ages, and a cloud of witnesses I might also bring from this age, blessed be the Lord! But my witness (He who gives me assurance) is nearer to me and is surer to me than all these witnesses, although they all be true.

Abraham, the father of the faithful and the righteous, who believed God and was accepted, he “saw Christ's Day and was glad.”¹¹ Professors¹² object—“But that was by faith!” Yes indeed, by what else? By faith Abraham saw, and by faith all others have seen, whosoever has indeed seen Christ, or His Day, or the Father. “By faith they saw Him who is invisible.”¹³ “Behold! God is my salvation.”¹⁴ What, do you enjoy salvation already? Yes, “He has become my salvation.”¹⁵ And Simeon, who waited for the consolation of Israel, said, “Now let Your servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen Your salvation.”¹⁶ And the apostle, knowing God's comfort and consolation, said this: “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.”¹⁷ Indeed, these were made partakers of His divine nature, and sat together in heavenly places in

¹¹ John 8:56

¹² By *professors* he means those who profess faith in Christ. Here the word has nothing to do with teachers or scholars.

¹³ Hebrews 11:27

¹⁴ Isaiah 12:2

¹⁵ Exodus 15:2; Psalms 118:4; Isaiah 12:2

¹⁶ Luke 2:30

¹⁷ 2 Corinthians 1:5

Christ Jesus. For Heaven is His throne, and they that are in Him and enjoy Him, (who is the power and wisdom of God) know peace, and rest, and salvation both from guilt and sin. And the apostle, in writing to the Hebrews, said, “After He had purged away our sins” (speaking of the atonement), “the everlasting High Priest sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.”¹⁸ Paul saw beyond sin, even unto Him who had purged away sin, and this purging from sin is made manifest unto and in those who believe by the Spirit of Jesus, who is Christ the Lord, the Arm that brings salvation, and the Author of eternal salvation unto all who believe. He begins salvation in His Day, and He perfects it in His Day; for He works in the Day, as He Himself has said, “My Father works, and I too work, but the night comes when none can work.”¹⁹ And this is His work in man—“to destroy the work of the devil.”²⁰ And those who have come to His Day feel and see the handiwork of God in themselves, and His own works praise Him, for they alone can. But those who have not come to the Day, do not know God's work in themselves. And those who have not yet given heed to that light in themselves (which manifests all things reprobable), have not come to know the appearance of the glimmering of light, or of the Day, which the saints do witness in themselves, even all those that are sanctified.

¹⁸ Hebrews 1:3

¹⁹ John 5:17; John 9:4

²⁰ 1 John 3:8

SECTION V

*Where the Day of the Lord appears, and how it comes,
and how it is to be looked for.*

Those who look outward, whose eyes are abroad, cannot see the Lord's appearance or His Day. He that does not know in what this Day consists, cannot know how to look for it, even as the Jews, who were professors of Scripture and learned men, did not know in what the kingdom of God consisted. In the same way, the literal professors of religion today, whose faith is founded upon the written letter and upon that which is visible, cannot understand what I say.

Before all else, one must know in what this Day consists: It is eternal brightness shed abroad through all things, which pierces through, searches, and makes manifest the most secret places, even that which is invisible. The nature of everything comes to be seen by the Day of the Lord, and this Day breaks forth and appears in the heart. It is there that man must wait for the Day to dawn, and seek the light which makes manifest all evil, and declares against all that is contrary to its own nature. So Christ—the Covenant of Light, God's Gift, the One sent and anointed of God to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the Day of vengeance—it is He who dawns and proclaims in the heart. He comes not to bring peace, but a sword, and His sword is the sword of the Spirit. It is this sword which divides and discerns the intents of the heart, and this Day which

discovers the desperate wickedness of the heart. And in the earthly heart, where He finds no faith, He kindles a fire and executes His vengeance. To such as these, the Lord's Day is a Day of great perplexity. Their spirits come to be wounded; their hearts are made faint; sorrow fills them, and trouble is felt. This is the condition of all who are unconverted, in whom He finds no faith or hope in the heart, and so He comes and takes away their peace. Many have talked of the Day of the Lord, but when it comes to draw near, they will not be able to stand it. "Whatsoever makes manifest is light."²¹ But when wickedness and deceit are brought to the light, then they that have done evil cannot abide it. They will run to anything rather than abide in the Day, or behold the Lord of life appearing to execute vengeance upon His enemies.

They who have not yet seen this Day of the Lord's vengeance in themselves, cannot see the Day of salvation. The prophet cried out: "Who may abide the Day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appears?"²² But now many have already been eye witnesses of the dreadful Day of the Lord, which has appeared, and in which all peace has been hid from their eyes. For indeed, all who ever came to see the Day of joy and gladness, first did face the terrible Day of the Lord in themselves. It is for this reason the apostle said, "We, knowing the terror of the Lord, do persuade men."²³

²¹ Ephesians 5:13

²² Malachi 3:2

²³ 2 Corinthians 5:11

Now, this Day comes not with outward observation, “Lo here, or Lo there,” for in this way the Pharisees expected the kingdom should come, even when Christ told them it was within them. So too I say, if anyone desires to behold the bright shining forth of eternal light, you must wait for it in that which is pure from God, through which He will manifest His Day and His power in you. As you keep in your mind to that light which both manifests evil and shows good unto you, you will see how it appears, “Even as the Light shines from the east unto the west, so is the coming of the Day of the Lord.”²⁴ The eye which is spiritual sees it, for the power and glory of the Lord comes to be seen in the Day which is pure and spiritual in the heart. Indeed, the eye which is pure does behold when it comes, where it comes, and how it comes. But it is hid from vulturous eyes, and from eyes which are full of adultery, and from those who cannot cease from sin. The Day of the Lord comes not where the carnal mind may imagine, nor according to man's will, or the carnal desires of the carnal heart. To the evil eye that looks outward, the Day cannot be seen, but it is seen in God's own light, according to the measure of God's Holy Spirit. And as the Day of the Lord is a mystery, so the Spirit of the Lord is the only discoverer of it, for “None know the things of God but by the Spirit of God.”²⁵

Truly, the Day of the Lord, and His bright shining forth in the heart of man, is one of the glorious things of

²⁴ Matthew 24:27

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:11

God which only the Spirit of God (and not the mere letter of Scripture) makes known to man and in man. For the Jews had the letter, but they had neither heard God's voice at any time, or ever seen His form. Through written words they had neither seen the Day of the Lord, or known His power, or perceived God, or the mysteries of His kingdom. Rather, they dreamed, imagined, thought, and conceived things in their minds, their foolish hearts being darkened. For the further a man draws away from the light, his heart comes more and more to be dark, and his understanding is closed up so that he cannot behold the Lord and His glory. These things are revealed only by God's Holy Spirit, which Spirit is near to man, though he sees it not.

SECTION VI.

What the Spirit of God is which discovers the things of God, and how it comes to be received.

The Spirit of the Lord, who is one with the Father and the Son, is purity itself, holiness itself. It is pure power, pure strength, which does not mix with, or join to, anything but that which is of its own nature. It is immeasurable pure substance; it is life issued forth; it is an active living power, which is everlasting and does not change, keeping its holiness and purity forever. It is unsearchable, unfathomable, and undeclarable. All

words are too short and too narrow to declare its excellency and glory, but it makes itself known, opens itself up, and sheds itself abroad in those who believe and wait upon it. The Spirit of God is revealed in its own purity, made manifest in its own power, received in its own light, and felt in its own virtue. The living Father of life Himself is manifest by it, and He appears in His power and majesty and excellency through it to the sons of men—that is, to the righteous and unrighteous, to the godly and ungodly, to the upright and to the deceitful, to the children of darkness and to the children of light.

The Spirit is that which searches the hearts of men, sees through all things, makes manifest all things, both the hidden things of God and the secret works of darkness, reproofing for all evil and iniquity. It is the pure act of the Spirit which convinces every man of sin, and as the creature comes to join with it, it arises and shines forth more clearly, making itself known in its power and operation. Its power comes to be felt as it checks and reproofs, as it judges and condemns all actions that are past, bringing them to remembrance. And as it is waited upon and hearkened to, it sheds itself abroad in its own pure brightness, bringing all things to light, and manifesting the intents of the mind.

Now, as one waits upon the pure appearance of the Spirit, and the mind is still, quiet, and calm, the creature comes to feel, and sensibly know, his own condition. He sees that his mind is alive to other things, to other lovers, and not to God, and so he recognizes himself to be dead to the things of God's kingdom, and

still in the fall and transgression. Now, that which shows the vain motions and thoughts, and checks them, this is the operation of the Spirit, and its purity comes to be felt working in the heart. And as this work is loved and obeyed, it leads and converts the heart to the Lord, and draws towards itself, out of unholiness, and out from under the dark power, bringing all darkness under. And so the Spirit arises in its strength (as it is believed in and waited upon), and judges and condemns all evil. For the Spirit is the discoverer of the mind of the Lord to the sons of men, and by it the Father makes known His mind to and in the creature, revealing the things that are eternal in their property and nature. Only those who have the Spirit, and are brought out of sensuality, come to discern Him who is invisible, and know the things that belong to everlasting happiness. Such things are not seen by the natural eye, nor are they received by the spirit of the world—for the world cannot receive the things of God, or the testimony of those who are in His life.

Now, all that come to receive the Spirit of truth must wait in, and be joined to, that which is pure. For the Spirit does not join to the corrupt man, to the sensual heart, to the vile affections, to those whose eyes are full of adultery. It does not join to the seed of falsehood, to the corruptible birth, to that which is born of the flesh, nor to the will of the creature. Nevertheless, though it will not join to these, yet it is near to man, even to the natural man. Its manifestation, or the shining forth of its brightness, makes all these things mani-

fest to be evil. And for this purpose the Spirit of God has appeared to the world, to convince the world of sin. For while the heart of any man is taken up with sin, and is joined to that which the light reproveth, it cannot receive the Spirit, nor become a possessor and enjoyer of it. Instead, the Spirit stands off from such a man at a distance, manifesting both the worker of iniquity and his works of darkness. But in as much as a man denies himself, and joins himself to the manifestation of God's Spirit (shining forth within him in purity, and so reprov- ing him) so he receives a measure of the Spirit of holi- ness, and feels the power of God in a small measure (though but weakly) working in him towards the purg- ing out of those things which the Spirit lets him see to be evil. And so in some measure he feels and learns in himself what to wait upon, and where to wait, and in what—even in that which gives everyone a feeling of their own condition within, and opens their understand- ing.

SECTION VII.

How the Spirit of Truth operates in those who are convinced, and yet have not obeyed.

Though God, who is a Spirit, has appeared by His manifestation unto all, yet all have not received it. He that hates the light has not received it, for “the morning

is to him as the shadow of death.”²⁶ The evil-doer does not like, heed, or receive, that which manifests and brings all evil to light, but rather remains without God in the world that lies in wickedness. He remains dead in sins and trespasses without the Spirit; he remains a sepulcher in which the Just One lies slain. In this state God is not remembered, for there is no remembrance in the grave, nor thanksgiving in the pit.

Light shines in darkness, and the man who is convinced but not converted is that darkness, though that which convinced him is the light. Disputers argue, “Only good men have light, but not those who bring forth deeds of darkness.” But, though man is in darkness, and is darkness, the Light shines in him, the Spirit of God shines there in the darkness, manifesting his darkness. The Ephesians were darkness in their unconverted state, yet light shined in them.²⁷ They were once “without God in the world,”²⁸ but Light shined in their darkness, and they were turned to it, and came to be made “light in the Lord.”²⁹ For indeed, “It is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”³⁰ So then, all are without excuse, “for He has not left himself without a witness”³¹ in any. But to those who do not know

²⁶ Job 24:17

²⁷ Ephesians 5:8

²⁸ Ephesians 2:12

²⁹ Ephesians 5:8

³⁰ 2 Corinthians 4:6

³¹ Acts 14:17

God's witness within them, that light which should bring assurance of salvation, unto them it assures their condemnation.

Now, as every man is turned to the measure of God's Holy Spirit, and keeps his mind to it, he comes to feel and see its reproof, and as the mind is kept to it, the Spirit arises in its purity, shining forth more brightness in the heart. This brightness checks for disobedience, judges, and as it is heeded, appears in strength, laying open every heart, showing how unrighteousness, imaginations, vanity, idle thoughts, and lust abound within. Indeed, whatever the mind may run into to take pleasure for a moment, still the measure of God's Spirit is always present to condemn it, and the strokes of the Almighty fall heavy on the back of the one still in disobedience to the Spirit. And though for a time the cry of the Spirit may not be heard, and through disobedience it may seem as dead unto man, yet if ever the mind is still, and a man is sober and calm, there it appears again. And though a man may take up and perform something that is called religious, and pray with words, and read and talk of the Scriptures, and take up some carnal outward ordinances, and in this content himself for a time, yet still the witness of God's Holy Spirit shows him to be a hypocrite. He that seeks to cover and shelter himself while he continues to live in disobedience to the Spirit, seeking to be at ease in the flesh, this one will find that all is in vain, and there is no peace within, for the measure of God's Holy Spirit shows him that he still serves sin. Indeed, if a man should practice

all those things which others have done in the Spirit and by the Life, and in which they were formerly accepted of God, yet this will not do, for God has no pleasure in this any more than if he “slays a man, breaks a dog's neck, or offers swine's blood.”³² All this is abomination to the Lord. And if man sins so far against the light of Christ in his own conscience, that the light becomes to him as though there were no such thing, yet this is no excuse. For the Lord will thunder from His holy place, and will cause him to see and hear, even though he has stopped up his ears and closed his eyes. He will cause His terror to strike into the heart, so that dread will compass him about as a wall, and he will be afraid of what he then sees and hears. For though the Spirit strives long with man, yet the longsuffering of God at last comes to an end with those who disobey, and they will have their portion forever with the rebellious and stiff-necked in the lowest hell, forever among the children of darkness, who have not submitted to the leading of the Spirit. Think on this, for it is the Lord's truth which I declare to you.

If you will persist after the imaginations of your own heart, and of your own rebellious will, then you indeed quench the Spirit and His motions. And though the Spirit is life in itself, yet it is dead unto you, who are resisting that light through which God's eternal power is manifest. Surely you will grow insensible and past feeling, and become seared in your conscious, and be senseless as to the things of God, and hardness of heart will

³² Isa. 66:3

come upon you like a stone that cannot be melted. Woe unto those in whom the Spirit of the Lord ceases to strive, having so long rebelled against its pure drawings, and grieved the Lord. For the Lord at last gives man up to his vile affections, to follow the imaginations of his own heart (who receive not the truth in the love of it). To those who have despised the Spirit of grace, His longsuffering comes to an end, and His fierce wrath is kindled, and that which would have led them out of the world into true everlasting peace, now becomes their tormentor. For they are banished from His presence, and shut up in eternal misery, where the fire is kindled by the breath of the Lord that burns forever “because they had pleasure in unrighteousness, and have sold themselves to do wickedly,”³³ crucifying the appearance of Christ in themselves. And this appearance, though crucified by them, yet lives forever to be their eternal condemnation.

SECTION VIII.

How the Spirit of the Father works in those who are turned to it, and have taken heed to its manifestations, and are, in some measure, partakers of His power.

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

³³ 2 Thessalonians 2:12

And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.”³⁴ Now the Spirit of Truth, which is life in itself, operates not only to convince the one that transgresses against its appearance, and to manifest the evil which has been committed, but also, being turned unto and waited in, it shows man when the motions and temptations to sin arise. And as the creature is still, and waits in the light which makes manifest, and keeps his mind singly to it, it sheds abroad its power, vanquishes and subdues the lusts which arise, and condemns the ground from which they raise. It works secretly, breathing forth its pure life in the one that waits in patience and stillness, not heeding the vain thoughts and imaginations that arise in his heart, but rather the manifestation of the Spirit, at whose bright appearance all vain desires come to be extinguished, and a hunger is begotten within to be made partakers of its nature and purity.

For God, through the operation of His eternal Spirit, lets forth His power, which turns and changes the heart, and cuts asunder and divides between a man and the lovers unto whom he has joined himself. The Lord makes a separation within, and carries a man further away from those things which the Spirit reproveth, leading the soul nearer unto God. And so, they that do believe in the measure of God's Spirit, and diligently wait upon it, come to feel what repentance from dead works truly is, for both the works and the worker are made manifest in the light.

³⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Now, for the one who singly and quietly waits upon the Spirit, there is nothing that passes through the mind but what can be easily discerned by the One who gives discernment. Yet, even after the Spirit of truth is in some measure felt, and its living testimony is known, it may still be long before there is a clear discerning in the understanding, so that the Spirit's movings can be clearly distinguished from all false motions and high imaginations which have risen above. But hasty and forward minds follow their vain motions which lead them into deceit, and then the questioner rises up, and they question all that ever the Spirit has made manifest to them before. A veil is then drawn over, and the enemy lodges in the darkness which has entered. And as soon as any listen to his voice, he presents motions for them to obey, and they are deceived by him. Therefore, all are to keep back to the measure of the Spirit, that they may sensibly feel the difference between the pure motions and drawing of the Spirit, and the vain thoughts that arise out of the earthly heart. And when anything does arise which the light does not give witness to, it is not to be followed or heeded, but a quiet and still waiting is to be observed, so that all things may be made clear to the understanding. For lack of this, many have run out, and acted things forwardly in their own will, bringing forth Satan's work. These have lost the true sense of that which should guide their minds, and instead have followed the spirit of error, causing the pure Spirit of the Lord to be evilly spoken of.

But as there is a keeping back, and a quiet waiting,

keeping out of willing or running and haste, then does the Spirit arise purely and stilly in the heart, and shines forth in brightness within, so that it gives perfect evidence and full testimony of itself, so that there can be no doubting or questioning of its motion. For it will clearly show forth itself in its own transparent brightness, with full assurance of its own will. And then, after its motions are clearly seen, let all reasoning be kept under, and all questioning kept out, and do not give way to temptation. For that which moves of the Lord of Life will carry you through in its own operation and power to accomplish the will of God. In this way you will have peace in obedience, and your strength will be renewed. For as any is brought to submit to the will of God when it is known, and comes to obey by the virtue of God's own power, then that which is contrary to God's Spirit in you loses its strength, and begins to decay and be weakened. But, as any disobey the pure motion of God's Holy Spirit after it is known, the enemy is then strengthened, and that which is of the flesh is nourished, and the Spirit (which gives His power when submitted to) comes to be quenched in you. But know this: the Spirit in itself never loses its purity, nor can it be quenched in itself. It will bear its pure witness against you, and none shall be able to stop its reproof.

As the Spirit is listened to, obeyed, loved, and believed in, it puts forth its pure power, which gives strength and seals peace to the obedient. In this way the diversity of the Spirit's operation comes to be known. But as it is disobeyed and resisted, it condemns, judges,

reproves, and seals condemnation to the disobedient. Yet, though its operations vary, there is no variation in the Spirit itself; for it is always one and the same. In good ground it causes to bring forth fruit unto God. And in the cursed ground, out of which arise briars and thorns, it kindles a fire that shall not be quenched. But as there is a submission unto the Spirit's pure operation, there is a burning and destroying of all that hinders the growth of the Seed, and a purging of the heart from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. So the Spirit works the creature into its own frame and nature, and fashions and molds all who are in the faith into the image of the Father. Here the love of the Father comes to be shed abroad in the heart. And even as wrath was revealed through the spirit of condemnation, so now the peace of God comes to be enjoyed, and His consolation is greatly shed abroad, in which there is pure rejoicing forever.

SECTION IX.

To whom the Spirit bears witness and seals both an assurance of the Father's love and true justification with God.

None have the witness of God's Spirit bearing witness to them and in them, who have not believed in Christ "the true Light that enlightens every man that comes into the world."³⁵ By Him alone is life begotten,

³⁵ 1 John 1:9

by His powerful operation in those who believe in Him. He is eternal life itself, and His word is Spirit and life, by which the new creature is framed and formed in those who believe. Unto these He makes manifest His power, for it is unto Him (who is the life of men) that all power in heaven and earth is committed. Nothing was made or created but by Him, nor is any man turned from sin but by Him and by His mighty power. Without Him is death; in Him is life, and the life is the light of men.

Now, none but those that are born of the light, and are begotten by Him who is light, can have the Spirit of Christ (who is light) bear witness unto them, nor can they have the assurance of the Father's love. For only those who are born of the Spirit, and walk after the Spirit, are justified by the Spirit of the Lord. The assurance of God's love is not made manifest to His enemies, but unto them that are born and brought forth in His own image, in His own likeness and nature, which is pure and incorruptible, without stain or defilement. These are born of the holy Seed which is the heir of the promise, and they know the living hope which purifies the heart, and brings the answer of a good conscience unto those that feel and witness the washing of regeneration. These have known in themselves the clean water poured forth upon them which has taken away stains, spots, blemishes, and defilements. For wherever these stains and defilements have not been washed out, and the heart cleansed from them, and where this washing is not believed in (nor God's all-sufficiency felt, and His

power made manifest), there cannot be true assurance of the Father's love in the heart, nor the Spirit's witness and assurance of justification. For where sin remains unsubdued and not taken away, the Spirit of the Father there condemns the sin, together with the one who has joined to it and become one with it. For no sin is brought forth except where there is a consenting and assenting to the instigation of the devil. When a temptation arises, whether within or without, there can be a resisting and striving against it for a little while. However, if the heart is not kept close to the Spirit, the enemy will at last find entrance, and so captivate the understanding that there is an agreement and a joining to the adversary. Thus the Spirit pronounces the sentence of condemnation upon the one who has joined himself to the harlot (becoming one flesh with her) and who is not joined to Christ the Seed. For whatever has joined and consented to drink the cup of fornication, must also drink of the cup of indignation and terror, and bear the stroke of divine justice, and lie in patience under it until that is cut down which has joined to deceit. Only then is there remission of transgression, and the creature is then justified in the sight of God. For sin is not blotted out of the book of God's remembrance until it be turned from and repented of; nor until then does the creature stand clear in the sight of God when He judges in righteous judgment—as the light in every man's conscience will testify.

Now, “whoever has been born of God does not sin,

for His Seed remains in him.”³⁶ This Seed is life, and as the creature joins to this Seed (which is the heir of the kingdom and of the crown immortal) he comes to be made partaker of its virtue and operation. The Seed is Christ, and by His power He limits the seed of the serpent, and weakens his strength in the creature. And as man comes to believe in the Seed's strength (unto whom all power is committed), the covenant with death is broken, and the agreement that the creature has made with death comes to be annulled by the arm and power of the Lord. In this way the creature comes to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and the new man comes to live; that is, the new creature (which is born of God and does not sin) comes to be framed and fashioned into the image of the Father. Unto this one, and in this one, is the Father's love made manifest, and he has the assurance in himself. This babe, who is born from above of the Spirit who is from above, has been justified by the just God, and has a record of his justification. “For there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.”³⁷ He who is born of that which is pure has the witness of these three in himself, for they agree in one. That which one bears witness unto, the other two do the same. Moreover, “There are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”³⁸

³⁶ 1 John 3:9; 5:18

³⁷ 1 John 5:8

³⁸ 1 John 5:7

So he that is born of the Father, and begotten of the Father in Christ the Seed, through the Spirit, he, and he alone, comes to feel the Father's love made manifest in him, and is justified in the sight of the Father. This one has his assurance and evidence near to him and in him, the seal of the Father, the seal of the Spirit. And so when the adversary comes to tempt and to assault, and would raise up doubts in the mind, the evidence is near, which puts him out of all doubt that he is in the love of God, and blessed forever. Happy are all those who have waited for these things, and have felt them, and are witnesses of them, for flesh and blood has not revealed them.

Now let every man that reads this prove himself, and try himself, whether he is in the faith or no, and whether he has the evidence of the Spirit that he is indeed born of it. Let him try himself whether he knows the birth that does not sin because the Seed remains in him, and the evil one does not touch him, being kept by the power of God. For such as these are kept alive unto Him who has brought them to life, and has given them to drink of the cup of salvation, which nourishes up unto eternal life all who continue in the faith.

SECTION X.

What the free grace of God is, unto whom it has appeared, and how all are to wait to receive it.

Titus 2:11-14 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

The grace of God is a pure, perfect, and free gift of God. It is the appearance of Christ, the beam of righteousness shining forth, a measure of God's strength and power issuing out from Himself. It is a portion of His treasure, virtue, and sufficiency which is shed abroad in all who believe in it. It is that through which God makes known His will, teaches, and reveals His saving health to those who are taught by it, believe in it, are built up in the truth, and become a habitation of God. No man does anything to purchase it. None need say, "Where may I get it?" or "How may I know its teaching?" It is near you; it is in you; it "has appeared to all men," showing ungodliness in the heart of man by its own brightness. Yes, to all men it shows the motions unto sin. And what-

ever is not like God in its motions, words, or actions, it draws the heart of man away from as with a chord. It shows the lusts of the heart and mind, “the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.”³⁹ It never joins to sin. Nothing can alter its purity or property, for in itself it is always one and the same. It is perfect, and will always be so. It stands off at a distance from that which is corruptible and imperfect, and yet it beholds it. And although some that have turned to it have again turned from it, and have turned it (as in themselves) into wantonness, still it keeps its purity, and reproveth all wantonness, and will lay it before you, showing you how you have abused the appearance of Christ.

Many have been talkers of the grace of God in this professing age, but have not known of what they spoke, nor made known to men where it was to be waited for, how it might be known, or what was its operation in man. Instead, they have applauded their own imaginations saying, “We are justified by His free grace from all sins past, present, and to come,” and in this conceit thousands have been led into the pit of darkness. In this darkness they cry out, “We are justified by the free grace of Christ,” but the free grace of God (had they known it) would have taught them that they never heeded it at all, but rather rose up into conceitedness, carelessness, and presumption, without the fear of God. Claiming justification, they are themselves still servants of sin, and bondslaves to corruption, and this is the state of thousands at this day who have been preachers and publish-

³⁹ 1 John 2:16

ers of free grace. And now, when grace has come to be witnessed by some, and declared (as to what it is, and where it is), these blind guides and ignorant shepherds seek to kill those who are fed and taught by the true gift of God. They deceive the sheep, scatter them from the fold, and lead them from the true Shepherd, and from His appearance (which is His grace) and from His voice (which is the Word of His grace), which is able to save the soul. Oh all you blind guides, and you that call yourselves orthodox men, and ministers, who preach grace in words! Now at last God has given those who have waited upon Him an understanding to declare grace, and yet you cry out, "Grace is not a sufficient teacher!" Now let me ask you a question: Is the grace which makes manifest ungodliness, and teaches to deny it, not a sufficient teacher? If it is not a sufficient teacher, why did the Apostle commit them and commend them to the Word of grace which is able to save the soul? (Acts 20:32) Answer me you wise men—is that which reveals sin and temptation not sufficient?

Truly that which reveals sin is holy, and that which leads from worldly lusts is pure, and that which saves from sin is grace. "For God so loved the world, that He sent His only Son into the world." He was and is the Light of the world, and has shed abroad His grace, and has made it appear to all. And all who wait upon it, and come to be taught by it, feel its assurance, so that all are left without excuse. Therefore, wait in that which has appeared in you. Wait in that which shows the lusts, and thoughts, and motions unto sin. This is God's gift, God's

grace, and it is sufficient, though all men deny it. All are to wait within, to hear Him who condemns sin in the flesh within, who by His grace shows man his transgression and insufficiency in himself, and by the Word of His grace saves out of sin, and gives dominion over sin. This comes to be revealed in the heart of man, and there it must be waited for in that which is pure. There, in the heart, grace is received, and there its operation comes to be known, and its virtue is partaken of by all that believe in it, receive it, and are subject to it. These see and feel God's salvation revealed through grace to their souls, and they know where their strength lies—not in self-acting, but in the free gift of God, the gift of righteousness, the righteous gift, by which justification comes upon those who believe.

SECTION XI.

Whether all have received the grace of God or not, and whether it is a sufficient teacher in itself.

This wise generation, whose wisdom is below the wisdom of God, has confounded people's minds with false distinctions, asserting there is a two-fold grace. First, there is that which they call "common grace," which has appeared to all men. Second, there is that which they call "special and saving grace," which has only appeared to the saints. By giving heed to these distinctions (in times past, many years ago), I lost

myself and my Guide, disregarding His appearance within me and hearkening to a thing at a distance from me. I did not heed the grace which was at home and near because it was called “common and insufficient,” and in this way I suffered great loss. So now I am moved by Him (in whose sight I have found favor and mercy and grace) to declare the truth as the Lord has made it manifest to me and in me, so that all who seek after the Lord may be informed and know where to wait upon the Lord. For unto that appearance which first showed me evil and temptation I was made to go back (even after many years of Christian profession) before I ever found the Lord or felt His living power again.

Now, the wise of this age defend their “common grace” with the written letter, where it is said, “He causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon the just and the unjust,”⁴⁰ and where it is said, “in Him we live, and move, and have our being.”⁴¹ For, they say, God has given to all health, strength, and understanding in natural things, and an ability to see grosser sins and evils. But that which they call “special grace” is that by which saints are saved and established in righteousness, and by which man receives remission of sins. But these have failed to see that He who causes the sun to shine, and the rain to fall, and gives health, strength, and nourishment to the outward, visible creation, is the same who is the Life of the soul. The same Power that discovers the dark places of the horrible pit, leads all who believe in it

⁴⁰ Matthew 5:45

⁴¹ Acts 17:28

unto the land of the living. The One who discovers the grosser sins and evils to man is the same that sanctifies, purifies, and saves them that believe. The same virtue and power that upholds the natural man is that which upholds the spiritual man, and that by which he lives unto God. It is the same grace, but I do not say that it is the same measure. For it is the virtue and power of God which made all visible and living things, and which causes them to subsist in their station, covenant, and bound where they are placed. And indeed, it is this same grace, strength, and power, but in a higher sphere or degree, that preserves all that believe, who have been made alive by Him, and raised up to sit down in heavenly places. And even among those who believe, though there be the same grace at work in all, still there may be a greater measure of its purity shining in one than in another, rending the veil, making the shadows to fly away, scattering the clouds, because the heart of one is more open to receive its virtue. Nevertheless, it is the same virtue and purity, and the grace keeps its purity and property in itself, and its power and sufficiency is always the same, though it does not appear so to the creature.

So this is my testimony of the grace of God, which is the gift of God, and which has appeared in some measure, more or less, unto all men: It is the grace of God which convinces of gross and open evils, and it is the same grace that leads from the least impure thought, unbelief, temptation, and secret evils that lodge in the heart. Indeed, this shall be witnessed to be truth by the

whole earth in the Day of the Lord's appearing, and is now witnessed by all the children of Light who believe, with whom I have fellowship in the pure, living, sufficient, and perfect grace of God. Therefore, all are left without excuse, for all that turn to His grace will see that He has long waited to be gracious, and that all mankind might be partakers of His bounty, love, mercy, and free gift, by which justification comes upon all that believe. This I write for the sake of such who thirst after God and the knowledge of Him, and not to satisfy critical men, nor those who are in philosophy and vain deceit, who are swollen big in their fleshly understanding, and puffed up in their earthly minds.

But now I come to speak about that which many are doubting, which is, “the grace of God which brings salvation, which has appeared to all men”—whether this be a sufficient leader and teacher when received. Let all first take notice that when I speak of the sufficiency of grace as a teacher, I do not speak of grace as distinct from Christ, or as a thing separate from the power of God, but rather as being one with it and with Him from which it comes. For as Christ is salvation itself, so the grace of God is of the same nature, and by it He manifests Himself and His salvation to those that believe, revealing His witness within them. For wherever the appearance and presence of Christ is manifest, there His power and strength is also manifest, either to salvation or condemnation. And though His pure appearance and presence is one in itself, yet it is very dreadful and terrible to those who have pierced Him, while it is delightful,

sweet, pleasant, glorious, and admirable to those who have believed, suffered with Him, and longed for Him. Oh that all who long after Him may wait for Him in patience, in that light wherein He will appear! For surely they will see Him, and His sight will be a recompense for all longing, thirsting, desiring, and waiting. The sense of longing and thirsting will be taken away when He who makes the heart glad appears, and lifts up the light of His countenance. Therefore all wait, and do not think the time long. Keep in your minds to His grace, which is His appearance, and you will feel and see Him, and be satisfied. And you will say, "This is He whom we have waited for, let us rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for now He is come, and His reward is with Him."

Now God, out of His everlasting love unto the sons of men, has followed man, and has called him to return. Yet there is a nature which has risen above in man, and has transgressed against the Life, and which always resists the drawings of the Lord. For it is not subject to the law of God, nor to the grace of God which teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. This nature has surrounded the creature like a thick cloud, and makes war against the soul, and there is none to deliver until there is a listening to the grace which shows ungodliness and worldly lusts. For indeed, none have power or dominion over that nature in them which leads into transgression; but the grace of God has power in itself. Truly God (who is salvation itself) has reached out from Himself, and has appeared in His pure and perfect grace

unto all men, yet all have not received this grace. For though the Lord offers grace so that the creature might receive it and partake of its living virtue and operation, yet while that nature which is contrary to grace has preeminence, it will never receive it, knowing that the grace of God will mortify it, take its life away, and slay the enmity. Therefore, all must be still and quiet, and wait in that which is pure from the Lord, and feel that which receives grace rise up above all corruptible thoughts and desires of the carnal mind.

Many who talk of free grace, put no difference between the precious and the vile, but set people upon doing and working who are still in the enmity, in the curse, and in death. Thus they have brought forth dead works, notwithstanding all their performances. For since they are dead to the life of God, another acts in them, even he who has the power of death, which is the devil. And not knowing what is precious in themselves, they cannot minister unto that which is precious in others, but are instead ministers of death.

Now, though all have not received grace, so as to save them from the committing of sin, the fault is not in God. For, "Israel would have none of my counsel; they stopped their ears."⁴² Neither is the fault in the grace which has appeared to all men, as though it were too weak or small. Rather, the fault is that the grace is not hearkened unto, and waited in, and obeyed, believed in, and received. For this is eternal truth, which will forever stand: The least measure of the grace of God has power

⁴² Zechariah 7:11

in itself to save man from committing the evil or sin which it shows to man. And as it is received, the power comes more and more to be made manifest, and all who believe come to be preserved out of evil.

Objection: But some now say, “There is common grace and saving grace, and the former has appeared to all, but the latter has appeared only to the saints and to the elect.”

Answer: Grace, which is God's pure and perfect gift, is but one thing. I do not say that the fullness of grace has appeared to all, but a measure of that fullness, which is Christ, the Head. Nevertheless, I cannot divide the least measure from the fullness in quality or nature, for it is one and the same. For the same grace which leads a man from drunkenness and excess, is as pure, and of the same kind and nature, as the greater proportion which leads a man from all sin. I speak what I have seen from the Father, though the dark world cannot receive it. For people have been blinded and darkened with distinctions which men have coined and framed in their natural reason, and by natural giftings, which are outside of the Life. (Though I do not condemn natural abilities, so long as they are kept in their proper bounds and compass, that is to say, to the management of natural things in the visible creation. For the things of God's kingdom are of another quality and nature, and cannot be reached by natural abilities.)

Objection: But some will be ready to say, “This is error, and is contrary to Scripture and to orthodox teachers, to suggest that the grace which is saving is near all men, and has appeared to all men.”

Answer: Though the grace which has appeared to all men is saving in itself, and may be truly called saving grace, yet to them that do not believe in it, nor are taught by it, to these it only convinces and shows evil, checks and judges for sin. Yet there is no variation or change in the grace itself, for the variation is in how it works upon different objects. For the word of His grace is a savor of life unto life to those who believe, and is a savor of death unto death to those who are in the unbelief (who indeed are dead while they live). Here is the same grace, and yet here are different operations. For “The Lord kills and makes alive,”⁴³ but He is the same Lord. The same Spirit convinces and reproves for sin, and also comforts and consoles. Here is diversity in operation, yet the same Spirit which never changes.

Objection: But some may say, “If a measure of saving grace has appeared to all men, then how is it that all are not saved by it?”

Answer: All are not saved by it because they do not believe in it, nor are taught by it. And though they who are careless and heedless say, “We feel no power or

⁴³ 1 Samuel 2:6

sufficiency in it to save us from sin,” yet this does not nullify the confidence of those who have received it and know its power. For there is power and sufficiency in grace to do the will of God. But what if unbelievers, who are alienated from life, say, “There is no beauty in Christ, neither form nor comeliness;”⁴⁴ this does not make His glory void who is the express image of the Father, full of grace and truth. The disciples, who were in the faith saw His glory, and bore record of Him; but the Pharisees, who were in unbelief, said: “He has a devil.”⁴⁵

Therefore, here is my testimony: The grace of God, the perfect gift of God, which shows ungodliness, and leads all who are taught by it out from ungodliness, is a sufficient teacher in itself, for the power of Christ is made manifest through grace unto all who hearken to it. Paul, a minister of the word of reconciliation, who was caught up into the third heavens where he saw things unutterable, came to be tempted and buffeted by a messenger of Satan, and fear and doubting rose up within him. Three times he prayed unto God, and this answer was given to him, “My grace is sufficient for you.”⁴⁶ Thus it is evident to all understandings that have been opened by the Lord, that the very thing which showed him the temptations, and Satan's messengers and buffetings, was also sufficient to preserve him. So grace is sufficient for all who are singly kept to it and in

⁴⁴ Isaiah 53:2

⁴⁵ John 10:20

⁴⁶ 2 Corinthians 12:9

it, sufficient to reveal ungodliness because of its purity, to lead out of worldly lusts by its power, to teach the will of God, and to live righteously in this present world. This testimony I bear to the grace of God, even what I have felt and tasted and handled of its sufficiency, virtue, and the power of its operation, which testimony I commend to that which is from God in every man, which will bear me witness in the Day of God.

SECTION XII.

A word to the wise men of the world, who are glorying in the sound of words, and worshipping outward appearances, who desire to search into the deep things of God by their natural wisdom, learning, and study.

God is shedding abroad His power and glory, and making it to flow forth to His little ones, by which you are all weighed—all your learning, tongues, languages, interpretations, significations, and wisdom, which are only natural. For although there are many languages, and each has an interpretation, and signification, they are all too short to declare the life, the immeasurable being of eternal life. O you wise teachers, with your rhetoric, philosophy, disputes, and languages, you cannot know the mind of the Spirit or the Author of eternal salvation. And not knowing the living eternal Spirit by these things, you invent, study, devise, form, and frame up things in your carnal minds. In this way

you fill the whole world with your dark and muddy conceptions, leading men away from the living wisdom of God, which is above, and was before, your words and languages.

Oh the world has swallowed down your concepts and distinctions, your devised fables and imagined worship, and so many have lost all sense of God in themselves to guide them, and so are further from the true knowledge of God than they were in the day they came out of their mother's womb. Oh how lamentable to see how many have gone out of the pure simplicity which is in Christ, into subtlety and deceit, and who are now stuffed and filled up with that which must be poured out as water before they can come to the least measure of God's true and saving knowledge. Oh, a dreadful Day comes upon you as a thief, for you have taken away the key of knowledge, and given people that which will not open. You, and those who follow you, will be shut out together as fools, though you count yourselves wise. Indeed, your wisdom will perish, and your honor will be laid in the dust.

And you literal professors of Christianity who have got the Scripture into your heads, and into your carnal minds to talk of, how you have taken up and exalted visible, shadowy practices, but neglected the life! You are making idols of those things which were but figures and representations in their time. And you, like the Pharisees, are limiting the Lord. For if He will not appear unto you according to those things which you have prescribed and gathered from the written letter,

then you will not receive Him. For you have heaped up your interpretations in the fleshly part of man, which has risen up like a mountain within you, high above God's pure witness in you, high above His appearance, so that you have lost sight of that which could give you the knowledge of the living God, and make you sensible of His pure presence. May the Lord open your understanding, that you may see yourselves, and how frothy, vain, light, and wanton you are, and how you are one with the world in all things at their very source. You claim liberty in Christ, and privileges in Him, even while you are still servants to corruption and many harmful lusts.

Consider, what are all outward appearances, but as a curtain, or veil, or shadow, compared with Christ, who is God's righteousness within. But you are filled so full of your apprehensions of His righteousness at a distance that you have forgotten your own condition at home. For indeed, Christ's righteousness will not be a cloak for your self-righteousness and unrighteousness. And if Christ is not formed in you, and does not live in you, and act in you, and work His work in you, you are in self-righteousness. And all talk of imputation will not save you while you are not in that nature and faith unto whom His righteousness is imputed. Are you not weary with blowing to and fro among the earthy hills that you have formed yourselves? Do you not see that your land has grown barren, and your possessions dry, and your worship dead, and that the rains and dews of heaven do not fall on you, but instead you wither daily as a branch

without sap? What have you found that will last unto eternity? Oh, is it not rusted and fading already? Is it not cankered and moth-eaten already? The glory of all earthly things is fading, and all earthly appearances, though ever so glorious, are all to cease. There will be no more glory in these things, for they will all fly away as a shadow when the sun arises. Your riches are wasting away, but when will you seek after that which endures forever?

I pity you who have had true breathings after God, but have sat down at ease in that which is not eternal. Be warned, return home! Do you rest in a faith that says you will never be cleaned here? That faith is cursed, it is reprobate, it is more properly called unbelief. It is not the faith of God's elect, by which they were sanctified and overcame the wicked one in themselves by the power of Christ. For Christ is able to save and manifest His ability in all who believe in the light. Indeed, Christ manifests himself to the creature, and makes known His power in the creature, in order to redeem the soul out of death and from under the bondage of corruption, to serve in the free Spirit of God, in which the sons are made free from sin and become temples of the Holy Spirit. Consider how far you are from this, you who are still temples of uncleanness and habitations of deadly lusts. For truly, setting up and conforming to a visible, external practice will not justify you while that which has transgressed the Life and disobeyed the Light is still the head in you, and is risen up above what is pure. You must come to the Rock before you will know anything

that will endure, or anything to build upon—which Rock is Christ, who abides forever. But you have gone out from that which could give you the knowledge of God in yourselves, that is, the Light of His Spirit, which shines in your hearts, making manifest the intentions of the heart and the motions unto evil.

The time of restoration is come, and many are restored again into God's covenant. Many have been delivered out of the jaws of death, and feel Him who is the healer of breaches to be the restorer of desolate places. But all must come to see the place made desolate wherein the wild nature lodges, before they come to have a share in the restoration. Come then, come down off the barren mountains where you are feeding. Come unto Christ the Life of men, who has enlightened you, so that you may feel His mind in yourselves. Otherwise you will continue to err for lack of knowledge, and perish for lack of understanding, and so lay down your head in sorrow.

SECTION XIII.

The kingdom of God and of His Christ declared in some measure, what it is, where it is to be waited for, and how it comes to be revealed to them and in them that believe.

The Lord has prepared His throne in the heavens; His kingdom rules over all, and His dominion is an

everlasting dominion. God is a Spirit; His kingdom is spiritual; His habitation is suitable to His own nature. He is immortal; His kingdom is so. He is Light; His dwelling place is so—a pure habitation where there is no uncleanness, nor ever shall be. It consists in purity and pleasantness, in power, righteousness, joy, hope, peace, life, quietness, and eternal virtue. It is a quiet habitation, eternally glorious, incomprehensible, unsearchable, and undeclarable. Words come too short; they are but sounds, and are like veils. All who believe in the King of eternal and immortal glory come to receive of His wisdom, of His life, of His power, virtue, righteousness, and to enjoy Him who is the fullness that fills all things, whether visible or invisible, earthly or heavenly.

Oh, but these things are hidden from the world, from those who are not redeemed from the earth, nor even seek to be so while they are in the body. Unto such I say, you will never see or enjoy God's kingdom while you remain in a faith that is reprobate, in a faith that may truly be called unbelief. Though you imagine a glory and a kingdom in your earthly mind, and dream of a thing to come (which corresponds to that nature in which your glory now stands), yet this will all fail, and those imaginations will be confounded and dissolve into nothing. These dreams stand outside of the truth, outside of Christ, and so are without ground or foundation, and are outside of that which would give you sight and knowledge of God and His kingdom.

Christ, when He taught those who followed Him,

exhorted them to “seek first the kingdom of God,”⁴⁷ even while they were in the body. The Pharisees were gazing abroad in their earthly knowledge, and though they had the Scriptures which declared God's kingdom, yet they knew it not. And now this generation is the same, and are in the same nature, and the same wisdom, which is earthly and literal. They are imagining, as the Jews were, and saying “lo here, and lo there,” the kingdom is in this observation, and in that thing. No, Christ said, “The kingdom of God is within you,”⁴⁸ and He bid them to seek it first. “What strange doctrine is this?” might the Pharisees have said. “He says the kingdom is within us, and yet bids us to seek it! Must we seek that which is already in us?” Yes, it is like a pearl or treasure hidden in a field. It is like a grain of mustard seed among many other great seeds, which is not easily found. It is like a piece of silver lost in the house among much rubble, and until the rubble be swept away you will not find it. You must dig deep, sweep clean, search narrowly, before you find it. And though He said to the Pharisees “the kingdom of God is within you,” He did not say that they were possessors of it, or that it was theirs. However, to the disciples, whom He taught to pray in faith “Thy kingdom come,” these came to find what they prayed for—the pearl, the coin, the grain of mustard seed. And having found it, and believed in it, He said unto them, “Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom

⁴⁷ Matthew 6:33

⁴⁸ Luke 17:21

of God.”⁴⁹ And in Luke 6:20 “And He lifted up His eyes upon His disciples, and said, 'Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.'" They had seen it, and were possessors of it; it was indeed theirs. And Christ said unto His disciples, “There are some of you standing here that shall not taste death until you see the kingdom of God come in power.”⁵⁰ And indeed His words were fulfilled, for they declared what they had felt and seen, and some of them said, “The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.”⁵¹ And Paul wrote to the Romans (who were also made partakers of the same power and kingdom) that “the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”⁵² And of the Colossians, who had waited for the kingdom, and believed in that light by which it was revealed, it is said, “Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”⁵³ These things were seen even in the body, and witnessed in the body. And the apostle to the Hebrews says, “He that believes is entered into the rest.”⁵⁴ Now all these things are felt within by the immortal Seed, the immortal birth, and by those who witness this immortal birth to live in them. And all that

⁴⁹ Matthew 5:3

⁵⁰ Matthew 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27

⁵¹ 1 Corinthians 4:20

⁵² Romans 14:17

⁵³ Colossians 1:12-13

⁵⁴ Hebrews 4:3

ever come to see and feel the kingdom of God which is spiritual, must wait in the Spirit, and in its manifestation.

Objection: But some say that there is a two-fold kingdom—the one of grace here and now, and the other of glory hereafter, which no one comes to enjoy in this life or in the body.

Answer: People have long been blinded and confused about names and words, and being full of imaginary thoughts and concepts have brought forth foolish distinctions; and that which God has joined together, they would separate. Grace is glorious, and glory is gracious, they are not separate. The kingdom of God, which was once like a grain of mustard seed, afterwards becomes a great tree. And though the tree in its strength and glory and height is more glorious than when it was in the seed, yet the seed and the tree are one in nature, quality, and kind. If the kingdom of God is in dominion, purity, power, and glory, is there not unity here? Though there be greater measures, yet is not the dominion still one, the power one, the glory one, the kingdom one in which both the grace and the glory stand? Grace is indeed glorious, “Having predestined us unto the adoption as sons, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the beloved.”⁵⁵ And it is through grace that glory comes to be revealed in the

⁵⁵ Ephesians 1:6-7

earth—"The earth is full of His glory."⁵⁶ For God is revealing His power, His kingdom, His grace, and His glory unto all who patiently wait upon Him in that which may be as yet a grain of mustard seed. These will come to feel His presence, His power and glory revealed in the heart through the Spirit, and will enjoy God in His kingdom, power, and glory, and through faith will see the weight of glory.

Objection: But some will cry out, "What? Do you look for no other glory but in this life, nor for any other kingdom but what you enjoy in this life?"

Answer: The saints looked for no other glory but that which stood in eternal life, in the immortal, incorruptible life, and the country they sought after was that of which God was the maker and builder. These looked and waited to receive of its power, the power in which the kingdom stands, and they did in this life come to know and enjoy it (though I do not say the full weight of glory). For to be made partakers of His eternal dominion and authority is that which all the saints did witness, and in time they came to enjoy it through faith. For by faith they saw Him who was invisible, and the things of His kingdom which are invisible, spiritual, and eternal. But to speak of the carnal, corruptible life of the flesh, and of those who are dead while they live therein, that life knows neither the kingdom, nor the power, nor the glory. The glory of God is not revealed to man until after

⁵⁶ Isaiah 6:3

the death of that life, and the death of the one who has the power of death, which is the devil, who rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience. Indeed the kingdom of God is hidden from the eyes of all while they remain in that state.

But blessed is the ear that can hear, for the kingdom of God has come near unto many, and the salvation of God and the power of His Christ is seen by many. Honor and praise unto Him forever, who is the only potentate, and who puts down all authority under His feet, that God may be all and in all. But first everyone must come to feel the kingdom of God in himself, which begins as a little grain within. In this, man must come to believe before he can truly know the kingdom, or in what it consists. And even after it is known in measure, the measure is still far short of the glory in fullness. For indeed, many may come to be partakers of the power in some measure, yet the measure is far short of the eternal weight of glory.

“He that believes has entered into the rest,” and is made a partaker of the heavenly gift, the heavenly power, the heavenly grace (all of which is glorious), and he indeed witnesses a heavenly place in Christ Jesus. And yet there remain many enemies still to be subdued, and there is much of the heavenly habitation which he does not yet see. These come to be revealed as there is an abiding in the faith which stands in the power of God. Indeed, the mysteries of God and His kingdom come in due time to be revealed; through death they come to be known, that is to say, through the death of

death. For in the case of Israel, the true type, after they passed over the Jordan and had taken Jericho and Ai, and had made an entrance into the land, yet there were still many enemies to be subdued, and much land still to be possessed, which they did not partake of until long after. Even so now, after there is a true rest enjoyed and possessed, and an entrance made into the kingdom, yet there are many enemies to be subdued, and still much heavenly inheritance to be enjoyed by those who stand in the power which gives dominion over sin, the devil, hell and the grave. These are made partakers of God, and as the enmity is slain, they enjoy God (who is eternal life). These come to receive the immortal crown, which God gives in due time to those who wait in patience and faith, through which the immortal inheritance comes to be revealed to all the children of light.

And so to conclude in a few words, this I say unto all who are longing after God, and waiting to feel His power: Keep in your minds to the pure measure of God's Holy Spirit, and therein wait to see His kingdom and dominion, and to be made partakers of it. For this kingdom brings the world to an end, and will let you see to the end of it too, and before it was, and also the One who is now glorified with the Father in the kingdom of God with the same glory He had with the Father before the world began. And whoever comes to the end of the world, and to the true beginning again, comes to see Him in His glory, and the kingdom of glory which fades not away. Indeed all who come to enjoy this are eternally happy.