

The
WORKS
OF THE
LONG MOURNFUL AND SORELY DISTRESSED
ISAAC PENINGTON

WHOM THE LORD IN HIS TENDER MERCY, AT LENGTH VISITED AND
RELIEVED BY THE MINISTRY OF THAT DESPISED PEOPLE

CALLED QUAKERS

AND IN THE SPRINGINGS OF THAT LIGHT, LIFE, AND HOLY POWER IN HIM,
WHICH THEY HAD TRULY AND FAITHFULLY TESTIFIED OF, AND DIRECTED
HIS MIND TO, WERE THESE THINGS WRITTEN

AND ARE NOW PUBLISHED AS A THANKFUL TESTIMONY OF THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD
UNTO HIM, AND FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS

"THEY ALSO THAT ERRED IN SPIRIT SHALL KNOW UNDERSTANDING, AND THEY THAT
MURMURED SHALL LEARN DOCTRINE."

ISAIAH 29:24

Volume 4

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A FURTHER TESTIMONY TO TRUTH

REVIVED OUT OF

THE RUINS OF THE APOSTASY

OR

SEVERAL THINGS OPENED FROM THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, TOUCHING THE WAY OF LIFE AND SALVATION; WHICH WILL REACH TO THE WITNESS IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHOSE SPIRITS ARE QUICKENED, AND WHOSE EARS AND UNDERSTANDINGS ARE OPENED BY THE SPIRIT AND POWER OF THE LORD

Written in a deep sense and tender love,

BY ISAAC PENINGTON

Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon you, and his glory shall be seen upon you. And the Gentiles shall come to your light, and the kings to the brightness of your rising. Isa. 60:1-3

O house of Jacob! come you, and let us walk in the light of the Lord. Isa. 2:5

[published posthumously in 1680]

PREFACE

OH! how excellent and precious is the name of the Lord, in this our day, among his people, whom he has gathered out of the worldly spirit unto himself, and whom he mightily defends in that wherein he has gathered them! Insomuch as it may now be said inwardly, as it was of old outwardly, Psalm 76. "In Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle, Selah." Oh, what mighty things has the Lord God done in and for the spirits of his people! How has he scattered the darkness from about them, broke the chains which held them in captivity! How has he risen up against all the enemies of their souls, discovered their snares, snapped in sunder the weapons of war, which the spirit of darkness has formed and lifted up against them! And how has he preserved them in

life, in peace, in purity, in holiness, in his power and dominion (over that spirit, and the devices thereof), to this very day! He lives and reigns in power over all; and because he lives, we live also; and because he reigns, those that are in his life and Spirit partake of his holy reign and dominion (over sin, hell, death, and the powers of darkness) with him. Lo! this is our God; this is he whom we have sought after, and waited for; and now his power is made manifest, now his righteousness and salvation is revealed, how can our souls but be glad and rejoice therein! Yes, how can we conceal the good tidings of the day of our God, and of the gospel of his salvation, which has arisen and broke in upon us! How can we but desire to awaken the minds of men out of their sleep, and call upon them to shake off the drowsiness and blackness of the night, and to lift up their eyes towards the hill and mountain of God's holiness, that they also may behold the beauty of his day in others, and wait for the springing of his life and glory in themselves!

Now there is something revealed of God, of his own nature, power, and Spirit, wherein we have met with him. To this we invite, of this we speak, concerning this we testify, as being that which the Father will honor, and wherein he has and will appear. It is a poor, weak, low thing to consider of, or behold with the eye and understanding of man; but there is the riches, the glory, the life, the righteousness, the peace, the joy, the everlasting power of the kingdom in it; and to them that receive it in the demonstration of God's Spirit, and in the love of it, it is the wisdom of God and his power to the redemption and salvation of their souls. Indeed of all the wise builders (out of the true sense and power) it is rejected at this day, as it always was of old; but to us who are called of God, taught by him, who have received an understanding from him, etc., we know the value of that which comes from him, being instructed by him not to judge according to the appearance, but to judge the righteous judgment; and in the righteous judgment, in the balance of the sanctuary, we find this little despised light to be elect and precious, even the foundation-stone, the corner-stone, and the top-stone of the building of God. And this we testify to men in true love, and from certain knowledge and experience which we have received from him that is true, and hold in him that is true.

Now this precious pearl (of which we testify) lies hid deep within; and there must men come to know it, to purchase it, to possess it; and there it is the desire of our hearts to bring men. Nor do we open the thing of God before men to this end, that they might get a knowledge thereof into their brains, and feed on it there; but through tender love we bring these things a little into the very view of men (as the Lord enables us); not that they might stick there, but that having a taste of the excellency and beauty of truth, they might be inflamed (with desires after it) to travel there, where it is to be had. Therefore dwell not in the notion, delight not in the outward knowledge of the thing itself (though the knowledge be ever so sweet, pleasing, satisfactory, and demonstrative to the mind); but come to the everlasting spring. Feel the measure of life in your particular, and that will lead you to the spring of life, from which the measure comes as a gift from the Father to you, to bring you to the Father. And singly for this end have I been drawn to write what follows, in service to the Lord, in faithfulness to him, in dear love to the souls of men, especially of those who have formerly been travelers, and have felt something of the Lord, and yet retain desires and breathings in their hearts after him. Oh that the Lord would touch their spirits, discover to them the way everlasting, and lead them therein to that which their souls darkly desire and seek after; to which there is no other way than that which has been from the beginning, only there have been various discoveries and manifestations of the one way! But what greater discovery can there be than of the thing or seed itself, which the Lord has been pleased to make manifest in this day of his glorious mercy, love, and power, whereof he has raised up many witnesses, whom he has enabled (by his Spirit and power) to give a living, clear, certain testimony to? Happy is

the ear that hears! for that also must be of God, as the message and messengers are known to be.

A FURTHER TESTIMONY TO TRUTH

Some QUERIES concerning Christ's righteousness, — how it justifies; whether as inwardly revealed and dwelling in the heart, or only as imputed, or both.

Query 1. Is not Christ the righteousness and justification of the soul with God? Is not he made of God unto us righteousness, and are not we made the righteousness of God in him? How is this done? Is it not by being ingrafted into him — covered with him? Is this a mere imputation? or is it not rather a bringing the soul into the thing itself, and a drawing his nature, life, and Spirit over the soul, which was and is always righteous in itself, and so accounted with God? And he that is found in him, clothed with him, emptied of himself, and filled with him, is he not really righteous in the sight of God?

Query 2. Is not the principle of life, which is from Christ, of the same nature with Christ? is it not also holy and righteous? yes, is not Christ the fulness of it? And he that receives this principle, does he not receive life, receive Christ, receive righteousness? Can the righteousness of Christ be separated from the seed of his life, nature, and Spirit? Can a man deny himself, go out of himself, give up to that, and be found in that, and not found in the righteousness? or can a man come to righteousness by imputation without that?

Query 3. This principle or seed of life being from Christ, of Christ, and one with Christ in nature, though not of the same stature and fulness, yet has it not the property and virtue of all that is of Christ in it? Do not all the promises belong to this seed, and go along with this seed? Does not all that is good in man spring up from this seed? He that receives this, does he not receive that which is righteous, and which makes him righteous, so far as he is of it, and in it? yes, the sacrifice of Christ in the flesh, the virtue thereof, the forgiveness of the Father for the sake of his Son, — does it not go along with this? and is it not accepted for that man who is found here, and his iniquities (which he committed formerly) freely forgiven him for his name's sake? Yes, are not his sins afterwards also blotted out upon the same terms, he returning to this, abiding in this, and being found in this, and wherein the remission of sin, and the power against sin, is alone to be felt and received forever? So here is the imputation in its right place, and the right use and pleading of the sacrifice of the Son, which here, in this its proper place, and in this state, prevails with God, and not otherwise. For the kingdom, the righteousness, the peace, the joy, the power thereof, etc. is placed by God in this seed, which is as a grain of mustard seed: and he that ever finds it must so find it; and he that ever joins to it must so join to it; and he that ever receives it aright must so receive it.

Query 4. Is not he that is born of God new created in Christ Jesus? and is not the new creature and new creation righteous in the sight of God? When Adam was created at first, he was created in God's image; and was not that image righteous, and he righteous in that image? And when man is regenerated, renewed, brought again into the image, is not the image again holy and righteous, and he in the image?

Query 5. Is not faith the gift of God? And is it not holy, spiritual, and righteous in its own nature, and in the creature to whom it is given? And being given to the creature, is it not owned by God as such,

and so justified in the creature? Is not the faith which is of God as righteous as the unbelief from the root of bitterness is unrighteous? And does not God own and justify that as righteous, as well as condemn and reject the other as unrighteous?

Query 6. Is not the obedience of the soul in Christ, and from the principle of his life in the soul, and through his Spirit, righteous? no, as righteous and justifiable in the sight of God, as the disobedience of the first nature is unrighteous?

Query 7. Are not all the works which are wrought in God righteous? and does not he that does truth bring them to the light, that it may be made manifest that they are wrought in God? John 3:21. Now there is no condemnation, but justification, to the deeds that are wrought in God; as there is no justification, but condemnation to the works that are wrought out of him.

So that here now he that is indeed of God, he that is new created in Christ Jesus, he knows the Father and fountain of righteousness, the Son of righteousness, the righteous seed, the righteous faith and obedience of the seed, and the works which are wrought by the power, and in the Spirit, which being brought to the true light, are always justified by it.

Concerning the true Church and Ministry

THERE is a great noise in the world about church and ministry. Many are affirming which is it, and many are doubtful and inquiring about it; and many are truly and groundedly satisfied, having received the knowledge of the thing from God, who is not deceived about it, nor deceives any, but gives the true understanding of these and other things, to them that wait upon him aright; that is, in his fear, and in the silence of the fleshly wise part before him. Now, I have a testimony to give concerning these things, which that ear which is of God can hear, and to that I desire to speak.

That is the church which is the spiritual body of Christ. The church is Christ's spouse, he the husband. The head is living, and so are all the members of the body. The head is anointed, and the oil wherewith the head is anointed runs down from the head upon all the body; and that upon which the oil runs not is none of the body. Now, no outward thing can make one a member of this body; much less can any outward thing, way, profession, or practice make a church. The church under the law was made so by outward things, by an outward gathering, an outward circumcision, an outward law, an outward worship, etc.; but the gospel is a state of substance, a state of the invisible things, of persons invisibly gathered by the Spirit into the life and power of God, inwardly circumcised, inwardly baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, inwardly worshipping in Spirit and truth, bowing at every sound and name of the Lord Jesus: and what is of an outward state here is brought forth and preserved by the power of the inward appearing, and dwelling in it. So that this is the church now, — a people gathered by the life and Spirit of the Lord; a people gathered by the power from on high, abiding in the power, acting in the power, worshipping in the power, keeping in the holy order and government of life (both inwardly in their own hearts, and outwardly in their assemblings and walkings) by the power. Christ was made a king, priest, and prophet, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life; and in this power he gathers, governs, and preserves his church, and ministers from and by his Spirit and power in it. Now, find this power of the endless life, find a people anywhere gathered by this

power, and in this power; there is the church, there is the living body, there is Christ the head, whose dominion and strength is over all, against whom the gates of hell cannot prevail.

And so for the ministers of this church. The same thing that gives to know the church gives to know the ministers thereof; for they also are of God, called by him, receiving power from him, and abiding and ministering in that power. So that there are three things requisite to a true ministry, without which they cannot be right, or execute their office rightly.

1. They must be called by God. The ministry under the law, this was their warrant, — they were called and appointed of God thereunto. Christ himself took not the honor to himself, but he was called of God to this priesthood, as Aaron to his. So the apostles and ministers, in the first publication of the gospel, were called and appointed by Christ. And when the everlasting gospel is again to be preached, God sends his angel with it, as Rev. 14:6.

2. They must receive ability and power from God. The elders that were to help Moses were to receive of his spirit. Under the law, the priests were to be anointed with the outward, literal oil, and the ministers of the gospel are to be anointed with the inward, spiritual oil. Their work is spiritual; and how can they perform it, but by the anointing, by that presence, guidance, life, virtue, and power of the Spirit, putting itself forth in them? The apostles themselves, who had been taught by Christ, who knew his conduct and doctrine, who were eye-witnesses of what they were to publish, and had received an authority and commission from him, yet were not to go forth merely upon this call and commission, but to wait for power from on high; and when they had received the Spirit and power, then they were made able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit and power.

3. They must abide in the power, keep in the power, feel the motion, virtue, and assistance of the power, in all their work and service. They must neither pull down, nor build up, nor watch over, or oversee the flock in their own wisdom, in their own spirit, in their own wills; but in the anointing, in the light and guidance of the Lord. This gathering, this building, this work of the Lord, begins out of flesh, out of man; and flesh must be kept out of the whole carrying on of it.

And indeed, unless the ministers of the gospel be in the Spirit, in the life, in the power, how can they minister to the nature, to the spirit, to the life, in the body? yes, so much as to the least member in the body? They may minister outward knowledge to the man's wisdom, to the man's understanding; but that is not the food that is to be ministered to the church, nor is that part in man to be fed by the true minister. But they are to minister life (living food) from the living fountain, from the head, from the Spirit of Christ in them, to the particular members under their charge; and so are to be good stewards and shepherds to the flock, giving every one their proper portion in due season.

It was no small matter to be a minister under the law. It was easy to err, and minister amiss then. It was easy erring from the letter, unless great care and circumspection was used to keep strictly to it.

But it is a much more weighty thing to minister under the gospel, to receive the power, to minister in the power, to that which is begotten and born of the power. And this is precious, and (without controversy) of God, wherever it is found. But they only that are of God can hear and receive this ministry (as 1 John 4:6). The uncircumcised ear cannot hear here, nor the wise and knowing according to the flesh. The wisdom of God is foolishness to him, and the mysteries of his kingdom (the mystery of his life, and the true godliness) are riddles, and direct madness to the eye of his wisdom: so far is man

degenerated from God, and bound down with chains of darkness and corruption. And he that would know the true church, or be of it, and hear the voice of God in his true ministry, must first take up the cross to that part in him which is not of God, and receive from God the eye which sees, and the ear which hears.

An OBJECTION concerning the Newness of the Way of Truth, answered: With a tender, expostulating Exhortation

Objection. It is objected against us, that this which we testify to, hold forth, and practice, is a new way, sprung up of late, never known nor heard of in the world till some few years ago.

Answer. The light eternal, when it shines out of the darkness, after the great apostasy from the Spirit and life of the apostles, is new indeed to those that were overwhelmed and buried in the darkness of the night, and so never saw or heard of it before; but it is not new in itself, but the same that it was from the beginning. This seed of life, this seed of blessing, is the same that was promised at first to bruise the serpent's head. The same which was promised to Abraham, when the gospel was preached to him. The same that saved all (that believed in it) under the law; for it was not the types and shadows, and outward ordinances, which saved the soul then, but the seed, who was the Savior from the beginning, and is the Savior all along, even to the end: and it was the same which was the gospel in the days of the apostles. They preached the seed also, the word of faith; Christ the way, Christ the power. Yes, all along the times of the apostasy, this was the thing that preserved the witnesses, saving them from being swallowed up in the darkness, and keeping them alive in their testimony. And there is no other thing held forth now by those who are in the truth, and raised up by the power of God in it to give testimony to it. This is it from which life has sprung in any that have felt life, in all ages and generations. This is the root and offspring of David, the bright and the morning star. This is the desire of all nations (oh that they knew their desire), and their saving health too, without which they can never be healed! And, O you! who ever felt any thing of God at any time, which was true, either in reading the Scriptures, or hearing a ministry, or in private breathings, etc., this was it which gave you to feel in that state, to desire after the Lord, to turn from vanity, to long for communion with him, etc. Oh that you were so far in it now, as you have been in times past! For there is no other thing we testify to you of (or desire to draw you to) than that which was the root and strength of your life in those days. I remember that time very well, and what I was and felt among you, nor can I deny it at this day, but know that it was of the Lord; yes, my soul blesses his name in the remembrance of it: but he that sticks in the letter of that (having lost the life thereof) is in a dead state before the Lord; and in that dead state has not the true sense and feeling, and then must needs err and mistake concerning the truth, and (in that error) make use of his wisdom and knowledge to resist and oppose it. And this brings more death and darkness upon the soul, insomuch as the very light there becomes darkness, and the very life dead; and if they could truly look inwards, they would see that they are not now there, what once they were, nor their duties or ordinances (as they account them) such; but a blasting and withering is come upon them, from the Spirit and power of the Lord, and they have lost their beauty and freshness, to all that with a true eye behold them. Therefore come back to the life; know that which formerly gave you life. Is it removed? stick not behind, but follow on. Oh, know the Lamb, who is the leader! And this is the great duty of duties to follow him whithersoever he goes. He may in his tender

mercy visit in Egypt, in Sodom, in Babylon: but these are not the places of his rest, nor so to be esteemed, because he once appeared, visited, touched, refreshed the soul there. But his dwelling-place is Zion, his holy city is Jerusalem, where the Christians dwelt with him before the apostasy, and where those that are redeemed out of the apostasy, are again to dwell. For the darkness of the night is not to diminish or take away any of the beauty or brightness of the day forever; but the brightness and beauty of the day, in its rising and glorious growth, is to overcome and swallow it up. Therefore lose no more time in disputings, in thoughts, in reasonings, in consultings, with that which will never advise the soul for its good; but wait on the Lord, that you may come (through his leadings) to the true sense of his seed, to the feeling of the nature of his eternal light and life in the heart; and that will put an end to disputes; yes, scatter the disputing mind, and powerfully determine the controversy in the pure sense and demonstration of the Spirit. And he that knows any thing of this, let him abide here, wait here, live here, dwell here, and breathe to the Father here, watching narrowly over that which would lead from hence, and draw the mind into another way, wisdom, and spirit. And thus, O poor soul! if the Lord touch your heart, and open your eye, you will see your beloved, even the choicest among ten thousand; whom none can parallel, whom nothing is like to for excellency of nature, nor is there any can do for the soul as he! It is felt, it is experienced, it is testified unto you in the love, and in the truth: oh that you could hear! They are not the words of the letter, nor the observation of all that is in the letter, that can give life; but his voice gives life. The words that he speaks (at any time) are Spirit and life; and if he speak them not, but letter. So this is it we live upon; not the bread which we can make; not the things we can gather or comprehend from the letter; but the words which proceed from the mouth of God. Now, this seed is his mouth, in and through which he speaks to our souls, who fear before him, and wait upon him, in his own eternal and everlasting ordinance, at the door and posts of the everlasting wisdom. And here we meet with all in substance, in life, in freshness, in purity, in power, that ever we met with of God; and we meet with something more also than we formerly met with. And this testimony is given forth to you in the love of God, from his tender bowels, which know your present state, your lack, your wanderings, your deep prejudices and settled hardness against his truth; yet he remembers the days of your youth, and cannot give over seeking after you, and crying unto you. Oh, when will you turn, when will you hear, when will you wait to feel life in the Spirit, and not increase death in you from the letter!

A CAUTION

To those who are at any time touched with the power of Truth; how they afterwards hearken to and let in the enemy, and so thereby have the good seed stolen away, the true sense lost, and the mind filled with prejudices and stumbling-blocks instead thereof.

THE Truth of God, being received into the inward parts, is found to be of a living, powerful nature, working mightily there for the cleansing and redeeming of the hearts. Yes, this is certainly witnessed, that as the mind joined to deceit is thereby defiled, so the mind joined to the truth of God is, by its power and virtue, purified.

Now, having felt this, and being filled with the love and good-will of God to the souls of others, how

can we but testify it to others, who stand in need of God's truth (and its cleansing property and virtue) as well as we; especially being thereunto moved and drawn by the Spirit of the Lord?

Now, when the Lord gives forth the sound in its power and life, it many times pierces deeply through the earthly veil, and reaches to its own; which, being reached to, answers to the testimony, saying, It is Truth. So here is a beginning of the work of God in that heart, the soul being touched with his truth, feeling it inwardly, and yielding in some measure to the overcoming virtue and power of it.

But then comes the subtle one, whose design and labor is to undermine and overturn the work of God in the soul; and he begets doubts and jealousies and questionings, both concerning us, and concerning the doctrine taught by us, to suggest into the mind, as if it were not, nor indeed could be, of God: and so bringing the dispute and determination into another part than where truth got entrance, he easily sways the mind to determine against its own former feeling, and to turn from that work which was begun to be wrought in it by God, and from the worker also. And thus many poor hearts are entangled, and carried back into captivity, who began to feel the stirrings of truth in their hearts (wherein is the power of redemption) which would have redeemed them as well as others, had they received it in the love of it, and become subject to it.

Oh! it is a precious thing to receive from God a spirit of discerning, which gives ability to discern his Spirit from the spirit of deceit; yes, it is impossible to be preserved in the right Spirit and way, but as this is felt. For how can the Lord be received in all the motions and operations of his Spirit? or how can the contrary spirit be turned from in all its subtle devices, twistings, and reasonings in the mind, unless there be a discerning, in the true light of the Lord, what is of the one, and what of the other?

And you that would not be deceived, sink deep beneath the thoughts, reasonings, and consultations of the earthly mind, that you may meet with something of the kingdom and power (which carries its own evidence and demonstration with it), and may be gathered into it, and find a sense, knowledge, and judgment there, which never was deceived, nor can deceive. Know the elect of God, which the deceits pass over, and cannot reach; for its nature and birth is beyond them. It came from the light of the Father. It lives in the light of the Father. It sees in that light; yes, there its judgment and understanding is, where deceit never had power to enter. But he that considers as a man, sees as a man, judges as a man, concerning the things of God, by what he can gather out of the Scriptures, or conclude from his own sense, knowledge, and experience, he may easily err; yes, indeed, he is in the way of error in so doing. For the pure religion, the pure knowledge, the right judgment, the living faith, begin in the power and demonstration of the Spirit; and these are its limits, out of flesh, out of man, out of his will, out of his wisdom, out of the compass of his comprehension. And he that passes not these bounds never meets with the life, power, and virtue of truth. He may meet with a body of notions and formed knowledge, wherein he may tell of the fall of man, and restoration by Christ, and very exactly, according to a literal description; but the life, the true knowledge, the powerful virtue, is another thing, and is met with in another country, where man cannot travel, but as he is stripped of himself, and new formed, made and brought forth in another.

Oh! therefore, you that desire after the Lord (that would be his, that would feel him yours, that would know his truth in the life and power of it), wait for the demonstrations of his Spirit; learn to distinguish inwardly, between his teachings from his Spirit, and the teachings of another spirit from the letter. For it is so indeed: that other spirit would have taught Christ so; and he will teach any one else so, that will hearken to him. Now, he that is taught so, and follows such teachings, wanders from

God, is not accepted with him, but follows that which leads from him, under a pretense and appearance of leading to him. And here hardness and deadness grow and increase, the soul being turned from that which is living, and alone able to give life.

Question. But how may I do, who am weak, and full of doubts and fears, to keep in the sense of truth, and to come to a certainty that I am not deceived therein?

Answer. To you, who put this question in the uprightness and simplicity of your heart, I have something to say.

1. Mind how you were touched, mind how you were reached, observe what ear was opened in you, and breathe to the Lord to keep that ear open in you, and the other shut. For this I can assure you in the truth of God, that with that ear which the Lord opened to truth (which you felt his Spirit unlocking in you, and letting in truth by), I say, with that ear you shall never be able to let in any thing afterwards contrary to truth. But if the enemy can open the other ear, that will hear his prejudices, his jealousies, his doubts, his fears, his temptations, and let them in, to thrust out that which entered at the other ear. Now, can you not distinguish, O poor soul, (a little to help you) between that which brought some sense of truth into you, and that which rises in you against truth? Oh, fear before the Lord! oh, watch and pray, that when the tempter comes, you enter not with him into temptation, and so lose your union and growth in that which is invaluable!

2. Keep your eye and heart upon the preciousness of what you felt. Oh! remember how fresh, how warm, how living it was; how it reached, how it overcame, how it melted. The remembrance of this (cleaved to in the mind) will be a strength against the temptations and subtle devices of the enemy.

3. Meddle not with the things that the enemy casts into your mind. Consider not whether they be so or no. He that considers of a temptation (in many cases) has let it in, and is overcome already. When Eve did but hearken to what the serpent said, how soon was she lost and gone! The enemy many times brings temptations beyond the state, capacity, and ability of the soul to determine. These things, at present, are too high for you. You have not yet received a proportion of life from God to determine them by; and if you run beyond your measure, and determine things in your mind, which as yet are beyond your reach, you must needs run into the snare.

4. The present determining of these things would not be of so great advantage to you, as you may apprehend. Why so? Because the enemy has many temptations and devices of the same kind (as well as of other kinds) which he would bring one after another. And when he brings a second, a third, etc., that which engaged you to consider of the first, would engage you also to consider of the rest. And if you could find one answered, and not the other, that would appear to you as so much the more weighty, and you would hardly be able to escape consenting to the tempter therein. Therefore the way is to keep out of him, in the upright sense of what the Lord wrought in you; for so far he is with you; and abiding there, you are out of the enemy's reach. But being drawn by the enemy to consider of things that are out of your reach, you therein lay yourself open to his snares and betrayings.

5. Mind what was forbidden you, or required of you in that time, when you felt the warmth from God. For there is then a heavenly voice, and a heavenly vision most commonly in the heart, though the enemy turns the mind, as much as may be, from heeding it. There is then oftentimes something of the worldly nature and course discovered, or something of God's will made manifest; something that you

do, or have done, which then you see to be not of the Father, but of the world; and something perhaps of the Father, which you know you ought to become subject to, but you are afraid of the cross, or shame, or would prefer have some more clearness first. Oh! call this to mind afterwards: and if ever you would receive life, and come into union with God's truth, and receive his Spirit and power, and be established therein; become obedient to the heavenly vision! Consult not with flesh and blood, but enter into the obedience of that very thing, which was forbid or required, be it little or much. This is the right way, this is that your mind should be exercised in. And if your mind be exercised faithfully here, the Lord will strengthen you against the tempter, when he comes with his temptations and subtle objections. But if you falter here, and become unfaithful in the little, you are not like to meet with more; no, nor with the preservation of the Lord in that little. And indeed this is the cause of the miscarriage of many, because they receive not that little which was made manifest, in the love of it; but had pleasure in the unrighteousness, and so lingered in pleasing the spirit of the world, both in themselves and others, when they were called by the Lord to quit it, and travel out of it.

6. Wait for the renewings of life and sense in you from God; wait for another visit, wait for another touch and demonstration of his Spirit. Where did you meet with it? Go there again, wait there again, and look up to the Lord to stay your spirit till he appear again.

But, oh! take heed, that before the light arise again, before the life stir again, you be not gone (by hearkening to temptations) into an incapacity of knowing or receiving it. For this is the way of the Lord, the experienced way; after him (after the touches of his truth) comes the tempter with his reasonings, deceits, likenesses, etc. Now the Lord is trying you, how your heart will stick to him: and if you come off from the temptation, if you stand clear of the enemy, the Lord will appear to you again; strengthen you, comfort you, open more to you, lead you further in the way of life, and nearer to the power and purity thereof: but if you draw back from that, wherein the Lord began to work, the Lord's soul has no pleasure to appear any further to you, or work any further in you.

And one thing I will tell you. If you let not in the enemy's temptations, but abide (under the clouds, under the storms, under the tempests, under the confused reasonings, fears, doubts, and troubles), looking towards the Lord, waiting for him, and not making a league with the enemy against him in the mean time, the Lord will certainly appear; and when he does appear, you shall find one of these two effects.

Either the power of the enemy's objections, or temptations, will be so broken, as you shall not then heed them; or they will be so answered by the appearance and light of the Spirit of the Lord, as you shall be satisfied about them. Now, which of these is the better for you, the Lord God knows, and that you shall be sure to receive from him in that hour; neither will he leave you, but secretly support you in the mean time; your eye and mind being towards him.

The light and power of the Lord, when it arises, scatters and breaks that in pieces in the mind, which was very powerful before; so as the soul does not now so much as mind the considering or knowing of that, which the enemy has made it believe was so necessary for it to know. For mark: that which causes me to grow, is the feeling of life, the sense of the Lord's presence and power with me, the living knowledge, the knowledge which quickens, and gives life. Now, when the life springs, when the light shines, when the Lord in the power and precious visitations of his truth, reaches to my heart, this is present with me. Then what matter I those objections and prejudices, which the enemy casts into my mind? No, I cannot heed them, being taken up with another thing of a deeper nature. Thus have I

often found it by experience; all that troubled me, and that I doubted of, vanishing in a moment; that being present with me, and prevailing in me, which puts an end to all thoughts, reasonings, and disputes.

Again, it pleases the Lord at other times (when he sees good) to open the mind, and let it into the light of those things (it waiting upon him, and letting them alone his season) which of itself it could never have waded through. Thus also have I seen the objections, and stumbling-blocks concerning this precious people (who are of God, as the first-fruits of his powerful visitation after the apostasy), concerning their principle, way, doctrine, practices, etc., opened unto me in the clear light of God, and in the holy demonstrations of his Spirit; insomuch as I have manifestly seen, and been fully satisfied, that what was objected in my own heart, and is objected to in the hearts of others, has been from the subtle accuser of the brethren, who bears false witness against them, and would draw as many as he can to partake in his false testimony, and so also to become false witnesses against God, his truth and people. Therefore beware, all you that desire after the Lord, and would meet with the rest and satisfaction of your souls in him, how you be prejudiced against that whereby God works in others, and whereby he has appointed to work in you, and all whom he works in. For he has sent his Son to give life, and he will not give life by another. And he has appointed his Son shall be received as a principle, as a seed of life, though as little as a grain of mustard- seed; yet thus must he be received; and in this his low appearance has he the presence of God with him, and his power and authority; and what he – this little seed – (though ever so little) requires, teaches, forbids, etc. must be observed. But there is none upon the earth can own or submit to this, but he that becomes a child also; yes, a very little child. Man's spirit, man's wisdom, man's knowledge, man's religion, man's zeal, etc. is too big to enter here. Men are too wise, too knowing, too rich from scriptures and experiences, to submit to this; as the Scribes and Pharisees were to submit to Christ's appearance, doctrines, and preachings, when he appeared among them in that body of flesh. Therefore, come into the true feeling, out of the dead knowledge into the living sense, where life, power, righteousness, yes, the peace and joy of the kingdom, is tasted of, and in some measure witnessed by those who bow down in spirit before the least or lowest name or appearance of Jesus; the lowest degree and measure of whose life is King and Lord over death forever.

An OBJECTION against the Principle, which in faithfulness to God, and in love to souls, we bear witness to, briefly answered.

Objection. MANY do believe, and in that belief do object against it, that it is a natural principle, and but a natural principle: and so, in its utmost improvement, could lead but to the state of Adam's nature, and not to the redemption and new life, which is in and by Jesus Christ.

Answer. I can grant that it is natural, in a sense; but not in the intended sense. It is a principle, indeed, of God's nature, of Christ's nature; but not of man's nature. It is that which stands a witness in man against him, when he falls and transgresses. It is a light indeed that shines in his conscience; but it was before his conscience was, and is of a higher nature. Man is earthly (with his understanding, knowledge, reason, judgment, conscience); but the light that shines in him (even in his dark, hard, unregenerate, earthly heart) is heavenly; such as his darkness cannot comprehend, though it shine in his darkness. But would you in true understanding know what it is? Feel it; come out of the darkness

where it finds you, into that light where it dwells, and then you will know it indeed, and be able to judge of it better. Now I will tell you how we know it to be the light of the new covenant. Why thus: Because we find it discover to us the new covenant, and lead us into it; yes, also show us the sins against the new covenant, and furnish us with power from God against them, and preserve us out of them. And with this demonstration, indeed, our hearts are satisfied; though we could also say further, we have witnesses, both in heaven and in earth, concerning this thing, whose testimony fully concludes it, to the full satisfaction of the soul, where it is heard and felt.

Some Questions and Answers concerning the New Covenant; opening the nature and way of it, as it is experimentally felt in the heart, and witnessed to in the holy Scriptures.

Question 1. WHAT is the New Covenant?

Answer. It is a new agreement between God and the soul, different from that former agreement, which was between God and that people of the Jews. It is a precious, glorious covenant, containing precious promises on God's part, and as easily to be obtained on the creature's part as can possibly be. It is a covenant of the eternal love of God; of life, peace, and rest to the soul; of the power of the Lord stretched out for the soul, to deliver it from Egypt, carry through the wilderness, bring into the Holy Land, giving it its proper possession and inheritance there, and maintaining it therein against all its enemies. Yes, this covenant contains very precious things, which the soul finds great need of, and rejoices in the sense and presence of, when they are felt flowing from the covenant into it; as writing the laws of God in the heart, putting his fear in the inward parts; yes, putting his own Spirit within, to be a fountain of life and strength there, whereby he causes the soul to walk in his ways, and preserves it from departing from him. Likewise in this covenant God becomes the teacher, who creates in the soul a capacity to learn, and causes it to heed and profit. And in this covenant there is a forgiving of iniquity, and a remembering of sins no more, but a destroying and rooting out of that which caused to sin, and a healing of the backslidings of the soul, and a loving it freely.

Question 2. How is this covenant made with the soul?

Answer. In Christ, the seed, who is all in this covenant. He is the light of it; he is the life of it; he is the power of it; he is the righteousness and sanctification of it. By coming into him, the soul comes into this covenant; by abiding in him, it abides in this covenant; and by growing up in him, it grows up in this covenant.

Question 3. Is this an absolutely free covenant? or are there any terms or conditions required of the soul in it?

Answer. It is absolutely free in its own nature. It comes from the free love of God; it contains in it the free love of God; it is freely offered to all to whom it is offered; it is freely given to all to whom it is given. Here is no price, nothing of the creature's required for it; all that is required is the creature's receiving of it, and giving up to God in it. And here, and after this manner, many things are required of the creature, without which the creature can never come to receive the covenant, abide in it, or reap the blessings contained therein. This the Scriptures abundantly testify to; as also the experiences of

those who know and feel the nature and virtue of the covenant.

Question 4. What things are required in this covenant, according to the Scriptures, and according to the experiences of those that enter into it, and reap the fruits and benefits of it?

Answer 1. This is required, that when the Lord calls, when the Lord quickens, when the Lord touches the heart, opens the ear, gives a faculty and ability of hearing, that then the Lord be hearkened diligently unto, the ear, which he has opened, kept open to him, and that that whereby he opens the one ear and shuts the other be kept close to, and he waited upon therein; the true ear may be more and more opened by him, and the other ear (which is apt to hearken to and let in the enemy) more and more shut. Who is there among us that has not felt the Lord God requiring this of us? Wherein, as he has been answered, the work of God has gone on in us; and as he has not been answered, the work has gone backward, and not forward. And the Scripture bears witness to the same, as Isai. 55:1-3. where the free covenant is proclaimed; yet there is something even there required. "Hearken diligently: come and eat you that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

2. Repentance is required, turning from the old, unclean nature and spirit, and touching it no more; but cleaving to that which has power against it, and preserves from it. This also is felt and witnessed to be required of God now, and was also testified to of old, as 2 Cor. 6:17-18. "Touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

3. Faith, believing the testimony of truth, and receiving the Spirit's baptism, is required. He that will enter into this covenant, must believe the testimony of the gospel (the record of God concerning his Son) with the faith which is of him, and must be circumcised, baptized, renewed, and changed by him. Now he that does this shall be saved, as Christ promised. Mark 16. but he with whom is the power of life and salvation did not promise that any should be saved otherwise.

4. Obedience of the gospel, subjection to Christ in the rule of his Spirit, and keeping of his commandments, is required. For as the first covenant required the obedience proper to it; so the second covenant requires the obedience proper to it. And as there was no salvation, or standing in the first covenant, without the obedience thereof; so neither in the second, without the obedience thereof. He that will enjoy the peace, the righteousness, the justification, the life, the power of this covenant, must live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, fulfill the will of the Spirit; keep to the seed, keep to the anointing, that the evil one touch him not; that the interrupter, the slayer, the destroyer of life in the heart, have not power over him, as he has over any out of the limits of this covenant. For within it are all the good, but without it the evil things, the dangers, the temptations, the snares, the death and destruction of the soul; and whoever wanders out of the covenant, cannot but meet with them, and acknowledge it to be so, if he be in the true sense. Therefore there must be a great care to abide in that which has gathered, in that which has quickened, in that which gives the true sense and understanding, and keeps out of the wrong. How tender, how free was the love of Christ to his disciples! yet he bids them abide in his love, and tells them how they should do it: "If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

Question 5. But how shall the soul be able to perform all these things? Are they required of it in its own strength, or does God undertake to perform and work all in it?

Answer. Not at all in its own strength, will, or wisdom (these are eternally shut out of this covenant); but in the strength, life, and power, which flows from God in the covenant.

Question 6. How shall the soul receive this strength, life, and power?

Answer. By embracing it as it comes, cleaving to it, panting after it, patiently mourning and waiting for it. (The vision of good will come to that soul in the Lord's season, and will not tarry.) By not despising the little, and looking after more before the little be received, but thankfully entertaining the beginnings of life, the beginnings of the holy instructions, the first drawings from off the spirit and nature of this world, in whatever it be. He that disputes not concerning the thing, but receives it just as it appears, in a simplicity and uprightness, watching thereto, he shall be blessed of the Lord, and meet with the desire of his soul in the Lord's season, when the Lord has fitted and prepared his heart for it. Now this is so little and strait a door, so poor and low a beginning, as the wisdom of man can never enter at it; and if there should be a little entrance in the overcoming power of life, yet that wisdom will drive the soul back again presently. Let me know the doctrine first, says the wise man; I will understand the doctrine thoroughly before I will change my present way. No, says Christ, "He that does his will shall know of the doctrine." You shall know a little, which will reach to your heart. There you must begin; and being faithful there, you shall know further of the doctrine; but being unfaithful there, you may be stumbled and prejudiced against the doctrine, but never be able to know it. Oh, the mystery of life! Oh, the hidden path thereof, which none can learn but those whom the Father teaches! But many think to learn in that, which ever was, and ever will be, shut out. If Christ would lay his doctrine before them, and make it good to their understanding, they would receive it. No, no; they must bow to Christ, to his name, to his power, to his will, to his way of manifesting his truth; he will not bow to theirs.

Question 7. What are the sins against this covenant, and what effects have they?

Answer. The sins against this covenant are chiefly unbelief in the power, and disobedience to the power, which are of a deeper nature than the sins against the first covenant, and have more dangerous effects. The refusing of this covenant is more dangerous than the refusing the covenant of Moses. And the breaking of this covenant; that is, the starting back from God (through a heart of unbelief) here, is more dangerous than the breaking of the first covenant.

Question 8. Why, can this covenant be broken? Has not God undertaken all in it?

Answer. It is an agreement between God and the soul, wherein things are required of the soul, through the life and strength which flows from the covenant. And the soul may hearken to the enemy, and not to the Lord; may walk after the flesh, and not after the Spirit; may lust after high knowledge, and hidden things of the kingdom, as they of old did after prying into the ark; may draw back from the Lord in those respects wherein it had given up unto him, etc. Now, these and such-like are breaches of the covenant; or at least such sins against it as draw down judgments upon the soul at present, and at last utter casting off, unless the soul be brought back by the judgments into the agreement again with the Lord in truth and uprightness. It is true, the Lord does all in the covenant according to his good pleasure; but withal, he has appointed a way of his working out the life and happiness of the soul, to

which it is his good pleasure to keep. And his way is Christ, his seed. Hence all the love, mercy, care, and tenderness of God flows. Here is the soul to come for it; and here the soul is to abide, that it may enjoy and possess it. But if the enemy can by any means draw the soul out from hence, he draws it from its life and strength, and from the sweet blessings and influences of the holy and free covenant. Now, the Lord has not given power to the enemy to force from hence; but he gives power to the soul to abide with him here; and in the hour of distress, if it cry to him, he helps the helpless, and lifts up a standard against the enemy.

Now, all that desire the sweetness of this covenant, the life, the virtue, the blessings of it, oh! wait to feel and receive something from God, and in that to fear before him, and walk worthy of him, and not to grieve or provoke his Spirit. For he has the power of life and death in his hand, and whom he will he may have sufficient cause against, to turn from and cut off when he pleases; and whom he will he may extend mercy to, as far and as long as he pleases; for it is his own, and he may do what he will with it. Only know this, God is love; God is bowels, infinite bowels; yes, his tenderness is beyond imagination or comprehension, and he hates putting away. The poor mourning souls that cry unto him, feeling their need of him, and gasping after him, he cannot cast off; no, nor any that come unto him in the truth of their hearts: but the wise, the confident, the conceited, from their apprehensions of scriptures, that think themselves safe by virtue of the covenant, and yet are enemies in their minds to the light of the covenant, these are out of the thing at present (in their own imaginings and conceivings,) and are in the most danger of any I know. The Lord in mercy cause his light to shine, his life to arise, his power to be manifest, and thereby lead into, and preserve in, his everlasting covenant, according to his good pleasure. Amen.

A QUESTION or Two, Relating to Election, Answered

Question 1. How may a man make his calling and election sure?

Answer. By making Christ sure to him, in whom the calling and election is; for the Lord chooses only in him, and refuses or reprobates only out of him.

Question 2. How may I make Christ sure to me?

Answer. By receiving him, giving up to him, parting with all for him, and waiting upon him in the way and path of life, till I feel the power of that broken in me, which would separate from him. For what danger is there then, when the soul is naturally become the Lord's, rooted in his love, circumcised in heart to love the Lord above all, even with the whole heart and soul? Certainly the love of the Lord cannot but flow in great strength to that soul, and what can come between? But now, while there is something ungiven up, something yet standing, in which the enemy has a part, and by which he may enter, the state of that soul is not fully sure; but there may be a going back from the saving life into that wherein is the perdition and destruction of the soul, and whoever goes there meets with perdition and destruction, so far as he travels that way. For in the path of death there is death, which is met with by all that enter into, and walk therein; as in the path of life there is life. God is no respecter of persons; but he is a respecter of his seed, and of his eternal covenant of life, which stands firm in his seed forever. Here is life for every soul that feels the drawings of the Father, and comes to his Son for life,

and abides in him; and there is death for every soul that comes not to this, and departs from this through the heart of unbelief. So the way of God is eternal and immutable; he cannot deny himself. He that believes in the Son has life; he that believes not is in the death and condemnation which belong to the unbelief. Now, would you know your election, wait to know and distinguish between Jacob and Esau, Isaac and Ishmael, in yourself; for they were outward figures, and allegories of something inward. Feel Esau, the profane one; Ishmael, the scoffer at the wisdom, way, and seed of God, — feel, I say, these (that are cast off by God) cast out of you; and then feel Isaac, the seed of the promise; Jacob, the plain birth of life, raised up in you, living in you, and you in it. And then you feel the election, and are in the election. And as his seed is sure to you, and your union with it, and standing and abiding in it sure, so your election is sure. Election is a deep mystery, and none can read the scriptures about it (which indeed are hard to be understood, but easy to be wrested), but they that understand the thing, — that can read in the seed, life, power, and openings of the Spirit of the Lord, — they read things as they are; but other men only read things as they apprehend and conceive them to be. So that the knowledge that God has given his people is above all the knowledge that can be searched out, gathered, or comprehended by all the men upon the earth; whereby they know God better, the things of God better, the words and scriptures of truth better, than they themselves otherwise (or any else) could possibly attain to.

A QUESTION answered concerning the Ground of Men's misunderstanding and wresting of Scriptures

Question. WHAT is the ground of men's misunderstanding and wresting of scriptures?

Answer 1. Lack of acquaintance with God's Spirit, and the right way of waiting upon him to receive the understanding of them. For though men may go thus far, as to know and confess that the Spirit of the Lord is the only revealer of the things of God, and the alone right interpreter of his own words; yet that man, who thus confesses, may not certainly and distinctly know the Spirit of the Lord, and when he receives the interpretation of a scripture from him, or when from his understanding, or a spirit that is contrary to him. For there is another spirit near man, whose nature, work, and delight is to cause man to misunderstand, and miswalk by the very scriptures; and will bring things as warmly and (as it were) clearly to him, as he can from scriptures, purposely to deceive and mislead him. Now, he that hugs and receives every thing that thus rises in him, easily runs into, and is surely caught in the snare of the enemy. Therefore a man must watch and wait and fear and pray, that he may distinguish between the nature and voices of spirits in himself, that so he may know (in the light of the Lord) when the Lord speaks, and also when the mysterious spirit of deceit strives to speak like the Lord. Now, man cannot know this of himself, but as he is taught by the Lord, at the very time when the snare comes; and he must not determine hastily, but wait to feel that wherein the Lord appears and speaks to him, and wherein the enemy cannot speak. Thus feeling the birth of life in his heart, the seed which is of the Father, which has an ear that knows the voice of the Shepherd, and sinking into this, and listening in this (out of his own thoughts, reasonings, and whole course of his own wisdom), he also has his ear opened to hear the true voice, and finds ability here to distinguish it from the voice of the stranger, let him counterfeit ever so deceitfully. For the eye of the Lord, the eye of truth, the eye of life, the eye of the Spirit, pierces through, and discovers all deceits to the soul that fears before him, diligently waits

upon him in his seed, and desires to walk faithfully therein.

2. Lack of acquaintance with God's truth in the love, life, and power of it. For he that knows truth, that has received from God the thing the Scriptures speak of, how easy is it to him to understand the words that speak of that thing! But he who has the knowledge of the thing but from the words, how easy is it for him to misunderstand the words! As for instance: he whom God has justified, he who has received the righteousness of the Son, he who daily feels the blood of sprinkling, etc., how easy and natural is it unto him to understand the words of scripture which speak of these things! But he that has not received this, nor thus knows the thing, how easy is it for him to misunderstand the words; and so from misunderstanding of the words, to set up another righteousness for the righteousness of Christ, than that which the Spirit of God intends in the Scriptures!

3. The opinions, apprehensions, ways, and practices of men, which they have taken up in the dark, and in which their minds are engaged, are a great let in their way from the right understanding of scriptures, or the testimony of truth from others according to the Scriptures. For there has been a cloudy and dark day, or a great night of darkness upon the earth, wherein the light, which leads to the soul's rest, has not shined clearly in men's spirits; and so, in this cloudy darkness men have wandered from mountain to hill, seeking their resting-place. Now, some have fixed and pitched on one mountain, some on another; some on one hill, some on another, saying, Here is the resting-place. So when the Spirit of the Lord comes and cries, Depart you, depart you; this is not your resting-place, for it is polluted; they cannot hear. Why so? Because they have already believed otherwise, and in that belief taken it up for their rest; and so cannot rightly understand or believe those scriptures, or those living testimonies from the Spirit of the Lord, which declare it not to be so; but are ready to wrest the one, and reproach the other.

**Some QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, and QUERIES, concerning Deceit and Deceivers;
as what they are, what discovers them, how man may come out of them, and be
preserved from them, etc.**

IN the truth there is no deceit; and they that are in the truth, are out of the deceit; and abiding there, are out of the reach of deceivers: but they that are out of the truth, are in the deceit already, and are liable daily more and more both to be further deceived, and to help to deceive others.

Question 1. What is deceit, and who are deceivers?

Answer. That which appears like truth, but is not, — that is deceit: and they which are in a form of godliness, but are without the Spirit, life, and power of it, — they are deceivers.

Question 2. Who are most liable to deceit?

Answer. The simple, the heedless, the careless, the credulous; those that wait not upon the Lord in the light, power, and demonstration of his Spirit, to try things; these (with good words and fair speeches, and appearances of things) are easily led aside from the truth itself into some likeness or resemblance of it.

Question 3. Which is the time of deceit?

Answer. The night; the cloudy, the dark time, when the enemy has raised his fogs and mists in the minds of men, — then is his time of deceiving their hearts.

Question 4. Is it now night or day?

Answer. It is night with some, day with others. Where the light is arisen, there it is day; where the darkness covers and possesses the minds of men, there it is night.

Question 5 How may a man know whether it be night or day with him?

Answer. By waiting to feel something of the life of God arising in him, by turning and hearkening to his witness. That will faithfully discover how it is with him, and where he is.

Question 6. How may a man come out of the darkness of the night, into the light and brightness of the day?

Answer. By joining to the first glimmerings and breakings forth thereof upon him. The least light of truth has the same nature, virtue and properties with the greatest. Though not the same in degree, yet the same in kind; and he that will come to the greatest, must begin with the least. Light makes manifest; the day discovers both the things of the night and of the day. Have you any discovery of either kind? either of that which is good, or of that which is evil? either of that which is of the worldly nature and the evil one, or of that which is of the heavenly nature and the Holy One? Join in immediately in the virtue, strength, and power of that which makes the discovery, and your spirit therein will find an entrance into the light of the day; and going on faithfully thus, it will daily more and more break in upon you, even until it has gathered your spirit out of the blackness, darkness, and deceit of the night, into the beauty, brightness, and truth of the day.

Question 7. How may a man be preserved from deceit and deceivers?

Answer. By abiding in that which discovers them to him, and preserves out of them; by dwelling in that light, in that life, in that power, in that truth, into which they cannot enter: by keeping to and in the elect of God, which never was deceived, nor can be deceived: for it is of God, it is his seed, of his nature, in which the wicked one, the deceiver, finds nothing, has nothing in him to enter at; and he that abides in him is safe in him. But he that goes forth out of the life, out of the light, out of the seed, out of the power which preserves, out of the holy anointing which keeps the eye open, he easily runs into, and is entangled in, the deceivableness of unrighteousness, judging it (for lack of a true discerning) righteousness; and then having judged that to be righteousness, which is in its own nature but unrighteousness, he must needs also judge that which is the true righteousness, to be but unrighteousness; and then, having passed this judgment in himself, he grows wise, confident, and strong in his deceit, both believing himself, and also endeavoring to convince and persuade others, that it is the truth. Oh! who knows the security of the little ones of God, who have a being and standing in his truth! The arm of his power is stretched round about them, and he is a defense and strength unto them against all that would break in upon them, to make a prey of their life, or to shake their standing in his truth, either inwardly or outwardly. Oh! bless his name, sing high praises to him, you that feel it, over all deceit and deceivables, over all the devices of the dark spirit, which entangles others, and would also entangle you, but that his goodness, mercy, tender love, and powerful arm is

stretched out over you. So to him be the praise, and the bowings of that soul, which feels his powerful and merciful preservation, forever and ever.

Now it is in my heart to add four queries, which, rightly weighed and resolved, in and according to truth, may further open men's minds into the true sense and right understanding of this thing.

Query 1. Have not the last days, the perilous times (the times foretold of by Christ and his apostles) been a long while upon the earth, wherein iniquity has abounded, and the love of many waxed cold, wherein men have been lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, etc.? Has there not been a long night of darkness, wherein these things (with many other fruits and effects of the night) have hid and covered themselves almost in all sorts of professors of Christianity, under a form of godliness?

Query 2. Is not their time expiring already, and in some degree expired? Was it not to have an end when the light and power of truth, which at first kept it back, did spring and rise again?

Query 3. Is not the day arisen? Is not the darkness already past? And does not the true light now shine (and the true power of life now appear) in many vessels? Let the souls, that desire to know the truth of this, wait to feel that which is of God answer in them.

Query 4. Where are the deceivers, and where is the deceit? Is it among those that have embraced the light of life? or among those who abide in their old darkness, and whose eyes are not yet opened to see the light and beauty of the day, which is arisen in the hearts of those that are quickened and raised by the power of the Lord?

That the Way of LIFE and SALVATION is freely held forth by God to all; and there is nothing in him to let, stop, or discourage any man from receiving his Truth, and giving up to him in the faith and obedience of it, but very much to invite and encourage.

IT has pleased the Lord, who is over all, and good unto all, to provide a remedy for the sin and transgression of the creature. For as sin has abounded unto death, so he has caused righteousness to abound unto life; yes, the free gift, which is as large and universal as ever sin was, has more power in it to save than sin has to destroy. And there is no ground of discouragement for any (who has not out-sinned the day of his visitation, and so the offer of mercy is over as to him) in reference to God; though the enemy of the soul strives to raise up many discouragements and objections in the minds of many, to keep them from hoping in the Lord, and from giving up to his truth, which saves all that receive it, and abide in it. Now, it is in my heart at this time, from a true sense, to signify something concerning the nature of the Lord (and his real desire to save even those that perish), which may conduce towards the removing of objections and lets of this nature out of the minds of men.

1. God is sweetness, meekness, tenderness, abounding in mercy and loving kindness, pitying the miserable, and naturally holding forth a helping hand towards them: yes, he is universally thus. There is not one miserable soul, not one perishing creature upon the face of the earth, but as he has wisdom and power to help it, so he has tender bowels, and a heart thereunto. And it is not for lack of something to be done on his part, that souls perish, but the failing always was and still is on the creature's part.

2. God loves all his creatures, and cannot but be good to them. He is outwardly good, he is inwardly good to them all. He can do nothing against any one of them, but what stands with his love and mercy. He does not forget himself; he does not lose his nature in the manifesting of his righteousness, wrath, and severity against sin and sinners.

3. He desires not the death of a sinner, no, not of the wicked. How mercifully did he walk with the Jews in the first covenant! Did he ever desire their miscarriages, and the miseries which came upon them thereby? No, did he not desire their good, and their obedient walking with him therein for their good? "Oh," said he, "that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them," etc. Deut. 5:29. How mercifully does he walk with all in the second covenant, that are in any measure drawn within the limits and compass thereof! He is a Savior, that is his nature; and he seeks the salvation of his creatures with his whole heart, and with all his soul. And when he brings any to repentance, there is joy in his bosom; and when the enemy breaks in upon any of his, or by any subtlety draws them into that which destroys, his pure, tender Spirit is grieved therewith, and mourns because of it. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," (said his true, living image with tears) "how often would I have gathered you!"

4. He would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. God sends his truth, his powerful truth, to save; and he shuts not any one out of it, but seeks (in the way he has appointed) to gather all into it, that they might be saved by it.

5. He is very patient and long-suffering, waits long, tries long, invites often, touches often, draws often; yes, the very vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, there is much patience and long-suffering exercised towards them, before the Lord can cast them off, and give them up utterly to destruction. For mark: destruction is not his work or delight; it is the work of the spirit and nature contrary to his. "I came not," says Christ, "to destroy men's lives, but to save;" to give life to them. And this is the proper end of God in every ministration: his end is not death, destruction, increasing of the condemnation of the creature, etc., but to bring it to life thereby, out of that which leads into the condemnation and destruction. Did he not, for this end, bear with the old world? Was not this the end of Noah's preaching to them, and warning of them? Did he not, for this end, bear with the Jews in Egypt, in the wilderness, in Canaan, etc.? Is not this the proper intent of the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of God, — that it should lead to repentance? (Rom. 2:4) and repentance leads to mercy, remission, and life.

6. The sacrifice of Christ had relation to all men. He was sent out of God's universal love to mankind, to the whole world; and was made a propitiation by God for the sins of the whole world.

7. There is no man perishes for lack of power; for there is power in the free gift which comes upon all. There is power in it to quicken, to give faith, to preserve in the faith, to do all that is to be done in the soul; and it does all everywhere, as it finds place and entertainment in the soul. But man refuses, man loves the darkness, hates the light, shuts his eyes against it, withdraws his heart from it, and so beats back the purpose and counsel of God's love and good-will towards him. For as the Jews outwardly, in the outward covenant, almost always rebelled, resisted, and brought wrath upon themselves, to the grief of God's heart and of his holy prophets; so do men in reference to the inward covenant (in that nature and spirit), exceedingly provoking the Lord, until his Spirit (in its holy jealousy and indignation) turn from them, and give them up to hardness, senselessness, and impenitency, which seals up to destruction. But as Israel, in that first covenant, could never justly lay the cause of their destruction on God, but God did most justly lay it on them ("O Israel! your destruction is of yourself,

but in me is your help"); so neither can any blame the Lord, who perish from, and fall short of, the virtue of the second covenant; for he fails not in doing his part therein, no more than he did fail in the first. But man turns from the power which saves, from the light which makes manifest, from the life which quickens; and this is his condemnation, and the cause of his perishing; so that God will be just and clear of the blood of all men, and the blood of them that perish will lie upon their own heads. Had there not been something near every man, which had more power in it than sin had, they might have had some plea before the Lord; but the presence of this, the power of this, the working of this, in every heart, more or less, leaves all men without excuse, and clears the free giver and his free gift in the balance of righteousness. For this gift of his is faithful to every man upon the face of the earth, never consenting to his iniquities and transgressions in any kind, but still testifying against them as the Lord pleases to open its mouth. But who has believed its report? and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Yet greater will the condemnation be upon them, upon whom the Lord has more abundantly shined; and many will have a plea in respect of them, which the Lord will hear and consider, and so they shall not enter into that depth of judgment and condemnation, which will light on such as have resisted the light and power of life, in its more glorious and bright appearances and strivings with them; even as Christ said, It shall be easier for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem.

Therefore, O all men upon the earth, know the day of your visitation! Make peace with the Lord, O transgressors! lay hold on his strength, that you may make peace with him. Believe not the liar, who would put you out of hope, but believe the voice of his love and tender Spirit. Turn in, listen after him, watch if he do not call, mind if he do not draw; and do not say, I lack power; but wait in humility, meekness, and fear, until his power arise. Bear his judgments, wait upon him in the way of his judgments. Do not fly from him because thereof; for therein is the mercy, life, and salvation. Be not hasty, but wait long, believe long, hope long, feel the patience of the Lamb, learn the mysterious path of life from the inward teacher, that you may certainly know it, and find your feet guided by his Spirit into it.

Is not the voice gone forth from him that is true? "Ho, every one that thirsts, come you to the waters," etc. "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And is not he near who causes the thirst, and gives the will? Whom has the Lord excluded? Why should any man exclude himself? The call is universal, the way is set open to all. That is at hand which has life and power in it, and is ready to work in all. This commandment has it received of its Father; and it is faithful which has received it: and all that come to the Father here, in this gathering of life, the Father is ready to receive. Your soul, O man! is the Lord's. It is very precious in his eye: he seeks to save it, and has sent something into your heart to gather you from that which would destroy it. And this which he has sent, has in it of the Father's love, of the Father's mercy, of the Father's power, of the Father's light, of the Father's life, of the Father's wisdom, righteousness, etc., and will gather you out of the world into the Father's nature and Spirit, if you will hearken to him with the ear which he will create in you, and receive him with the heart which he will give you: yes, he will help you to turn from and forsake your own wickedness, and the wicked spirit, and to turn towards him who is life, righteousness, and peace to the soul that is gathered unto him; do but give up yourself (in the faith and obedience which he is creating in you) in the way of his quickening and renewing life.

Some QUESTIONS answered concerning the Spirit of CHRIST, and the spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees

Question 1. WHAT kind of spirit was the spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees?

Answer. A strict, zealous, righteous spirit, according to their understanding and apprehensions of the letter. They fasted much, they prayed much, they gave alms, they were great contenders for the circumcision and ordinances of Moses.

Question. 2 What kind of Spirit was the Spirit of Christ?

Answer. A righteous, strict, and zealous Spirit, according to the power of the endless life. He was in that from which the righteousness of the law came, and which brought it forth and fulfilled it in his vessel.

Question 3. What did the Scribes and Pharisees judge of Christ according to their apprehension and understanding of the letter?

Answer. They judged him a sinner, and transgressor of the law of Moses, a loose person, an eater, a drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners; one who taught not his disciples to fast and pray, but rather to break the law of God, and transgress the sabbath; yes, one who was a blasphemers, and a deceiver of people, etc.

Question 4. How came the Scribes and Pharisees thus to judge of Christ?

Answer. Because they were in that spirit, nature, and mind, which gives wrong judgment. For it is not a gathered knowledge from the letter, which makes able to judge of spirits, and about the things of God; but a receiving and being born of the Spirit. For from the Spirit alone is a right understanding of the letter, which the Spirit has to give, and gives to the true birth.

Question. 5 What did Christ judge of the Scribes and Pharisees according to his knowledge of them from the Spirit and power of life?

Answer. That they were hypocrites, painted walls, and sepulchers, which make a fair show in the flesh, but were not of nor in the truth.

Question 6. Is the spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees to be found now in the world?

Answer. There is nothing new under the sun. The spirit of wickedness and deceit is always the same, in all ages and generations; and the Spirit of holiness and truth is the same also. So that Cain, Ishmael, Esau, the scoffer and persecutor of the prophets (of Christ's apostles and holy martyrs) are to be found in every age (the same in spirit and nature with them): and so are Abel, Enoch, Isaac, Jacob, etc.

Question 7. Where is the spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees now to be found?

Answer. They in all professions, gatherings, and walkings, that are strict, zealous, and righteous, according to their own understandings and apprehensions of the letter, and not according to the Spirit and power of the endless life, — they are of and in that spirit.

Question 8. How may a man come out of the spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees, and into the Spirit of Christ?

Answer. By coming to the power of the endless life, wherein Christ's ministry is, wherein his Spirit is felt and ministers. This shuts out all the deceits and devices of that spirit which lies in wait to deceive. He may entangle the mind about the letter, about the understanding of scriptures, and practices and ordinances there; but he that begins in the Spirit (in the power of life, in the living demonstration of truth) is out of his compass; and there abiding, grows up and remains out of his reach.

Question 9. How may a man come to the power of the endless life?

Answer. By waiting to feel it. There is something of God near every man; which, his spirit retiring and waiting on the Lord, the Lord will give him to feel in the seasons of his good pleasure. For it is near man, not as a talent always to lie dead and buried, but to work in him, and bring him out of his own sinful, corrupt nature into his holy, pure nature.

Question 10. How may a man feel and know the power of this life?

Answer. By its nature, properties, manner and end of working in the heart. It enlightens the soul, it quickens to God, it draws the heart from that which is manifestly and sensibly evil without dispute, it opens the eye to see and discern that which is holy and good, inflaming the mind with desires after it. Now, this is the appearance of the Holy One, who thus appears and begins to work, to draw the mind from that which is sinful and destroys, to that which is holy and saves. Happy, oh! happy is he who thus feels the drawing, quickening Spirit, and in faithfulness gives up thereto! for he (by the Spirit and power of life) shall feel Cain, the sacrificer according to the flesh, Ishmael, the seed of Abraham after the flesh, Esau, the first birth, whose mind is in the earth, — he shall feel these, I say, cast out; and Abel, the righteous seed, who lives and sacrifices in the true faith; Isaac, the seed of promise, Jacob, the wrestler with God, in the power and strength of his own Spirit, with the tears and supplications which are from his own life, — he shall feel (I say) this nature, birth, and Spirit raised in him, and his soul in it living to God, and increasing in union and fellowship with him.

Some QUESTIONS answered concerning Blasphemy and Blasphemers

Question 1. What is blasphemy?

Answer. It is the reproaching or speaking ill of the truths or name of God, in any of their appearances, or of them whom he has chosen to bear his name, or hold forth his truth. To reproach the name or truths of God, as they have been held forth in former ages, or as they are held forth in this age; or to speak evil of the instrument he then chose, or now chooses and makes use of to hold them forth, — this is blasphemy: and the Lord will not hold him guiltless who so does, whatsoever he be.

Question 2. In which respect are men most liable to blasphemy? Are they apt to reproach and speak evil of God's truths, as they have been held forth in former ages, and the instruments by which God then held them forth? or are they apter to reproach and speak evil of the truths of God, as they are held forth in their age, and the instruments and ministers who then held them forth?

Answer. Men are not so liable to blaspheme the truths (or name) of God, as formerly held forth, or the messengers and ministers of former ages, as the present truth and the present ministry.

Question 3. How comes that about, or why is it so?

Answer. Because the truths of former ages, and the ministry therein, have wrought through the deceit and opposition, which withstood them in their day, and have left a good savor behind them; so that it would be hard and disadvantageous to the evil spirit to endeavor to bring a reproach over them. If men should go about to revile Moses or the prophets of old, Christ or his apostles, who would give an ear to them? Surely very few, if any. But to cry up these and their doctrine, and to endeavor to make the present dispensation of truth appear to men, as if it were different from and contrary to these (of another nature, of another spirit, tending to other ends, and towards the producing of other effects), — this is a very subtle device, and an advantageous way of opposing the present truth and ministry with; and this way the enemy has taken all along. Moses in his day had enemies and resisters, but after his death we never hear him spoken against; but those that withstood the prophets in after ages, would honor the remembrance of Moses. In Christ's day they would honor both Moses and the prophets; but Christ, and his disciples and apostles, were reproached as blasphemers and deceivers. After that age, Christ and his apostles were generally acknowledged, as well as Moses and the prophets; but yet they that were in the same spirit, in the same life, in the same nature, have afterwards still been persecuted and opposed by the present age.

Question 4. Who are the great blasphemers in every age?

Answer. They which profess truth, but are not in the power and life of that which they profess; and among these, those especially who have had any taste of the power: for if these turn from the power, which it pleased God to give them some taste of, they are given up by God to delusion, devilishness, subtlety, and enmity, above all others. For as the blasphemy (which I am speaking of) is above truth and the name of Christ, so it is chiefly to be found among those who pretend to his name. Those that have the outward name, knowledge, and talk about the name, about Christ, about the heavenly things, — these blaspheme and reproach those who have and are in the thing itself, who dwell in heaven, and worship in the heavenly place, even in the true tabernacle which God has pitched, and not man. These bring their knowledge, wisdom, scriptures, experience, observations, and all that ever they can reap and rend, against the present power and life of truth.

Question 5. How come men, who pretend to truth, and to seek after it, to run into this grievous and dangerous blasphemy?

Answer. By reason of their not being in that, which demonstrates the truth in the holy power and nature thereof. They lack its light and demonstration, and so understand things out of it; and in this their own misunderstanding turn against that, which should enlighten, sanctify, and preserve them. Now, not being in that (but in another thing), not being in the true Spirit, in the true light, in the true knowledge, in the true sense and understanding, they must needs err and misjudge; and the greater their knowledge, ability, wisdom, and zeal is, the more desperate and dangerous is their path of error, both to themselves and others. Who erred so dangerously in that day, as the Scribes and Pharisees; which by their wisdom, knowledge, and skill in the Scriptures, would dispute against Christ, prove he was not (he could not be) the Messiah, according to the Scriptures (bidding men search the Scriptures, and see if any prophet came out of Galilee, John 7:52), judged him, who was indeed the Holy One (who

loved righteousness, and hated iniquity) an unholy one, a sinner and companion of sinners, a blasphemer, deceiver, etc.? And in the same spirit, the stricter a man is, and the more he knows, and the more confident he is of his knowledge and skill in the Scriptures, the more desperately and dangerously will he venture to oppose the appearance of the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus in this day.

Question 6. How come they who have so much literal knowledge of scriptures, and have had a true sense and experience (some of them) of the things of God, to be out of that which demonstrates the truth?

Answer. By their turning from it, and rejecting it. The Scribes and Pharisees rejected the counsel of God, against themselves. There is but one thing can open the eyes, and the Scribes and Pharisees turned against it, believing that their eyes were opened already, by the light and knowledge which they had received from Moses. Moses, said they, we know God speaks to; but as for this fellow, we know not where he is from. And just so is it now. Oh that you could read, whose state it is!

Question 7. Why do they turn from it and reject it?

Answer. Because it answers not their expectations. That appearance of Christ in flesh in that day, did not answer the expectations of the Scribes and Pharisees. And this appearance of Christ in his Holy Spirit and power after the apostasy does not answer the expectations of many now. And so, not appearing as what they look for, as what they have expected, according to their apprehensions and understanding of the Scriptures, they cannot (so standing and believing) wait, but turn from it, and turn the Scriptures against it, as the Scribes and Pharisees turned the Scriptures against that appearance of Christ.

Now, oh that men, that have any desires after truth, might not run into this kind of blasphemy, and so thereby provoke and turn that Spirit and power of life against them, which alone is able to save them! For the Spirit and power of the Lord turns against the other spirit, in all its devices and transformings, and against them who are joined to that spirit. And as the eye of the Lord is chiefly upon his present ministration of truth in the present age to mind that, to bless that, to appear in that; so his Spirit most turns against that which opposes and seeks to overturn it. Yes, little do men know what they have lost from God, as to themselves and their own states; and what they are become in his sight, by opposing the present dispensation and ministration of truth; even as little do many know in this day, as the Scribes and Pharisees did in their day, what they brought upon themselves, and others whom they infected (by their false knowledge and wrong expounding and managing of the Scriptures) with a prejudiced spirit against Christ.

The Lord did promise that he would become the Shepherd, and gather his sheep himself, after the cloudy and dark day. He is come to seek out, to gather, to heal, to bind up, to comfort, to preserve, etc. He is known, he is witnessed, he is received; his life, virtue, healing and saving power is felt. Let men reproach and revile it ever so much, yet it is known to be the thing, the pearl, and seed of the kingdom, etc. Yes, and he that receives it, and is born of it, knows that he is of God, and has the true nature of life, and true language from God; which that, which knows God, hears; but that which is not of God cannot hear.

A QUESTION concerning Miracles answered

Question. IF this be a new dispensation of the life and power of God, even of the preaching of the everlasting gospel again after the apostasy, why is it not accompanied with outward miracles now, as formerly it was? I say outward miracles, because it is accompanied with inward miracles. For the lame, that could never set step in the path of life, do now walk; the eyes that were blind, are opened, and do now see; the ears that were deaf, have been unstopped, and do now hear; the lepers inwardly, who were all overspread with sin and corruption, have been washed, cleansed, and healed by the pure power; yes, the dead inwardly, have been quickened, raised, turned to him that lives for evermore, have received life from him, and do live in him and with him. Now, these are mighty things, wonderful miracles, even the substance of the miracles which were wrought under the law, and which Christ himself wrought outwardly. For it was not the outward healing, which is salvation, life, and power chiefly aimed at therein; but to point men by that to the thing which was to work the inward; that they might take notice of it, know it, come to it, and wait upon it, to be made partakers of the inward health and salvation by it. Yet seeing in that day Christ did then please to put forth his power outwardly, to point to and witness of the inward, why does he not do so now?

Answer. The nature of the present dispensation does not require it. For the present dispensation of life, is to bring men to the principle of life which is within them (which is the sum and substance of all former dispensations); and to bring them to this, there does not need any thing of a miraculous nature outwardly; but the witness, demonstration and enlightening of the Spirit inwardly. Now, when the outward law was to be received, then the Lord saw need of outward miracles to confirm it; so also in the prophets' days, while that dispensation held, till towards the coming of Christ. And when Christ came in the body prepared by the Father, it pleased the Lord to confirm, by outward, visible demonstrations of his power in him, that this was he. Likewise afterwards, the apostles having the doctrine concerning that appearance to preach and testify to the world, the Lord was also pleased and saw good to confirm it by miracles. But now there is not any new doctrine to be preached. The doctrine concerning Christ is the same that it was, the very same that the apostles preached. Neither is there any need of confirming it now; for it is generally believed among professors of all sorts; as Christ's birth, preaching, living holily, dying (offering himself up as a sacrifice for sin), rising, ascending, sitting at the right hand of the Father, etc., — who doubts of these things? But under all this knowledge men hide their sins, their lusts and corruptions, serving not the Lord (not truly fearing, believing in, and obeying him), but his enemies, and are become corrupt like unto the Heathen; being in words Christians, but as to the holy conduct and power of the endless life, as far from it as the very Heathen. Therefore has the Lord visited the world in this state, and sent forth what he judged fitting for it in this state; namely, not a ministry to preach over that doctrine, under which the Christian world had corrupted themselves; but to point to the principle of life, wherein is the light and power to discover, lead from, and wash away this corruption. And with this ministry there goes a power to reach the heart and raise the witness, in all that hear in fear, and in the sense and dread of God; so that the witness presently answers, and the mind is inwardly satisfied, knows the thing, and turns to it. Now, this (and the effect of this) is beyond miracles, and the satisfaction or assurance which they can afford. For miracles leave a dispute in the mind (notwithstanding all the miracles Christ showed, there was yet a dispute and dissatisfaction in the minds of many concerning him). But he that feels the thing itself in the true principle, where the demonstration and certainty of the Spirit's assurance is received; he is past dispute, and is gone a degree, in the nature of things, beyond that satisfaction which miracles can

afford. He is out of that state and mind which asks a sign, or seeks confirmation by a sign. So that men ought to take heed how they expect or call for miracles now, as the Jews did to Christ for a sign of old; for that is not the temper of mind which this dispensation is to answer, but rather to draw men out from there into a principle, into the new life and Spirit itself; where fuller demonstrations (of a deeper nature) are given to the soul, than outward miracles are. Feel the power that is revealed, feel the life that is made manifest, let in the light of the day which shines; this will scatter the darkness from you, and clear up the things of the day unto you. The pure ministration of power, the pure ministration of life, the light of the everlasting day, is come. Oh! wait the opening of the eye that sees it, and be conceived and brought forth in the womb of it.

Some further QUESTIONS answered, concerning the New Covenant

Question 1. WHAT were those days, after which the New Covenant was to be made?

Answer. They were the days of the law and prophets, the days of the first covenant, the days of God's exercising and making trial of that outward people, the Jews, by his outward and literal covenant. After the full expiring of those days, another covenant was to be made.

Question 2. What are the days wherein the new covenant is made?

Answer. They are the days of Christ, the days of his power, the days of the ministration of his Spirit.

Question 3. What is the house of Israel and Judah, with which this new covenant is to be made? Is it the Israel and Judah according to the flesh? — the Israel and Judah according to the old covenant, or according to the new?

Answer. When the old covenant is passed away, the consideration of Israel and Judah after the flesh passed away also; and the new covenant is fitted for and made with the new Israel and Judah; so that, as the apostle said, "He is not" (now, according to this covenant) "a Jew, that is one outward; nor is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inward," etc. This gospel breaks down the outward consideration between Jew and Gentile, and brings up another consideration in both; so that the promises and blessings are not to either in their old state, but as they are gathered into, and spring up in, the new seed.

Question 4. Is this covenant faultless? Does it mend that which God found amiss in the other? Does it keep more firmly to him than the other did? Is there no falling away from it?

Answer. Yes, it is faultless. It does help the defects of the other. It does keep more firmly to God. There is no falling away from it, by those with whom it is fully made, and who are established in it. But in the passage and travel, there is danger to the soul which is not faithful and watchful, lest it be drawn from that which gives it right to and entrance into the covenant. For as the beginning is in the faith, and in the obedience, so is the continuance, growth, and progress. Thus the gospel was preached, "He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved;" which believing includes not only a beginning to believe, but a going on therein, and continuing to the end. For so is the promise and word of Christ, "He that continues to the end shall be saved." But if any man draw back from the Lord, from his Spirit, and

return into the way of death with the other spirit, the soul of the Lord will have no pleasure in him.

Objection. But then this also is like the first covenant, depending upon the creature, and is defective as the other was.

Answer. No; this covenant does not depend upon the creature, but upon God's love, mercy, and power, which has no limits in this covenant, but may extend itself as far and as long as it pleases. It depends upon the principle of his life, upon the power of his Spirit freely dispensed to the creature; yet the creature that will reap and enjoy this, must come to it in the faith and power which is of the principle, and in the same must abide with it. For God forces none to come, but draws and makes willing; neither does he force any to stay, but persuades and makes willing to stay. This is the manner of his working in the day of his power. But now, if the soul hearken to the other spirit and his drawings, and depart from the Lord, and will not hearken and be won again, the love and pleasure of the Lord turns from it, even according to the law of this covenant. For there is a law of this covenant, according to the nature of it (according to which the Lord works) as well as there was in the other.

Now, search you the Scriptures concerning this thing. Is there any promise of salvation, but upon coming to the Son; or to them that come, without abiding? Did not Christ tell his own disciples, that as they were in the vine, in his love, so they must abide there? It was the law his Father gave him, and the same law he gives them. It is natural to man to backslide; and in his backsliding from that wherein is the life and virtue, how can he but miss of the life and virtue of it? Therefore, in this covenant, the Lord has provided that which will heal the backslidings, which will work out all in man freely, which will powerfully preserve him, etc. But he must come to it (he must come to the Son, he must come to the waters), and he must also abide there. Yet this is not required of him to do of himself neither, according to the law and course of the old covenant; but of him in the new ability, which is in the new principle of life, wherein he is daily to receive it: yes, it is with him, and near him; as near him to be daily drawing him into, and preserving him in, life, and within the limits of the covenant, as the tempter is to be drawing him into sinning against the covenant, and so into death.

Question 5. What does God promise to do for the new house of Israel and Judah in this new covenant?

Answer. He promises to put his laws into their mind, and to write them in their hearts. (Oh, happy he that knows these laws, this mind, this heart, this manner of writing!) He promises to be their God, and that they shall be his people. (This covenant is a powerful covenant; it will make so indeed!) He promises to become their teacher, and such a teacher as all shall know him, from the least to the greatest, even so as they shall not need to seek out abroad after the knowledge of him. (It is so where this covenant is made, even with the least with whom it is completed; but it is not so where it is only begun, or in some few degrees carried on.) He promises to take away that which alone is able to hinder the good things of the covenant; for he will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will he remember no more. This also is witnessed according to the soul's growth in, and receiving into it, the strength of the covenant. For many find sinning against the covenant, and the remembering of their iniquities in their passage; yes, judgment does continue in the refining time, till that be made to pass away thereby, which the judgment is to; but in the covenant itself is rest, joy, peace, satisfaction, life, and powerful redemption and righteousness for evermore.

Question 6. How is this covenant made, and how does the soul enter into it, grow up in it, and reap and enjoy the sweet blessings and promises of it?

Answer. It is made in the faith and obedience of the soul to the gospel, to the power of the endless life. It is made according to the promise. The promise is to him that believes and obeys the gospel. There is no other way in it but union with Christ in the faith, from which flows obedience to the holy commands and requirings of his Spirit. All unbelief and disobedience is out of this holy blessed covenant. They are stops in the way, and hinder the soul both from entering into, and from abiding in, the covenant; yes, the gates of hell may easily prevail against them who do not believe, obey, watch, and pray, but enter into the temptation of the enemy, which draw into death, as the motions and requirings of the Spirit lead into life.

A brief Account concerning Silent Meetings; the nature, use, intent, and benefit of them.

THIS is a great mystery, hid from the eye of man, who is run from the inward life into outward observations. He cannot see either that this is required by the Lord of his people, or any edification therein, or benefit thereby; but to the mind that is drawn inward the thing is plain; and the building up hereby in the life of God, and fellowship one with another therein, is sweetly felt; and precious refreshment from the presence of the Lord received by them, who singly herein wait upon him according to the leadings and requirings of his Holy Spirit. Now, to open the thing a little to the upright-hearted, if the Lord please.

After the mind is in some measure turned to the Lord, his quickenings felt, his seed beginning to arise and spring up in the heart, then the flesh is to be silent before him, and the soul to wait upon him (and for his further appearings) in that measure of life which is already revealed. Now, this is a great thing to know flesh silenced, to feel the reasoning thoughts and discourses of the fleshly mind stilled, and the wisdom, light, and guidance of God's Spirit waited for. For man is to come into the poverty of self, into the abasedness, into the nothingness, into the silence of his spirit before the Lord; into the putting off of all his knowledge, wisdom, understanding, abilities, all that he is, has done, or can do, out of this measure of life, into which he is to travel, that he may be clothed and filled with the nature, Spirit, and power of the Lord.

Now, in this measure of life which is of Christ, and in which Christ is, and appears to the soul, there is the power of life and death; power to kill to the flesh, and power to quicken to God; power to cause the soul to cease from its own workings, and power to work in and for the soul what God requires, and what is acceptable in his sight. And in this God is to be waited upon and worshipped continually, both in private and in public, according as his Spirit draws and teaches.

For the Lord requires of his people not only to worship him apart, but to meet together to worship him, in the seasons, and according to the drawings, of his Spirit: and they that are taught of him, dare not forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is; but watch against the temptations and snares, which the enemy lays to deceive them therefrom, and to disturb their sense by, that they might not feel the drawings of the Father thereunto.

And this is the manner of their worship. They are to wait upon the Lord, to meet in the silence of flesh, and to watch for the stirrings of his life, and the breakings forth of his power amongst them. And in the

breakings forth of that power they may pray, speak, exhort, rebuke, sing, or mourn, etc. according as the Spirit teaches, requires, and gives utterance. But if the Spirit do not require to speak, and give to utter, then every one is to sit still in his place (in his heavenly place I mean), feeling his own measure, feeding thereupon, receiving therefrom, into his spirit, what the Lord gives. Now, in this is edifying, pure edifying, precious edifying; his soul who thus waits, is hereby particularly edified by the Spirit of the Lord at every meeting. And then also there is the life of the whole felt in every vessel that is turned to its measure: insomuch as the warmth of life in each vessel does not only warm the particular, but they are like a heap of fresh and living coals, warming one another, insomuch as a great strength, freshness, and vigor of life flows into all. And if any be burdened, tempted, buffeted by Satan, bowed down, overborne, languishing, afflicted, distressed, etc., the estate of such is felt in Spirit, and secret cries, or open (as the Lord pleases), ascend up to the Lord for them, and they many times find ease and relief, in a few words spoken, or without words, if it be the season of their help and relief with the Lord.

For absolutely silent meetings, wherein there is a resolution not to speak, we know not; but we wait on the Lord, either to feel him in words, or in silence of spirit without words, as he pleases. And that which we aim at, and are instructed to by the Spirit of the Lord as to silent meetings, is that the flesh in every one be kept silent, and that there be no building up, but in the Spirit and power of the Lord.

Now, there are several states of people: some feel little of the Lord's presence; but feel temptations and thoughts, with many wanderings and roving of mind. These are not yet acquainted with the power, or at least know not its dominion, but rather feel dominion of the evil over the good in them. And this is a sore travelling and mournful state, and meetings to such as these (many times) may seem to themselves rather for the worse than for the better. Yet even these, turning, as much as may be, from such things, and cleaving, or at least in truth of heart desiring to cleave, to that which dislikes or witnesses against them, have acceptance with the Lord herein: and continuing to wait in this trouble and distress (keeping close to meetings, in fear and subjection to the Lord who requires it, though with little appearing benefit), do reap a hidden benefit at present, and shall reap a more clear and manifest benefit afterwards, as the Lord wastes and wears out that in them, wherein the darkness has its strength. Now, to evidence that the Lord does require these silent meetings, or meetings after this manner silent, it may thus appear.

God is to be worshipped in spirit, in his own power and life, and this is at his own disposal. His church is a gathering in the Spirit. If any man speak there, he must speak as the oracle of God, as the vessel out of which God speaks; as the trumpet out of which he gives the sound. Therefore there is to be a waiting in silence till the Spirit of the Lord move to speak, and also give words to speak. For a man is not to speak his own words, or in his own wisdom or time; but the Spirit's words, in the Spirit's wisdom and time, which is when he moves and gives to speak. And seeing the Spirit inwardly nourishes, when he gives not to speak words, the inward sense and nourishment is to be waited for, and received as it was given when there are no words. Yes, the ministry of the Spirit and life is more close and immediate when without words, than when with words, as has been often felt, and is faithfully testified by many witnesses. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man how and what things God reveals to his children by his Spirit, when they wait upon him in his pure fear, and worship and converse with him in spirit; for then the fountain of the great deep is unsealed, and the everlasting springs surely give up the pure and living water.

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY

BROUGHT TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL

BEING

**A TRUE DISCOVERY OF THE NATURE AND GROUND OF THE RELIGION AND
KINGDOM OF CHRIST**

IN

**SEVERAL WEIGHTY QUERIES PROPOUNDED; AND OTHER SERIOUS
MATTERS TREATED OF, HIGHLY IMPORTING THE ETERNAL SALVATION OF
SOULS**

Written by

ISAAC PENINGTON

IN THE TIME OF HIS IMPRISONMENT IN READING JAIL

[1671. Published posthumously]

PREFACE

THE Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Oh, blessed is he, who meets with that which powerfully saves! Most men's religion is but a talk and profession of that which they have not; and what will such a kind of religion avail, when it comes to be tried by the piercing fire of the Spirit of burning, and pure (impartial) judgment. Neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Alas, how few know that! And yet if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and all things become new there. Who can bear the decision of this trial? For many pretend to be in Christ, and yet they themselves are still in the old nature and spirit. "Be not deceived," says the apostle, "God is not mocked." Alas, how many are deceived about their religion! Indeed it is impossible for a man not to be deceived, who knows not the anointing, nor is taught his religion by the anointing. He is truth and no lie, and he teaches truth and no lie; but men's apprehensions and conceivings upon the Holy Scriptures and mysteries of God's kingdom are but like themselves, empty and vain. Oh that men could see with the true eye, hear with the true ear, understand with the true heart! Then might they know indeed, and come to witness the Ethiopian skin washed, and the leopard spots changed; but till then, they may change from one opinion to another, and from one profession and way of religion to another, and yet in nature, spirit, mind, and heart, yes, and in conduct also (as to the substance thereof), remain still one and the same. And what will become of men, whose hope is in their religion, in their knowledge of Christ, in their faith, in their worship,

etc., if all these, when they come to be tried, shall be found lacking of the true nature and virtue, and condemned by the Lord for dead and dry! Oh, that men knew what should be yoked down, what should be turned from and denied, how gloriously and takingly soever it appears! "All flesh is grass;" all fleshly knowledge and religion must pass away. That which the earthly man can comprehend in his understanding, is but the outward, the fleshly part of religion; the spiritual knowledge, the living knowledge, is reserved for and given to the spiritual capacity and understanding, which the children of the Most High receive in the new birth, and holy begetting of life.

Here are some queries, held forth in love to you, reader, to bring you into a true sense in many weighty matters. They are not of a confounding (unless it be to that part which is not to know), but of an opening nature; they were sweet to my taste, which (as in God's presence, and by the virtue of his life and Spirit flowing in me) relished the things queried of. I desire they may be profitable to you also, and that you may witness the guidance of God's Spirit, leading you into, and giving you faithfully to walk in, the way that leads to eternal rest. For our days in this world are but for a moment, and then we must be judged, and disposed of by the Lord, forever; each person according to the nature and spirit he is of, "and according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or evil." The Lord give you so to consider your ways, that you may apply your heart to true wisdom; which consists in fearing of God, and departing from evil; which the least child, that is taught of God, learns; and those that are grown up in holiness and righteousness, are skillful and perfect in; so that they cannot do any thing against the truth, but in and for the truth.

There are also questions answered; one about preaching the gospel after the apostasy, another about the reason of God's not teaching others what it pleases him to teach us; and the way of his teaching us. There is likewise something concerning the threefold appearance of Christ, and touching Mount Sinai, from which the law of the letter was given; and Mount Zion, from which the law of the Spirit goes forth; as likewise concerning the temple and sacrifice under the gospel, and of the way to know one's election, and to obtain full assurance thereof, etc. All these sprang from life in my heart, for your sake who breathe after the Lord, and after his pure way and holy path of life, and who read in humility, fear, and uprightness; and my prayers to the God of my life go along with them, that your heart may be opened by him, in the reading of them, and that you may have the sense of them in the shinings of his light in your own heart, whose work it is to cause it to shine out of the darkness; that his glorious gospel may not be hid from the sons of men; but, through the virtue, power, and operation of the Spirit of truth (which first convinces of sin, and then leads out of it, into that which is pure and holy) they may come to be acquainted with the mystery of life, which has been hid from ages and generations, but is now made manifest to God's children and sanctified ones; which being made manifest to them, is revealed and known to be Christ in them, the hope of glory. The Lord grant you may know and experience him to be so to you and in you. Amen.

A FEW WORDS IN GENERAL
TO THOSE THAT DESIRE THE
KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUE GOD

The Inspiration of the Almighty gives Understanding.

**We know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an Understanding, that
we may know him that is True.**

It is a great matter to receive an understanding from the Lord; which until a man does, his knowledge is neither true, living, nor saving.

Now, he that would receive an understanding from the Lord, must wait to know the beginnings of the new and holy understanding; and what that understanding and knowledge is, which stands in the way thereof, and how to part therewith: and then he must faithfully lose and part with it for the other; which is pure, true, and heavenly.

And when a man has received an understanding from the Lord, then he may weigh, consider, and come to know things aright: but till then, deceit will lodge in his heart, and have power over him; and his very wisdom and knowledge will pervert him, and turn him aside from the way of life and truth. The wise professing Jews were hindered from owning the Messiah, by the very knowledge which they had gathered and comprehended out of the letter of the Scriptures.

But if a man has received an understanding from the Lord in measure, yet it is a hard matter to keep that understanding; and he must lie very low and humble, who so does. Oh, what a continual watch has my soul had (and still has) against that part wherein my religion formerly stood! For though the Lord had reached to the pure seed of life in me, and had quickened my soul thereby; yet I knew not how to turn to the seed, and abide in the seed, and to hold my knowledge and life there; but was still striving to live and know (and comprehend and practice) in a part above the seed; and there the enemy was still too hard for me, and did often deprive me of the benefit or right use of what the Lord had wrought in me, and freely bestowed upon me.

Alas, who can understand this voice! Surely it is very hard for any so to do, but such who have had some sensible and lively experience thereof in themselves; but for lack of this knowledge, sense, and experience, many are deeply deceived concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and the state of their own souls, concerning faith in him, love to him, pardon of sin, and justification in and through him; regeneration and sanctification by his Spirit; and concerning walking in the way of holiness, and obeying his commands; and so err in heart exceedingly (both in doctrine and practice) concerning the weighty things which appertain to salvation.

Now, I having erred in time past in my former professions, and been deeply perplexed and distressed, through my erring from the holy seed, Spirit, and power of life; bear with me! bear with me! yes, I say again, bear with me, if I pity others, and sincerely desire that their eyes may be opened to see the pure, living, holy, undefiled way, in which no defiled spirit can walk; but a man must be truly made alive,

and truly cleansed in mind and spirit, before he can walk in this way. Now, if we experimentally, most tenderly, and in true love, witness, from the God of life and salvation, where the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the cleansing of his blood and Spirit is met with, and that according to the plain testimony of the Scriptures, why are you offended with us for our love, and for telling you the truth, as the Lord has opened our eyes, and taught us to see and read it in the Scriptures of truth, and as we have experimentally found it in Jesus?

Well! the Lord knows how we are many times mourning and praying for you, while you are reviling and backbiting us; for we know the way and course of that spirit wherein you oppose us. And, oh that you yourselves also did know what spirit it is, which thus acts you! For then, surely, you would confess it to be the very same which opposed Christ in the days of his flesh, having only a different cover and way of appearance; that, crying him up as to come; this, as already come; but both denying him who is the Messiah. For in that you deny his Spirit, life, appearance, and power in the least of his, you deny him. Oh that you could feel the tender bowels, truth of heart, and true understanding from God's Holy Spirit, wherein this is written! Oh that you could rightly distinguish between the precious and the vile; and not call that vile, which in God's sight is precious; nor that precious, which in God's sight is vile. You must feel the holy seed, the living of God, judge in you; and you judge only in that, or you will err in judging according to the appearance, and not judge the righteous judgment.

I. P.

Reading Jail, 26th of the Third Month, 1671

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY, etc.

I. Some QUERIES concerning the state of the Church as it was in the Apostles' days, and was to be afterwards

Query 1. WAS not the church exceeding beautiful, and in heavenly glory, in the days of the apostles? Did she only travail after life and glory? Did she not also bring forth? Did she not witness the kingdom come, the power come, the eternal life come? And did she not partake thereof, and dwell therein? Was she not a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and crowned with a crown of twelve stars? Yes, did she not bring forth the man-child, which was to rule all nations with a rod of iron? Who can read this state, who is not in some measure a partaker of the same glory?

Query 2. Was not this heaven afterwards wrapped up, rolled up; and did not this glory pass away? Did not the great red dragon fight with the woman? And did she not fly into the wilderness, and was not the man-child caught up to God? And did not the remnant of her seed (who had the testimony of Jesus, and who kept his commandments) testify and prophesy in sackcloth? Read the 11th and 12th chapters of the Revelations.

Query 3. Upon the flight of the true church into the wilderness (when she was thus gone out of sight) did not the false church start up; which made a glorious and taking appearance in the world, to the eye of man's wisdom? Did not she sit upon a scarlet-colored beast (wise and strong) having seven heads,

and ten horns? Was she not arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, making the kings, nations, and inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication? What do those things mean? What did the wisdom of God thus describe her for?

Query 4. What did the true church carry into the wilderness with her, and what did she leave behind her? Did not the temple, the altar, and the true worshippers go along with her? Did not the Gentiles, such as were not true Jews, such as could not come into the temple (but only into the outward court, and worship there), did not these stay behind? And had not these Gentiles henceforth (from the true church's flight into the wilderness) the outward court given to them, that they might make use of it, and worship in it, as much as they would? The virtue, the life, the power, the Spirit, being taken away, and removed with the true church, which fled into the wilderness, what did God regard the outward? "Leave it out of my measure," says the Lord, "and give it to the Gentiles." Rev. 11:2.

Query 5. What is the cup, the golden cup, which this false church has in her hand, wherein are sorceries and witchcrafts, wherewith she bewitches people, and makes them drunk? Is it not a glorious appearance of things without the true life and power? doctrines concerning God, doctrines concerning Christ, doctrines concerning worship, doctrines concerning sanctity, &c? Yes, but the Spirit, the life, the power, that was in the apostles' days, is lacking. What remains of these is to be found with the true church in the wilderness (the blood of whose seed she drinks), not with her.

Query 6. What will become of this great woman in the end; this rich, this glorious church? Shall she continue forever? Shall she sit as a queen forever, and never see sorrow? Shall the true church never come out of the wilderness, to be restored to her beauty and glory again? No, no; in one day shall her plagues come, — death and mourning and famine. It is true, she is wise and strong (and the beast also, on which she sits and rides, who is able to make war with? says man's wisdom); but wiser and stronger is the Lord God Almighty, who judges her, and who is taking and will take to him his great power, wherewith he will thunder against her, until he has brought her down, and her flesh be utterly burnt with fire.

Query 7. What shall become of those who drink of her cup, and who believe and worship as she teaches? Shall they not all drink of the wine of the cup of the wrath of God Almighty, poured out without mixture? Shall they not partake of her dreadful plagues, in the hour of her judgment? Read Rev. 14:9-11 and chap. 18. For these things are to come to pass as certainly as they were foretold; and when they do come to pass, blessed shall the saints be who have suffered with patience, keeping the commandments and the faith of Jesus; and woe will be to them who have persecuted them, and drunk their blood. Read the 13th, 14th, 17th, and 19th chapters of the Revelations, which signify of and testify to these things.

Now, whereas many say, that the book of the Revelations is such a mystical book that it is not to be understood; to what end then was it written? It was the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, chap. 1:1. and would Christ give them forth in such words as could not be understood? Again, it is said, ver. 3. Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand. How can any be blessed in reading, or how can any keep what is written therein, without understanding the things contained in it? How can any follow the true church into the wilderness, or avoid being taken with the golden cup of fornications of the false church, or

refuse the mark of the beast (that he take it neither on his forehead nor hand, nor have the name of the beast upon him, nor so much as the number of his name), unless he truly and rightly understand these warnings and descriptions of the Holy Spirit of God, given forth in the book, to preserve in the way of truth, in the way of life (though through great sufferings and tribulations), out of the way of spiritual whoredom and death? For mystical Babylon, the nations of the earth and great ones (generally) commit fornication with. Rev. 17:2 and 18:3. Indeed this book is a mystery to man's wisdom; for it was not given to the wisdom of this world, but is hid from that; but God gave it to Christ to give to his servants; and it is not a mystery (but opened and revealed by the Father's Spirit) to the children of the true wisdom, who are instructed and taught of God to escape the bed of whoredom and spiritual fornication, which the earthly wisdom (in the wisest men of this world) is entangled in.

II. Some QUERIES on Chap. 29 and 30 of Deut. compared with Rom. 10

Query 1. DID not God command Moses to make a covenant with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant he made with them in Horeb? Deut. 29:1.

Query 2. What was this covenant? Was it of the same nature with the former, or was it of a different nature? Was not the former the covenant of the law? And was not this the covenant of the gospel? Did not this covenant contain the promise of circumcising the heart? Deut. 30:6. Whereas, under the other covenant, notwithstanding all the temptations, signs, and miracles which they had seen in Egypt, and in the wilderness, about the space of forty years; yet the Lord had not given them a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto that day. But Moses and Aaron, with Caleb and Joshua, who knew and partook of the other covenant, they were of a better spirit, and understood the leadings and commands of God, and followed after him.

Query 3. Had the Jews minded this covenant, might they not have been able to keep the other also? Did any fail in sacrifices, or outward obedience of the law, who kept to this covenant? What a holy man was Samuel, who did not so much as err in government, but could plead with the people, Whose ox or ass have I taken, or whom have I defrauded or oppressed? Zacharias, and Elizabeth his wife, walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And so the children of God in the gospel, who have a new heart, and a new spirit, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit and law of life in Christ Jesus, they also fulfill the righteousness of the law declared in the letter. Rom. 8:4.

Query 4. What is the commandment of this covenant, and where is it written? The commandments of the other covenant are written in the law of Moses, and in tables of stone; but where is this commandment written, or where is it to be found? Is it in heaven above, to be fetched down from there; or is it beyond the sea, &c? No, is it not very nigh? Is not the Word of this commandment nigh in the mouth and in the heart? And is it not there placed by the Lord for this very end, that men might hear it and do it?

Query 5. Was not this the Word of commandment of life and good, or of death and evil to the Jews? See chap 30:14-15. And is it not so also to mankind? He that hears and obeys the Word of this commandment, does he not live and partake of good? He that disobeys it, does he not die, and undergo wrath and evil, tribulation and anguish upon his soul from the hand of the Lord, either poured out

upon him at present, or treasured up for him against hereafter? Read Rom. 2:5-6, etc.

Query 6. Was not this other covenant, this second covenant, this new covenant, which God bid Moses make with them then, the same which God makes with believers in the days of the gospel? The old covenant had been made with the Jews before; was not this the new? They had had the law in the letter before, wherein the commandment was afar off; but is not the commandment of the new covenant (the law of the Spirit of life) nigh? And had not the people of the Jews the Spirit of the Lord nigh to instruct them, by virtue of this covenant? That they had so, is plain, Nehem. 9:20. and Isa. 63:10; but whether they had the Spirit nigh to them by virtue of the old covenant, or by virtue of the new (which Moses was appointed by God to make with them, as is afore expressed), let the wise in heart consider. And whether the tender mercies which God all along expressed to them (as is mentioned Isa. 63:7) were by virtue of that covenant wherein God had continual advantages and provocations against them, or by virtue of this covenant, from which mercy and redemption is continually springing freely towards the Israel of God?

Query 7. Whether the Word of faith which the apostles preached, was not the same Word nigh in the mouth and heart which Moses preached? Is not the Word of life, the Word of faith, the Word of the new covenant, one and the same thing in all ages and generations? Indeed there are outward sayings and testimonies after diverse manners; but Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. And the commandment of life in the mouth and heart changes not, but is always one and the same.

Query 8. What is the justification under this covenant; or what is that which God has an eye to in justifying any person here? Is it not the obedience of faith? What does God condemn but unbelief? And will he not justify faith? For faith flows from life, and life from Christ. So that, indeed, here the holy root makes all that are of it holy, and the righteous root makes all that are of it righteous; and he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 1 John 3:7. And Christ is here, indeed, made unto the soul that thus receives him and obeys him as the Word and commandment of life, — I say, he is, indeed, made unto such a one of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and blessed are they that do not mistake about this, but come truly to witness it.

III. Some Queries concerning destruction and salvation

Query 1. WHETHER there be not something which destroys, which has the nature of death and destruction in it, and which leavens with death and destruction, as it is let in and received?

Query 2. Whether there be not something also which saves, which has the nature of life and salvation in it, and which leavens with life and salvation, as it is let in and received?

Query 3. Whether that which destroys be not near, and whether that which saves be not near also? (Does not Christ stand at the door and knock? And may not he be heard and let in? See Rev. 3:20.)

Query 4. Whether this, which is so near, and so able to save, was not that which saved in all ages and generations, even before Christ appeared in a body of flesh, and the shedding his blood?

Query 5. Whether, after Christ appeared in a body of flesh, and shedding his blood, any can be saved

thereby, or by any believing on Christ whatsoever, without letting in or receiving that life and power which saves? Be not deceived; God is not mocked. He that believes in the power which raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and is subject to the power, shall be redeemed and saved thereby. For death came by the soul's separation from the power which gave life, and Christ saves by bringing to the power again; so that he that would indeed be saved by Christ, must believe in God through him, and feel the power which redeems. But let a man believe ever so much concerning God and Christ, until he feel this, and be changed by the virtue and operation of this, he cannot be saved, but is still in his sins, and under condemnation and wrath, because of sin, whatever he thinks of himself.

Query 6. Whether Christ was not the same yesterday, today, and forever; even before he took up the body of flesh, while he was in the body, after he laid down the body, and after he took it up again and appeared in it to his disciples?

Query 7. Whether Christ, where he inwardly and spiritually appears and is received, does not discover, shake, dissettle, and remove that nature which cannot receive the law, and so bring up and bring forth the heavenly seed, which was afore the law (which is appointed by God for a generation to himself), which always does the will of him who quickens it, and who fills it with life and power from on high?

IV. Some Queries on Coloss. 1:27-29. (Observe, that in verse 27 whereas it is in our common translation rendered, This Mystery among the Gentiles; it is in some other translations rendered, This Mystery in the Gentiles; and so it is in the Greek.)

Query 1. WHETHER there be not a mystery of light, a mystery of life; something of a true light hidden, something of true life hidden in the Gentiles? Whatsoever makes manifest, is light, says the apostle. Ephes. 5:13-14. And that which may be known of God, is manifest in them. Rom. 1. Is there not something in the Gentiles, which in some measure discovers something contrary to God in them, and is many times working in their minds against it? Is not this of a precious nature? and has it not precious virtue and power in it, though it be little took notice of by them?

Query 2. Do not the saints know what this mystery is? Do they not know what is the riches and glory of it? Indeed it has been hid from ages and generations, so that they knew it not; but is it hid from the saints also in the day of the gospel? is it not revealed in them and to them?

Query 3. What is this mystery in them in whom it is revealed? Is it not Christ in them? Is it not the hope of glory in them? Do they not know it to be Christ? Do they not know it to be the hope of glory? Who can damp the faith, or darken the knowledge, of those who feel the mystery of life revealed in them? who feel Christ (the hope of glory) living, dwelling, and reigning in the authority and power of the Father, in their own hearts?

Query 4. Did not the apostles preach this mystery? Did they not preach the word of faith within in the heart? the kingdom within? Christ, the hope of glory, within? Did they not preach this message of the gospel (which they had from Christ to carry to men), that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"? And did they not preach it to this very end, to turn men, and bring men from the darkness within

to the light within, that in it they might have union and fellowship with God, who is light? Can any have fellowship with God, who is light, but as his spirit is brought out of the inward darkness into the inward light?

Query 5. What did the apostle Paul, and the other apostles aim at, in their warning men, and teaching them in all wisdom? Was it not to perfect the work of God in them, and that they might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus?

Query 6. Did not the grace and power of God go along with the apostles, and work in them mightily to this end, even for the perfecting the saints? And the grace and power of God, working mightily against sin and the power of Satan, is it not able to conquer Satan, and to make him fall like lightning, and to trample him under feet? Consider ver. 29 and 2 Thess. 1:11-12.

Query 7. Did the apostles ever preach such a doctrine, that no man could be perfected in this life; but man must always (every day) be committing sin? No, did they not speak wisdom among them that were perfect, and say, Let as many of us as be perfect, be thus minded? Did they not distinguish between the weak, and between the strong and perfect? Do they not speak of some that had overcome the wicked one, and were born of God, and did not sin? It is a precious thing to feel the power of God regenerating the mind; but it is much more precious to witness it regenerated. But that state none know but they that are in it; but this is most certain, that sin is shut out of it, and that all things are new there.

Query 8. Will the mystery of life, where it is received and turned to, ever cease working against the mystery of death, until it has wrought it out of the mind? Shall judgment never be brought forth unto victory over sin in the heart? Shall there never be pure and full communion with the Lord here in this world, without the interruption of sin? "These things," says John, "I write to you, that your joy may be full." Shall the joy never be full in any? How can the joy be full, where sin has power, and breaks in upon the soul, and prevails upon the mind, even to the committing of it daily? The soul that is weary of sin, and grieved at its grieving God's Spirit thereby, can never come to full union and fellowship with the Lord, nor to have its joy full, while it does that which grieves God's Spirit; for it is impossible but it should grieve the soul also, and weaken its joy and rejoicing in the Lord.

V. Some Queries concerning the Way of Life, and Mystery of the Gospel

Query 1. Is not the way of life, the way of holiness, the way of truth, the way of peace, one and the same in all ages and generations? Was there ever, or shall there ever be another than that which was from the beginning?

Query 2. Is not this way a pure way, a clean way? Can any impure thing walk in it? Is not the gate strait, and the way narrow, that leads unto life? Is it easy finding it, or is it easy entering into it, and walking in it? Does not the corruption and unholiness of the hearts of many, hinder them from walking in the holy way of life and peace?

Query 3. Is not this way a mystery? Can any learn it, but those whose eyes are opened by the Lord, and to whom the mystery is revealed by him? Can any discern or understand it, but the children of the

pure, heavenly wisdom, whom the Lord teaches, and whose eyes he opens, to see and justify it in every age?

Query 4. Is not the whole vision of God, the whole vision of life, the whole vision of peace, a book sealed to all sorts (both learned and unlearned in every age and generation), but those to whom the Lord unseals it?

Query 5. May not such as are not at all acquainted with the mystery of godliness, the mystery of life, the mystery of redemption, read what the Scriptures say concerning these things, and get a great deal of knowledge, from the letter of the Scriptures, into their minds, and be able to raise doctrines, reasons, uses, etc., and back all by scriptures very plentifully? But are not those who teach not from the mystery of life, and gift of the Spirit, but only what they have gathered and formed from the letter, — I say, are not such blind leaders of the blind? and is it possible but that they themselves, and such as follow them, should fall into the ditch? For it is only the mystery of life and redemption (not a literal knowledge and wisdom, though with an endeavor to practice according thereto) which preserves out of the ditch. Oh that this were duly considered of! for it is tenderly and weightily proposed.

Query 6. What is the knowledge of Christ which saves? Is it a knowledge of him after the letter, or a knowledge of him in the Spirit and power of the endless life? Can he be known truly, livingly, and savingly, without the Father's revealing him in man? Or can any truly call him Lord, but they that are first taught by the Father to discern his spiritual and heavenly glory, and to receive him and bow to him in Spirit?

Query 7. What is it to kiss the Son? Can any do so, but those who discern and receive the light of his Spirit?

Query 8. Can any truly know the Father, unless the Son reveal him? or can any know the Son, unless the Father reveal him? I know men may get notions out of the Scriptures concerning God the Father and his Son; but can they get true knowledge of either without the inspiration of the Almighty, which gives understanding?

Query 9. Can any person fear God, and depart from evil, anywhere upon the face of the earth, without some visit of the Lord Jesus Christ to his soul, and without receiving something of life and power from him? He is the wisdom of God, he can teach this; but can any else teach it? If none else can teach it, then he that learned it must needs learn it of him. Is not this, namely, to fear God, and depart from evil, the path of wisdom, which is hid from all living, but such as are taught by Christ, who is the wisdom of God? Read Job 28:12. to the end of the chapter, and consider. For does not the Spirit of Christ, which convicts of sin, reach to all men, and minister to all men, inwardly and spiritually, in some days of instruction about fearing God, and departing from evil?

Query 10. Can any be acquainted with the fear of God, and be sensible of the hour of his judgment, and give glory to him, and worship him, but they must know and receive the everlasting gospel? They that are sent to preach this after the apostasy, are they not sent to preach it as the everlasting gospel? Read Rev. 14:6-7. and consider. For come to life and power in any doctrine, which Christ sends his messengers to preach towards the salvation of men's souls, a man comes to the gospel presently; but read and assent to, and practice all the things, as well as men can, related in the Scriptures, without the life and power, and so acknowledge and believe all that is said concerning Christ; yet for all this, and in

the midst of all this, a man may miss of the gospel; for the gospel is a hidden mystery of the life and power, see Col. 1:26-27.

Query 11. Is not the message of the gospel, That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all? Does not the Spirit of Christ preach this, more or less, to all people under heaven? Yes, is not the gospel preached in every creature, and hid in those that are lost, whom the god of this world has blinded? For is not the spirit of God, in some measure, everywhere convincing men of sin, and drawing them out of darkness into the sense and obedience of light? And will not this be the general and universal condemnation of the world, that they did not bring their deeds to the light, but turned from it and hated it, loving the darkness more than it, because their deeds were evil, and they had not a mind to part with them, but to remain and abide in them?

Alas! alas! men should pass through the knowledge of things after the letter, into the knowledge of things after the Spirit and power of the endless life; but instead thereof, men stick in their apprehensions of the letter: and if any man be taught of God, and have the things of his kingdom, and the mystery of the Scriptures, revealed to him in the Spirit, and so signify of them in the words which God's wisdom teaches; yet so, men know them not, but oppose and resist the ministration of life and power in their day and generation! And this will be bitterness in the latter end, even as bitter to the professors of this age, as the former denying of Christ's appearance in the flesh was to the professors of that age.

VI. Some Queries concerning Righteousness or Justification

Query 1. Is there not a new covenant under the gospel, as well as there was an old covenant under the law?

Query 2. What did the old covenant require? Did it not require obedience to the law of Moses? What does the new covenant require? Does it not require faith in Christ, and obedience to his Spirit? Does it not require faith in the grace, and obedience to the grace which brings salvation, teaching to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, etc.?

Query 3. What is the righteousness or justification in the old covenant? What does God justify in the old covenant? Does he not justify the obedience thereto, and condemn all disobedience? What is the righteousness or justification of the new covenant? What does God justify in men under the new covenant? Does he not justify their faith in Christ, and their obedience to the law of his Spirit? Is not whatsoever is not of faith sin, and condemned; and whatsoever is of faith holy, and justified?

Query 4. What is faith? Is it not the gift of God? What is obedience? Does it not flow from faith? Is it not performed by the power and in the newness of the Spirit? and is not that justifiable, and always justified in the sight of God? Does it not spring from the new tree, from the holy root of life in the heart? And whatsoever springs therefrom, is it not holy and righteous? And is not whatsoever is truly holy and righteous justified and accounted righteous by the holy and righteous God?

Query 5. To what end was Christ made under the law, and did fulfill the righteousness of the law? Was it not that he might accomplish and fulfill that righteousness, and so make way for the bringing in of

the everlasting righteousness, even of the righteousness of his own nature and Spirit, which is everlasting? Is not this the righteousness which the children of the new covenant experience in the new and living way? Is not this far beyond the righteousness of the law, if they could fulfill it ever so exactly from the letter? For I feel a vast difference between that righteousness which would belong to me from the law, and the righteousness which flows into my heart from the nature and Spirit of Christ revealed in me, and which flows up in me from my union with him: for this is absolutely a righteousness of another nature, of another kind, of another root.

Query 6. If Christ's fulfilling the law of Moses, the law of the first covenant, were imputed to us as our righteousness, and we justified in the sight of God thereby, were not then our righteousness the righteousness of the first covenant in nature, and our justification a justification by the righteousness of the first covenant? For Christ was made under the law, made under the first covenant, and fulfilled the righteousness of the first covenant; so that if that be imputed to us for righteousness, then the righteousness of the first covenant is imputed to us for righteousness, and is our righteousness.

Query 7. Was not faith imputed to Abraham for righteousness? What was his righteousness? Was it not the faith which he had from Christ, whereby and wherewith he believed God? Is not faith of the nature of Christ? Is not true faith justified forever, and does it not justify him in whom it is found? And does not gospel obedience flow from faith? and has it not of the nature of faith in it? Oh, how pure and precious was it in the eye of God, that Abraham reasoned not, consulted not with flesh and blood, but retired into faith in the pure power! "He believed God," say the Scriptures, "and it was accounted to him for righteousness:" and shall it not be imputed to us also, if we have the same faith, and believe in the same power?

VII. Some Queries about being under the Law, and being under Grace

Query 1. WHETHER they that have received the Spirit of grace, and are under the Spirit of grace; I say, whether they are under the law also, or witness freedom therefrom?

Query 2. What is the law? Is it not a ministration of death, of bondage, of condemnation? What is the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of grace? Is it not a Spirit of life, a Spirit of liberty, a Spirit that frees from bondage? They that have received it, and are in subjection to it, do they not partake of its liberty, and through it come into dominion over sin and death?

Query 3. Is the law to the righteous or the unrighteous? Whom was it made for? He that comes into the holy and righteous nature of the seed, does he not come from under the law? Does he not come into the nature, state, and spirit, which is free from the law?

Query 4. What is it to come through the law into the liberty and redemption of sons? What is it to know the seed free in the particular, and to come into the freedom of the seed? Does not the Son make free, the Truth of God make free, all that come to it, and dwell in it? and are not they that are made free by it, free indeed? O Zion! your children are all free-born! Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all; and she brings forth none but free children. They that dwell in the height of notion, they are not free; but they that dwell in the power of life, know that which makes free, and witness freedom by it.

VIII. Some Queries for the Professors of Christianity to consider of, and try their States by. For it is good for every one to know and understand his Estate aright (what it is in the sight of the Lord), and not to be mistaken in a Matter of so great Concernment

Query 1. IS your spirit, heart, mind, soul, and body, a temple for God to dwell in? Who dwells in your heart? Does the Holy Spirit, or the unclean spirit? Is that dislodged and purged out of you, with which God will not dwell? Is that discovered and taken away, in which the wicked one dwells? O Jerusalem! wash your heart from wickedness; how long shall your vain thoughts lodge within you! O Jerusalem! will you not be made clean? When shall it once be? Is not forbearing to touch every unclean thing, and cleansing from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, more necessary to the state of a son and daughter of the Most High than most people are aware of? Read 2 Cor. 6:16-17 and chap. 7:1.

Query 2. Is Christ revealed in you? Does God dwell anywhere, in any heart, but where Christ is, but where he is inwardly and spiritually revealed? "Know you not that Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?" And can any know Christ in them, who has not had him revealed there by the Father? Almost all sorts of pretenders to Christ own him as spoken of without; but the true Christian witnesses him revealed within: for it pleases the Father to reveal the Son in such; and none can be truly ingrafted into Christ, but as Christ is in some measure made manifest within.

Query 3. How do you confess Jesus to be the Lord? Is it by notions from the letter, or by feeling his Spirit and power revealed within, and your heart made subject to his Spirit and power inwardly revealed? For there is a confessing Christ in and by the Spirit, and a confessing him without the Spirit, according as men can read, conceived, and apprehend of him from the letter. Consider which of these yours is.

Query 4. Are you come out of the apostasy and spirit of darkness, into the light and Spirit of Christ? What was the apostasy from? Was it not from the Spirit, from the anointing? Wherein did it consist? Did it consist in holding a knowledge of Christ, and form of godliness out of the power? Are you returned to the anointing, — to the Holy Spirit of the Father? Have you received it? Do you live and walk in it, and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh?

Query 5. Do you know the tree of righteousness, and the tree of unrighteousness, inwardly? Have you felt the axe laid to the root of the corrupt tree, and it cut down; and the holy plant of God (the plant of his renown) planted in your heart, and bringing forth fruit to him? Can the fruit ever become good in you till the tree be made good? Can the corrupt tree ever bring forth the holy fruit of righteousness to the Lord? Oh, mind your growth! I mean, from what you grow, and from what your fruit proceeds: for all the knowledge, faith, love, zeal, practices, etc. which proceed not from the renewed Spirit and nature, are not the good fruit which God calls for and accepts; but the denying the least custom or fashion of this world, from a renewed nature, and from the drawings and teachings of God's Spirit, is good fruit, and accepted by him.

Query 6. Can any be redeemed to God, but by his judgment and righteousness revealed in them? Is the soul redeemed from its enemies, while its enemies remain in strength, and have the dominion over it?

Where grace is received, and the soul taught by it and subject to it, does it not break the dominion of sin? As the spirit of judgment and burning is felt in any heart, does it not cut down and burn up sin there? And as the righteous Spirit is turned to, is not his righteous nature received, and does not the holy and righteous seed spring up in the heart? and as it springs up, does it not redeem and deliver that which is joined to it? Can any be redeemed by a righteousness at a distance, without partaking of the new, and holy, and righteous image of the Son? And he that is righteous in measure, he may do righteousness: but no man can do righteousness, until he become righteous, by being joined to, changed by, and in some measure brought forth a new plant to God, in the new, righteous, and holy seed. See 1 John 3:7.

Query 7. Do you indeed know the new covenant? Was it ever inwardly revealed in you? Do you know the difference between reading the holy directions given forth in the Scriptures, and so getting them into your minds and practicing them as well as you can, — I say, do you know the difference between this and God's writing them in your hearts, and causing you to walk in his ways? Do you know the difference between reading in the letter and in the Spirit; and between walking according to the oldness of the letter, and according to the newness of the Spirit? Oh that you might not be deceived about these things, but might know the truth as it is in Jesus, and come into fellowship with us therein! For truly our fellowship is with the Father and the Son, in that which changes not, but is one and the same forever: yes, the Lord our God has redeemed us out of all changeable ways, religions, and worships, into the one pure way of life, and into the worship in the one Spirit and truth, which changes not, but is still what it was, even one and the same before the law of Moses, or writings of the prophets, all the time of the law, while Christ was in the flesh, afterwards when he was revealed in Spirit, and all the time of the apostasy, and after the apostasy, and so forever.

IX. A Question answered about preaching the Gospel after the Apostasy

Question. WHY does God after the apostasy send an angel to preach the everlasting gospel, after a manner different from what it was preached before the apostasy? How was it preached before the apostasy? Was it not preached thus, That in Christ alone is remission of sins, and salvation through faith in his blood? How is it to be preached after the apostasy? Is not an angel from God sent to preach it thus: Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters? Is this the same gospel that was preached before? How different is the sound thereof! Surely this would seem not the same, but rather another gospel, to any man who is not taught of God, and has not received of him the true understanding to observe and discern the nature of things.

Answer. The gospel is the same in substance, though differing in sound and manner of appearance; and they that judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment, experience it to be the same: for whoever receives the gospel thus preached, receives the power of God unto salvation, which goes along with his fear, and with the hour of judgment, and with the true worship.

And this is the reason why the Lord sends his angel thus to preach it; that he might shut out the birth of the false wisdom, and convey it to the children of the true wisdom. For in the apostasy, the doctrines of the knowledge of Christ had been corrupted, and held in the wrong part; and men had got a wrong

knowledge and a dead belief, concerning Christ and his blood, etc.

Therefore to shut out these, God so orders his gospel to be preached, as these cannot understand it, nor know it to be the gospel, nor come into this spiritual ministration of it; but those whom the Lord touches, whose hearts he opens and quickens, they (in the demonstration of his Spirit) have the sense and obedience of it: for men had got a form of religion, a form of knowledge, a form of doctrine, a form of worship, out of the power. Therefore the Lord comes with the light of his Spirit, to sever between that which was known and held out of the power, and that which was received and held in the power, and so preached the truth, that none but those that are of the truth can own and receive it.

Had he sent an angel to preach the birth of Christ, the death of Christ, his resurrection, etc., all the dead would receive this; but to preach thus, "Fear God, come to the Spirit of judgment and burning; worship him that made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and fountains of waters;" who can understand what this means? Who can know this to be the everlasting gospel, but he that is taught of God?

This is to preach God the creator, says the wise professor; this is not to preach Christ the redeemer; this is not to preach the everlasting gospel, will they readily say. Yes; but God who is wise, and knows what the gospel is, and sends his angel to preach it after the apostasy, sends it thus to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people: read Rev. 14:6-7. and consider seriously, and spurn not against the way of God's preaching his everlasting truth, wherein is wrapped up the eternal salvation and happiness of mankind; yes, more especially of this age, who ought to bow to God in this his way of dispensing his truth, which he himself has chosen.

Now, consider this one thing; was ever the gospel thus preached before this age? The same gospel was preached from the beginning; but was it ever thus preached before? "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;" so it was preached to Adam: "In your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed;" so it was preached to Abraham: "To us a child is born, to us a Son is given," etc.; so it was preached in the days of the prophets: "By this man, every one that believes in his name shall receive remission of sins;" so it was preached in the apostles' days.

And in the reformation from popery, some of the doctrines about free justification by grace, and of remission of sins by faith in Christ, etc. were revived; but was it ever preached thus before our age? Did persons ever come forth in the power and authority of God, bidding men fear him, and be sensible of the hour of his judgment, even of his mighty day which was at hand; and come out of all false ways and worships, into the worship of him who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and fountains of waters, — I say, did persons ever come forth thus, and preach the everlasting gospel thus, preach these doctrines to men, as the gospel of God, before this day? And let men well consider, whether it be not indeed of God, and by his command and power thus preached; and take heed of opposing his message, lest they be found fighters against him.

For mind: was not this always the sum and substance in every dispensation? Could men be saved by believing that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; or that in Abraham's seed all the families of the earth should be blessed; or that a child should be born, and a Son given; or that through Christ's name, remission of sins was to be had, etc.; without coming into the true fear, which teaches and causes to depart from evil; and without giving glory to God, in bowing to his Spirit's instructions and teachings; and without worshipping him, who made heaven and earth, and sea, and fountains of waters? Or could any fear the Lord, and give glory to him, and come under the hour of his

judgment, and worship him, who made heaven, and earth, and sea, and fountains of waters; but they must first feel the power of the gospel overcoming their spirits, and leading them there?

X. Two Questions answered; one concerning others not learning what God teaches us; the other concerning the Way of his Teaching us

Question 1. WHAT is the reason that others cannot learn, nor become subject to, the same spiritual truths, which God makes manifest to us, and subjects our spirits to?

Answer. The reason is, because they do not learn the same way that God teaches us; and so, though they have many advantages above us of parts, learning, etc., and study hard to know much; yet not coming into the right way, wherein God's Spirit teaches, they never come to learn the truth, as it is there taught.

Question 2. But what is the way wherein God teaches you? may some say.

Answer. Thus God teaches us, by giving us an understanding to know him that is true, and by opening an ear in us to hear his voice; and so, being kept within the limits of that understanding and ear, we come to hear and know aright.

"Take heed," said Christ, "how you hear." Oh! the Lord has made us sensible of the weight of that scripture; and we have often experienced, that it is easy to hear amiss, and read amiss, and pray amiss, and believe amiss, and hope amiss; but hard to do any of these aright. Therefore, we are taught still to wait for the stirring of the waters, for the moving of God's Holy Spirit upon our spirits; and then healing virtue and ability is felt and received from him, to perform what he requires.

Thus, when we read the Scriptures, our eyes are towards him, and we watch against our own understandings, against what they could gather or comprehend of themselves, and wait to feel how he will open our spirits, and what he will make manifest to them, being opened; and if he drop down nothing, we gather nothing; but if he give light, then in his light we see and receive light. So in praying, we wait to feel the birth of life (which is of the Father, and which the Father hears) breathe in us; and so far as the Spirit of the Father breathes upon it, and it breathes to the Father, so far we pray; and when life stops, we stop, and dare not offer up to God any sacrifice of our own, but what the Father prepares and gives us. So in eating and drinking, and whatever we do, our heart is retired to the Lord, and we wait to feel every thing sanctified by his presence and blessing; and, indeed, here every thing is sweet unto us. And in whatever God enables us to do, we narrowly watch to that direction of Christ, "not to let the left hand know what the right hand does." For we are nothing of ourselves, nor can do any thing of ourselves; therefore whatever is done in us, as we feel the grace of God, the virtue and power of his life working all in us; so it is still given us to attribute all the honor and glory thereto.

And in this temper of spirit we find nothing too hard for us; for the strength of Christ is still at hand, even in the midst of our weakness; and the riches of the kingdom are still at hand in the midst of our poverty and nothingness; and his strength works, and our weakness does not hinder the glory of him that works through it. So being beaten to it, by constant sense and daily experience, that it is not by our willing or running, according to our wisdom and strength, that we can attain any thing; but by God's

showing mercy to us in Christ; we therefore daily wait at the posts of God's heavenly wisdom, to feel the gate of mercy and tender love opened to us, and mercy and love flow in upon us; whereby we may, and daily do, obtain what our hearts desire and seek after; blessed be the Lord forever!

And truly here in the springings of love, and openings of mercy from our God, we have fellowship and converse with the Father and Son, and one with another, in the holy Spirit of life; and we testify of these things to others, that they also might come into the same fellowship, and be of the same faith which flows from, and abides in, and makes living in, the power and life eternal.

The Lord guide all tender, breathing, panting spirits here, that they may be satisfied in the goodness and loving-kindness of the Lord, and may eat abundantly of the fatness of his house, and drink of the rivers of his pleasures, and not wander up and down any longer in their own barren thoughts, apprehensions, and conceivings upon the Scriptures.

XI. Of the threefold Appearance of Christ; namely, under the Law, in a Body of Flesh, and in his Spirit and Power

FIRST, Under the law. Various were the appearances of Christ; sometimes as an angel, in the likeness of a man; so to Abraham, and so to Jacob, when Jacob wrestled with him, and prevailed, and had overcome God; so to Joshua, or the captain of the Lord's host, at his besieging Jericho; so to Moses in the bush, he appeared as an angel, Acts 7:35. so likewise in visions. Those glorious appearances of God to the prophets in visions were the appearances of Christ; as particularly, that glorious appearance of God sitting upon a throne, and his train filling the temple, and the Seraphims crying, "Holy! holy! holy is the Lord of hosts; his glory is the fulness of the whole earth!" Isa. 6. This was an appearance of Christ to Isaiah, as is manifest, John 12:41. where the Evangelist (relating to that place) uses this expression: "These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." So he was the angel of God's presence, which went before the Jews, in all their journeyings and travels out of Egypt, through the sea, and in the wilderness, and in the time of the Judges; and wrought all their deliverances for them, as is signified, Isa. 63:9. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them," etc. So with the three children, he appeared in the midst of the fiery furnace in a form like the Son of God, as Nebuchadnezzar judged. Dan. 3:25.

Now, indeed, the whole law was a shadow of him, who was to come to be the substance of it, and to perform that inwardly in the hearts of his, which the law figured forth, and represented outwardly. Thus Moses and all the prophets were forerunners of him, the great prophet of the spiritual Israel of God. All the priests, especially the high-priests, were types and forerunners of him, and to end in him, who is the high-priest over the household of God forever. The judges and saviors were types of him, the great Savior and Redeemer: for they saved not by their own strength, but by his Spirit and power coming upon them; so that the yoke (which was made and brought upon them by their rebellion against the Lord, and disobedience to his law) was still broken, because of the anointing.

David, Solomon, and the good kings were types of him. David, of his conquest over his spiritual enemies; Solomon, of his ruling his Israel in peace, after he had conquered their enemies.

Circumcision was a type of his circumcising the heart, that his children (his holy seed) might love the

Lord their God with all their heart, and live.

The passover, and blood of the lamb, was a type of his blood, and sprinkled upon the conscience, which preserves against the stroke and power of the destroyer; and so God passes over all such, when he visits for sin and transgression.

The outward sabbath was a type of the pure rest which Christ gives to those that believe in his name; for, indeed, they that truly believe in him do enter into rest, and cease from their own labors and workings of themselves, and witness God's working in them, "both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The outward law, in the letter, written in tables of stone, was a shadow of the inward, living, pure, powerful, spiritual law of love and life, which God writes in the hearts of his children, which constrains them to obedience, and enables them to do all that God requires of them with ease and delight. For truly the yoke of his law is easy, and the burden of his commandments is light; so that they are not at all grievous to them that are under, and in subjection to, his Spirit.

When the mind is gathered, and brought from under the spirit and power of darkness, into his Spirit and power, oh, how easy is it to believe, to love, to obey, etc.! Indeed there is nothing but love, and faith, and obedience, and life, and righteousness, and holiness, and pure power, and peace, and joy here. "For the old things are passed away, and all things are become new in Christ," to them that are in the new creation in him.

So Canaan, the Holy Land, represented the land of life, or country of life, into which God gathers, and in which he feeds and preserves all the living, whom he gathers out of the territories of death and darkness. And the plenty and fulness of the land of Canaan, and the sweet rivers therein, signified the abundance of rich things, and the rivers of God's pleasure, whereof his redeemed ones drink, as they come to live and dwell and walk and sup in and with him.

Jerusalem, the holy city, was a figure of the new Jerusalem, the spiritual Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of all them that are born of the Spirit; and the hill whereon Jerusalem was built signified God's holy mountain, whereon this his city is built; and the inhabitants of the outward Jerusalem signified the inhabitants of the new and inward Jerusalem; and the temple signified Christ's body, and the bodies of the saints, which are temples, which the Holy One dwells in the midst of. And that altar in the outward temple signified the altar in this inward temple, which all the true, inward, spiritual Jews have right to partake of, and none else. The fire in the outward temple, and the candlesticks, and the lights which were never to go out, signified the holy fire in the spiritual temple, which comes from heaven, wherewith all the spiritual sacrifices are to be offered up; and the candlestick is to hold the light (and the priests to keep the lamps burning) or God will remove it out of its place. So the holy garments of the priests signified the robes of righteousness, innocency, and purity, wherewith the people of God under the gospel (who are a royal priesthood to him) are to be clothed.

And the ark signified that which holds the law of the new covenant; and the pot of manna, with which kind of food God fed and nourished the soul in the wilderness, before he brought it into the Holy Land, must be for an everlasting memorial in the land of the living. For, indeed, Christ appeared to and was with that people in the wilderness, in a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; which signified the

leadings of God's Spirit in the day of the gospel. Isa. 4:5. And he was the rock that followed them; and he was the manna of which they did eat, and the water of which they did drink; for they did eat and drink of the heavenly things in a figure, and (as their spirits were at any time opened) had a taste and sense of the true food, in and through the figure; yes, doubtless, at some times, they had all some sense, and did all eat of the same spiritual meat as we now eat of, "and did all drink of the same spiritual drink" as we now drink of; 1 Cor. 10:3-4. for they were not only all under the cloud, and did not only all pass through the sea, but they were also all baptized in the cloud and in the sea, having a sense of the pure power of the Lord, and of his outstretched arm made bare for them; in which sense they sang his praise, though they soon afterwards forgot his works. Psal. 106:11-12. So likewise there was Aaron's rod, that budded, laid up in the ark; which is the evidence of the true priesthood and ministry forever; and that which is so is not to be spurned against, but still to be acknowledged and honored, as of God.

In it also were the tables of the law, in the representative ark: in the true ark are the tables of the law of life, which God writes by the finger of his Spirit, and appoints to be kept in the spiritual ark forever.

Above the ark was the mercy-seat, with two cherubims of glory, one at each end of it, spreading their wings on high over the mercy-seat, between whom God dwelt or sat, where God met with and communed with Moses, and the priests under the law, when they came to worship him, and inquire of him; which figured out the true mercy-seat under the gospel, where the true priests (the true circumcision, the spiritual Israel of God) have access with boldness to the throne of grace, that, through the high-priest of their profession, they may obtain mercy and grace, to help in time of need.

So under the law, all the sacrifices (the sin-offering, the peace-offering, the thank-offering, the heave-offering, the wave-offering, the whole burnt-offering, the meat-offering, the drink-offering, etc.) signified Christ, the one offering, who comprehends them all; and the holy, spiritual, heavenly offerings, which the spiritual people (the priests of the gospel) are daily to offer up to God: and the sweet spices, frankincense, and odors signified the sweet seasonings of the gospel sacrifices with grace, with salt, with the Spirit, with the fresh breathings of life, with innocency, with meekness, with tenderness, with zeal, with faith, with love, etc., which yield a most pleasant scent in the nostrils of the Lord.

Now, in the bullock and goat for the sin-offering, the blood was to be brought into the holy place, to make atonement; and the fat and inwards burnt on the altar; and the flesh, skin, and dung carried forth and burnt without the camp. What means this? Oh, how precious is it to read the figures of the heavenly things with true understanding! but to read through the figures (with the eye of life, with the eye of the Spirit) into the invisible substance, — this is sweet, precious, and heavenly indeed!

Secondly, Concerning Christ's appearance in a body of flesh. When the time of these shadows drew towards an end, and the fulness of time was come, he who thus appeared in several types and shadows among that people of the Jews under the law, he now came down from the Father, debased himself, and clothed himself like a man, partaking of flesh and blood; and was in all things made like unto us (excepting sin; for he was the Lamb without spot) humbling himself to come under the law, and under the curse, that he might redeem those that are under the law (and under the curse) by fulfilling the righteousness thereof, and bringing them through into the righteousness everlasting.

Now, while he was in the body, his glory did shine to the eye of the children of true wisdom: his

disciples (to whom not flesh and blood, nor the wisdom and knowledge which they could get from the letter, but his Father revealed him) they saw the hidden glory; they saw through the veil of his flesh, and beheld him as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Now, in this body he finished the work which his Father gave him to do; he fulfilled all righteousness (the righteousness of the letter, the righteousness of the Spirit) that he might bring his through the righteousness of the law or letter, into the righteousness of the Spirit and power, into the righteousness of the new life; and here that scripture is read and fulfilled, "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live to God." So his whole life was a doing the will of the Father, which sent him.

When he was but twelve years old, he disputed with the doctors and teachers of the law, hearing and asking them questions (discovering the pure wisdom of the Father which dwelt in him), because it was his Father's business which he was to be about, as he told his mother. Luke 2:49. And when the Lord led him into the wilderness to be tried, he went and was tempted, that he might fight the battle against his great adversary. And when the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, moving him to preach the gospel, he preached the gospel in the Spirit and power of the Father, and went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, as his Father's Spirit led and guided him: for he did nothing of himself, or in his own will, or for himself; but all in the will and time of the Father.

"Mine hour is not yet come," said he to his mother, when she was hasty to have him do that miracle of turning water into wine. John 2:4. And so when his brethren urged him to go up to the feast, John 7:3-4. "My time," said he, "is not yet come; your time is always ready," ver. 6.

Thus he did always please his Father, and seek the honor of him that sent him; and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, being willing to drink of the cup which his Father gave him to drink; and so having finished his work, he returned from whence he came, and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, being exalted above all principalities, and powers, and dominions, both in this world, and in that which is to come.

Thirdly, Now, the third appearance of Christ, which these two outward appearances made way for, was his appearance in Spirit, even his pure, inward, heavenly appearance in the hearts of his children. This he bids his disciples wait for; telling them, "that he would not leave them comfortless, but would come again to them." They had had the appearance of the bridegroom in the flesh, and he was to go away. It could not be helped; it was necessary for them that he should go away; but (says he) "I will come again." The same power and presence that is now with you in a body of flesh, shall visit you in Spirit, and so abide with you forever. For he that is now with you shall be in you; till that time you shall have sorrow, and be like a travailing woman; but the world, in the mean time, shall rejoice; "but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you." And was it not so? Did not Christ send the Spirit, the Comforter? Did he not come in the Spirit and power of the Most High, to be with them always to the end of the world? Did he not bid them "stay and wait at Jerusalem" for that appearance of him in his Spirit, and not go about his work and message till he came in the power and authority of his Father to go along with them? And did not their hearts rejoice when he came with joy unspeakable, and full of glory? Had they not then the joy and peace which passed all the understanding of man; which joy and peace none could take from them; which joy they were not promised that they should receive till he came and saw them again? Yes, truly; in the kingdom, Spirit, and power of our Lord Jesus Christ there is a seeing eye to eye. Yes, it was so, in some measure, with

some precious ones in the days of old, which that promise, Psal. 32:8. "I will guide you with mine eye," intimates; for the eye of the soul must be upon God's eye, and observe the motion thereof, if it be guided thereby.

And truly this administration of the Spirit and power of the gospel is exceeding glorious, and they that come into it come into the glory and heavenly dominion and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ (and so are made kings by him, and wear crowns in his presence, though they still cast them at his feet), and are changed from glory to glory; and behold, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, which none can do but with the eye which is in some measure changed and glorified.

Now, this dispensation of the gospel, Spirit, and power, began in the apostles' days, and the church was exceeding chaste, pure, and beautiful then, without spot or wrinkle; though there were some crept into the outward court, which were spots among them; but that did not mar the beauty of the rest, but they could bring victory and dominion to him that sat on the throne, and witnessed that salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ was come. For the man-child was born, and was among them; and the glorious woman (the church, the spouse of Christ) "was clothed with the sun," etc., and had both her husband (her Lord and head) and the man-child (the pure birth of life) with her. But there was a falling away after this, and a thick dark night, and a very great and universal apostasy from the Spirit and power of the apostles; many departing out of the faith into the high-mindedness, and not keeping their standing in the faith, and love, and obedience of the truth; but holding a form of godliness out of the power.

But God, in his tender mercies, determined to send an angel to preach his everlasting gospel again; and in due time so did, as is expressed, Rev. 14:6-7. (Mark: none could preach the everlasting gospel after the apostasy, by any ordination or succession of ministry left amongst them; but there must be a new receiving of the gospel, by a new message and commission from on high.) And God likewise sent forth his Spirit of judgment and burning to consume the whore (the false church) which was grown very great, sitting over peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues; and to bring the true church out of the wilderness into the enjoyment of her beauty and glory again. And when she comes again, she comes as a morning without clouds, without any veil, without any outward types or shadows of the glory to be revealed, even in the pure and heavenly glory itself.

He that has a true eye, let him read this; and he that has a heart opened by the Lord, let him acknowledge it: for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is exalted, and the knees of his redeemed ones bow to him, and acknowledge him the only Anointed One, the only Lord and King over all, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

XII. Concerning Mount Sinai, and Mount Zion

WAS not Sinai the mount that might be touched, an earthly mount, from which was the ministration of the law outward, or in the letter, which gendered to bondage, condemnation, and death? Does not the apostle Peter say, concerning the law as so administered, "that it was a yoke too heavy for them or their fathers to bear"? Acts 15:10.

Is not the gospel Zion a spiritual mount, a heavenly mount, a mount that cannot be touched by human

senses, a mount from which is the ministration of the Spirit, the ministration of liberty, the ministration of life, the ministration of the glory that excels? Is it not the holy mountain, whereon the holy city (the New Jerusalem) is built, and where the King of Righteousness rules in righteousness and peace over all his subjects; where he makes to them the feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees well refined; where he and his sup together, eating and drinking the bread and wine of the kingdom, even the living bread, and the fruit of the living vine?

Is not the whole ministration of life, from the beginning to the end, from Mount Zion? Is it, any of it, from Mount Sinai?

Is not Zion to be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness? Does either the judgment or the righteousness, wherewith Zion and her converts are to be redeemed, come from Mount Sinai? Do they not both come from Mount Zion?

Out of "Zion shall go forth the law, and word of the Lord from Jerusalem," Isa. 2. He that understands this scripture, knows the gospel state.

"You are not come (said the apostle) to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire; nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, etc.; but you are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," etc. Heb. 12.

Now, they that come there, they witness the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes free from the law of sin and death; and the pure Word of eternal life issuing from there, even from that Zion and Jerusalem.

Mind that scripture, Gal. 4:25-26. "For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage, with her children; but Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

We read, Rev. 11:19. "That the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament; and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." Whence did those lightnings, voices, thunderings, etc. issue; out of Sinai, or out of Zion? Does not the lion of the tribe of Judah roar out of Zion against his enemies, and shoot the arrows of his judgments from there? And if he judge his enemies from there, does he not judge his people from there also? Is not his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem? And does not the Spirit of judgment and burning (by which he washes and purges away the blood and filth of the daughter of Zion) issue forth from there? Oh that men had a true and spiritual understanding of these things, and were taught of God to know and distinguish concerning the things of his kingdom!

XIII. Of the Signification of Mount Sinai, and Mount Zion

MOUNT SINAI was that mount of earth which the voice and presence of the Lord shook at the ministration of the law outward.

Now, there is an inward earth, which is to be shaken also; even the nature which transgressed, the

nature which was subject to sin, and under the curse, the earth which brings forth briars and thorns. Into the earth the plow of the Lord is to go, to break it up, and overturn it, that there may be a new earth formed, fit to receive the heavenly seed; out of which it may spring, and bring forth fruit to God. Yes, not only the earth, but also the heavens, are to be shaken, yes, and removed too; though the shaking of Mount Sinai did not signify that, but only the shaking of the earth. "But yet once more" (says the Lord) "I shake not earth only, but also heaven;" which signifies the removing those things that may be shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

There is that which is changeable, and there is that which is unchangeable. The old earth, and the old heavens, are changeable; the new heavens, and the new earth, are unchangeable. There is a changeable mind, a changeable spirit, a changeable nature, a changeable will, a changeable wisdom, a changeable reason and understanding (which one while goes this way, and another while that way), a changeable knowledge of God; which man learns not of the Spirit of the Lord, but after a traditional way, and by the search of his own hunting mind, and drinks into that part which is old and earthly. There is man's kindling a fire there, a beating out sparks there, with which he compasses about and warms himself, getting unto himself peace and joy, hope and confidence, etc. But when the Lord appears, and his voice is heard (when he arises to shake terribly the earth, yes, and the heavens also), all these will be shaken, and fall like untimely figs at the rushing of a mighty wind and terrible tempest.

For the day of the Lord, the day of his pure appearance, the day of the brightness of his rising, will be upon all that is high and lofty; upon all that is proud and lifted up above the pure seed. Every cedar of Lebanon, and oak of Bashan, that is high and lifted up; every high mountain and hills that are lifted up; every high tower, and fenced wall; every ship of Tarshish, and pleasant picture, etc. shall all feel the terror of his majesty: and that alone which is of the pure seed, gathered into the seed, and changed into the nature of the seed, that alone shall stand. Nothing else shall be able to dwell with the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings: so that it may be very well said, "Who may abide the day of his coming; and who shall stand when he appears?" For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; and he comes with his fan in his hand, to fan away the chaff; and shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, to purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, pleasant to the Lord; which none can do but those that are purified by him.

And happy will they be, whose religion and worship in that day will stand the trial, and bear the fire. And oh! blessed forever be the Lord, who is come near to judgment, and is a swift witness against all deceit and unrighteousness; but a justifier of them whose consciences he has sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.

But now, as the Lord takes away the old, so he brings in the new. As he removes the old earth and the old heavens, wherein dwelt unrighteousness; so he forms and brings forth the new heavens, and the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

And here the kingdom is known and received, which can never be shaken. Here is the Mount Zion, which shall never be removed; and the Jerusalem, one of whose stakes or cords shall never be plucked up, or broken. Here is the city which has everlasting foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Blessed are they that come here, and dwell here; who are not come to the mount that may be touched and shaken, and removed (read inwardly); but to the holy mount of God, and whereon all the buildings

of life are raised, and whereon they stand firm forever.

And all that are herein built up and established can truly say, and sing in spirit, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, and blessed by him shall be the habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness, from this time forth for evermore." For Jerusalem is now become a quiet habitation, and the king of glory reigns therein: for the Lord of Hosts, who has created the new heavens, and the new earth, has created Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; and they shall be glad, and rejoice, and bless themselves in him, forever and ever. Amen, Amen.

XIV. Concerning the Temple and Sacrifices under the Gospel

GOD'S temple under the gospel is the light of his Son, the Spirit of his Son, and those souls which are renewed, and built up a habitation for him in the Spirit of his Son, and those bodies in which renewed minds and spirits dwell. God is light, and he dwells in light; God is Spirit, and his building is holy and spiritual; for he dwells in nothing that is dark or corrupt or unclean.

And that which is sacrificed or offered up to God must be clean and pure. No unclean thought, no unclean desire, nothing that is earthly or fleshly or selfish, must be offered up to God, but the pure breathings of his own Spirit; for whatsoever is of him, and comes from him, is accepted with him; but whatever man can invent or form or offer up of his own, or of himself, though it be ever so glorious or taking in man's eye, yet it is but abomination in the sight of the Lord.

Thus all the sacrifices of the Gentiles (or heathenish nature) are rejected. Thus all the sacrifices of the Jews outward (or of the professing mind and nature, without the true life) are rejected also.

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord," said the prophet of the Lord of old, "and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression; the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Mic. 6:6-7.

What says the answer of God? No, no; this is not the way to come to pardon of sin, or to acceptance with the Lord; but come to that which teaches what is good, and what the "Lord requires of you, O man!" which is "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with the Lord." Come there in the teachings of God's Spirit, and worship there, and there you shall witness forgiveness of sins, and acceptance with the Lord. Mic. 6:7-8. and Isa. 1:16-18. For it was not offering sacrifices of old (appointed under the law) that would do the thing, nor men's pleading the sacrifice of Christ under the gospel; but coming to that Spirit which teaches holiness, and being subject to that Spirit, and offering in that Spirit (to the Father) what proceeds therefrom. So that his building in the Spirit is the only temple, and the sacrifices or offerings in the Spirit are the only offerings of the New Testament.

And here every groan or sigh towards the Lord after that which is pure, every supplication in the Spirit, every acknowledgment of the goodness of the Lord in a true and pure sense, are of a sweet savor in the nostrils of the Lord: yes, using hospitality, relieving the poor, or doing any thing that is good from the good and holy root, are sacrifices acceptable to the Lord. Read these scriptures following (and if the Lord open your eyes, you may thereby come to see both what the temple and sacrifices are), 1 Cor.

3:16. and 2 Cor. 6:16. Isa. 5:7,15. Eph. 2:21-22. Heb. 3:6. Rev. 21:22. John 4:23. Psa. 90:1. These places foregoing are for the temple: then for the sacrifices, Psa. 1:14-15. and 51:16-17. and 141:2. Mal. 1:11. Heb. 10:8-9. Rom. 12:1. 1 Cor. 6:19-20. 1 Pet. 2:5. Heb. 13:15. Phil. 4:18.

XV. Some Questions concerning the Light of Christ's Spirit answered, according to the Testimony of the Scriptures of Truth, and according to Experience.

Question 1. WHAT is the message which Christ sent his apostles to declare, whom he sent to preach the gospel?

Answer. This is the message which they heard of him, and which they declared unto others, "That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

Question 2. What was Christ's intent in sending them with this message; and for what end were they to declare it to others?

Answer. For the opening of men's eyes and hearts, that men might come to a sight and sense of the darkness, and to a sight and sense of the light; and might be turned from darkness to light (and so from Satan's power to God); and might come out of the one into the other (that is, out of the darkness into the light), and so might walk in the light, as God is in the light.

Question 3. What is the danger of abiding in darkness?

Answer. In the darkness is sin, death, condemnation, and destruction of the soul, and separation from God and Christ forever.

Question 4. What is the benefit of being turned to the light, and of coming into the light, and walking in the light, as God is in the light?

Answer. The benefits are great and many; three whereof I may now mention, which comprehend and contain in them many more.

First, In the light, remission of sins is received; for there is the blood of sprinkling, wherewith those are sprinkled that come there; and, indeed, none can walk and abide there, but they come to witness the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleansing them from all sin; and true, real cleansing is nowhere else witnessed.

Secondly, They have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and come also into fellowship with the saints in light; which are great mysteries, and none know what they mean, but such as are in that holy fellowship.

Thirdly, They there receive the earnest of the everlasting inheritance, and the sealing up by God's Holy Spirit unto the day of full redemption.

Question 5. Where is the darkness which men are to be turned from?

Answer. It is within, chiefly within; there is Satan's kingdom; there is the house, which the "strong

man armed" keeps; where his goods are in peace, till a "stronger" than he comes to trouble and dispossess him.

Question 6. How or where is the light to be met with which man is to be turned to?

Answer. It appears within also; it shines in the darkness: for there Christ (the stronger) comes, with the light of his Spirit, to overcome and dispossess the strong man of his house and kingdom.

Question 7. When does the light of Christ's Spirit shine in the darkness of man's heart?

Answer. When and as God pleases. For the light is his, and he causes it to shine (in the hearts of the sons and daughters of men) according to his pleasure; and therefore men are to wait for the shining of his pure, heavenly light in their hearts, that with it the darkness may be resisted, overcome, and subdued in them, and scattered and dispelled from them, and their hearts filled with the light and power of life.

Question 8. How may a man perceive or know the light when it shines?

Answer. By its shining; for light (both outward and inward) manifests both itself and other things by its own shining. And as there is no discerning the things of this world but by the light of the world, so there is no discerning the things of the other world but by the light of the other world; that is, there is no discerning spiritual things but by the light of the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God causes to shine in the heart; which light searches the heart, and tries the reins, and discovers the most hidden things there.

Objection. But the heart is deceitful above all things, and Satan can transform himself into the likeness of an angel of light; so that he shines inwardly too by his feigned appearances: how then may I know the shinings of the true light of Christ's Spirit in my heart, from his false shinings and transformings?

Answer. God has a witness in men's consciences. For as God has not left himself without witness outwardly, but all his works testify of him (his works of goodness, love, mercy, power, etc. testify of his goodness, love, mercy, power, etc.), so he has not left himself without witness inwardly; but there is something in men to testify of God, and for God, and against his enemy, and all deceitful appearances; which witness always speaks faithfully, and testifies truth.

Therefore he that comes to discern that, and mind that, shall find that near him which will always witness for God upon every occasion, and against all the appearances and devices of the enemy.

Now, no man can come to discern or distinguish in cases of this nature, but as that which is of God, and for God, gives the judgment in him; and he that judges thus shall never judge according to the shows and appearances of things, but shall still judge the true and righteous judgment.

Question 9. What is the nature and properties of the light of Christ's Spirit; and what will it do in the hearts of those that turn to it, receive it, and walk in it?

Answer. It has a most excellent nature and properties, and it will work wonderfully in the hearts of those that receive it, and walk in it towards the redeeming and saving them from sin and the powers of darkness; so that following this light, and abiding and walking in it, they cannot be overcome by the enemy of their souls; but must needs conquer and overcome him. To instance in some:

First, It has an enlightening or manifesting property. It will discover all that is of God, and likewise all that is against him. It will discover the very mystery of death, and the most subtle workings of the enemy in the mystery of darkness, and deceivableness of unrighteousness. And it will discover the mystery of life, and the mystery of the way of holiness. So that not only the precepts of holiness, but the way of the precepts, the way of obeying the holy will and Spirit of God in every thing, is here learned.

Secondly, It has an awakening property. This light will not let a man sleep in sin, or grow heavy and dull (if he hearken to it); but it awakens him that sleeps: and whoever is truly awakened at any time, is awakened by this light; by the shining thereof in his heart; by the manifestation of God to his spirit by it. This testimony Paul gives, Ephes. 5:13-14. "Whatsoever does make manifest is light." Wherefore he says, "Awake you that sleep," etc.

Thirdly, It has a quickening property. For it is the light of life, the light of Christ's Spirit, which is living and powerful; and it has life and power in it, and quickens and raises the man to whom it reaches, and gives him ability to arise from the dead.

Fourthly, It has a cleansing, a sanctifying, a purifying, property. Oh! how clean it makes within! The light is pure, and it makes pure. All the defilement and corruption is in the darkness; none of it is in the light, but the light purges it away, where it finds entertainment.

Fifthly, It has a uniting and separating property. It unites to God; it unites to that which is pure; and it separates from sin, Satan, darkness, and whatever is impure.

Sixthly, It has a preserving nature and property. It preserves the man in whom it dwells; and where it has power, and rules, it keeps out the darkness; so that darkness cannot break in where it has place, and is kept to: nor can the mind break out from the Lord, which keeps in the sense, savor, and seasoning of the light of his Spirit.

Indeed time would fail me, to speak of the excellent nature, virtues, and properties thereof; but come, taste, and see how sweet the light is, and what a pleasant thing it is to behold the shinings of this Sun.

Question 10. Does God visit all men with this light?

Answer. Yes; as God loves all men, and would have all men saved, so he visits all men (more or less) with that which is able to discover the darkness to them, and to save them therefrom.

Question 11. What is the reason, then, that all men are not saved by it?

Answer. Because they do not receive it, and join to it against the darkness; but join to the darkness, and hearken to the wisdom and reasonings thereof, against the appearances and discoveries of the light.

Question 12. How comes it that men do so?

Answer. From their love to the darkness, and to the deeds of darkness; which they know they should not love, because they have something near them, which often shows them the evil, both of the darkness that is in them, and of the deeds that come from it. So that this is the condemnation, that men love the darkness, cleave to the darkness, and follow the darkness; but hate the light, and turn

from the light, which in the love and mercy of God follows them, to bring them out of love with the darkness, and to bring them into the sense of, and fellowship with, him in the light.

Question 13. How come some to love the light?

Answer. God affords a capacity therein to all, and God is love; and from the flowings of his love, and aboundings of his mercy to all, are men begotten to him; and the obedient are kept by him in subjection to that, which many resisting the strivings of his Spirit with them, are finally given up to hardness of heart, who turn from and hate the light. So that to God and his grace is to be attributed the salvation of all that are saved; and to man, his own destruction and perishing from the way of life, notwithstanding the tender visitations of God, to recover and reconcile man to himself, through the blood of his Son.

Question 14. Against whom do they rebel, that rebel against the light?

Answer. They rebel against Christ, from whom the light comes; and will Christ save such as rebel against him? Oh that men did aright consider this thing! for it is a greater matter to know and be subject to the light of Christ's Spirit, as it shines from him in the heart, than men are aware of. Now, that which discovers the hidden things of darkness in the heart, and reproves for it, is the light of Christ's Spirit, and not another. Oh that all that desire to know what and where the true light is, did understand so!

Question 15. What do they miss of, who do not know nor heed the light of Christ's Spirit, nor mind the reproofs thereof in their hearts, but look on it as inferior in kind and nature to what it is?

Answer. They miss of many great and precious privileges, which they that know it and have received it, and so walk in it, and are subject to it, do experience and are acquainted with.

First, They miss of knowing the ways of it: for in this light there are ways or paths of holiness, paths of life, paths of righteousness, paths of peace, paths of joy, paths of refreshment and consolation, wherein all these things are daily met with by those that walk there; which they that know not the light (or rebel against the light) are not acquainted with. See Job 24:13.

Secondly, They miss of the lighting of their candle by it: for God lights his candle in the heart by this light, and by no other thing; so that in this his light, they, whose candle is lighted by him, see light.

David had experience of this, and from that experience spake, "You will light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." Psa. 18:28. And Job had experience of this also, as those words of his plainly signify, Job 29:2. etc., where he says, "Oh that I were as in the days past, when his candle shined upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness." And all the children of God, who in this day wait for the shinings of the light of his Spirit in their hearts, and are subject to him therein, they experience the same, and know the word of life (which is nigh in the mouth and heart) to be a "lantern to the feet, and a light to the path," of the lowest and meanest here.

Thirdly, They miss of the sending forth, or revelation of that from God, which leads to his holy hill and to his tabernacles, which David experienced and desired more of. Psal. 43:3. For "who shall dwell in God's holy hill, or abide in his tabernacle?" Psal. 15:1. "He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart, etc., he shall never be moved," ver. 2. to the end, and

Isai. 33:15, etc. But how shall any come there? Surely by God's light and truth sent forth from his Spirit into their spirits. This is the way of ascending there in all ages and generations.

Fourthly, They slight that measure of light given them, and despise the day of small things, and therefore miss of the pouring forth of God's Spirit upon them, which is plentifully poured forth upon the sons and daughters of the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem, in this day of God's visiting the earth again after the apostasy; blessed be the name of the Lord! And how comes it to be poured forth upon them? How comes wisdom to pour out her spirit unto them? Why, they hearken to her reproofs, turning thereat, and forsaking that which they are reprov'd for, and so come into wisdom's fear; and then wisdom opens her secrets, and pours out her spirit, and makes known her words to those that are subject to her reproofs, and learn her fear, which is the fear of the New Covenant. See Prov. 1:23. He that receives the convincer of sin, and follows his leadings, out of the sins he is convinced of (and into the paths of righteousness and holiness, into which he is the leader), cannot miss of the Comforter, or of his comforts; for he is one and the same with the convincer or reprover.

XVI. The way to know one's Election, and to be fully assured of it; as also concerning Election itself.

DAVID says, "The Lord has set apart him that is godly for himself." Psa. 4. This is God's choice. God is the great potter, who forms vessels upon the wheel of his power; some to honor, some to dishonor; but not before they were. Some he melts and tenders for salvation, who hearken to his voice; others he hardens and gives up for destruction, who rebel against his Spirit. Oh! how should all fear before him, who has power over them, as the potter over the clay, that they should reverence and obey him, lest his power break them to pieces!

Now, this is most certain: the holy man, the righteous man, the godly man, he that is renewed in the spirit of his mind: this is a vessel of honor, fitted and chosen by God unto honor: but he that is corrupt, dead, filthy, polluted, etc. this is the vessel which God rejects. For the righteous God loves righteousness forever, and the holy God loves holiness forever, and he that is holy and righteous is of him, and chosen by him: but all that is unholy and unrighteous, is of another nature and spirit, and so rejected and cast out by his pure nature and Spirit.

Therefore every one that would be accepted of the Lord, and witness his choice, is to mind that, and be subject to that, whereby God fits vessels for himself; which is the Holy Spirit, nature, and life of his Son, wherein every man is accepted, as he is called there, gathered there, and found there, and none rejected: but out of this every man is rejected, but none accepted, "for God is no respecter of persons."

He carried himself equally to every Jew under the old covenant; and he carries himself equally towards all who obey the call of his Spirit into the new and living covenant; so that the truth stands forever, that in every nation, tongue, and people, he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him, and none else. And this is the great mercy and tender love of God to all men, that which brings into his fear, and teaches and enables to work righteousness, is near every man, which is the word of faith, the word of life, the word of power, the word of reconciliation; so that no man need go far to seek out salvation: for Christ, the Savior and salvation of God, is nigh to every man, in the light of that holy

spirit of truth wherewith God visits mankind, and wherein he speaks peace and reconciliation, both to them that are nigh, and to them that are afar off, as they hear the voice of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, and learn subjection to it.

"Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure," said the apostle Peter. 2 Pet. 1:10. How shall we do that? may some say. "Why, give all diligence to add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love: for if these things be in you and abound, you cannot be barren in the knowledge of Christ, but must needs be fruitful." Well, but what then? What if they be fruitful? Why, if they be fruitful, then (to be sure) they are chosen branches; for God casts off none but that which is dry, barren, dead, and unfruitful. Feel life, which is active and bears fruit, you feel the choice of God, you answer the end of your call, etc., and herein as you come to settlement and establishment, you will find your calling and election made sure to you, and an entrance ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For Christ has the key of the kingdom, and shuts out no such as these, but gives them further admittance day by day. And so by this means you will witness translation further and further, out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and an inheritance and possession of life and glory in measure; which will be an earnest to you of the full inheritance in due time, and a seal upon your heart unto the day of full redemption: yes, you may then also come to see how you were loved and chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, through obedience unto, and sanctification of the Spirit, manifested in time. 2 Thess. 2:13. (For known unto God are all his works from the beginning, before ever any of them were wrought.) If you feel that which comes forth from the Lord to call and gather to him, and to renew and sanctify, and make fit for him, and to make you fruitful (from the holy root and power of life) in that which is good; this is enough for you, and your soul is safe and blessed here: for here you know that, and are in the blessed seed of promise, into which all that are gathered and abide, are blessed in and with it.

Now, as concerning election itself, observe this; that it is in Christ, and not out of him. For it was the intent of God to honor his Son, even as his Son honored him: and this was the honor which God gave him, "That he should be his salvation to the ends of the earth; that whosoever believed on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." That he should be the way for all mankind to come to the Father, through faith in him; that as in Adam all died, so in Christ all might be made alive; and as in Adam all men were shut up in death and condemnation, so the free gift might come upon all, and the way of life and redemption be opened to all, in him.

Mind the figure, the brazen serpent, which was not lifted up, that a certain number might be healed, and no more; but that every one that was wounded, every one that was stung with serpents, might look up and be healed.

So was Christ lifted up, that every sinner that was stung with sin and the serpent might look up to the physician of souls, and receive virtue and healing from him, according to that precious scripture, "Look unto me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth. And whoever is athirst, let him come; and whoever will, let him come and drink of the water of life freely." Yes, God stands ready, by his Holy Spirit and quickening power, which is near men, to kindle the true thirst in them, and to make them truly willing. To open it yet further;

There is predestination, election, calling, justifying, glorifying: predestination unto holiness, election

in that which is holy, calling out of darkness into light, justifying and glorifying in the light, through the renewing and sanctification of the Spirit. All these God orders and manages according to his good will, and according as he has purposed in himself; although he be not the decreer, nor author of sin or rebellion against himself, which is the cause of the creature's condemnation.

Thus all things are as present with God before they were: for God did foreknow Adam's fall (though he was not therefore the author of it) before it came to pass; and he foreknew how his power and love and mercy should work towards men and for men, in and through Christ; and how far he would visit men therewith, and how far men would resist and strive against his holy and good Spirit; and he determined how long his Spirit should strive with nations and persons: for with some he would long wait to be gracious; with others he would be quicker and more severe, according to their provocations.

Now, his love, his mercy, his power, his good Spirit, are his own; and he may show forth the operations of them towards men according to his pleasure; and who may say unto him, What do you? May he not do with his own what he pleases? (who is "good and righteous in all his ways?") and because he may show mercy as long as he will, and harden as soon as he will (as he sees cause), may it not be truly said, "That he has mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardens"? But that he hardens any, without first giving them a day of mercy, and visitations of mercy, following them with mercy, and forbearing them in mercy, and so by the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, leading them to repentance, that they might escape his wrath, and the dread of his powerful vengeance, because of sin, — I say, that God hardens any before he has dealt thus with them, from a mere will in himself, because he would destroy the most and far greater part of men; this the Scriptures nowhere testify to, but abundantly testify against. For how long did God strive with the old world, even to have saved them, whom afterwards he did destroy? And how did he strive with that people of the Jews (yes, and with other nations also, though they might seem cast off)? "As I live, says the Lord," (and he speaks his heart) "I desire not the death of the wicked, but rather that they might return and live. I am not the destroyer, I am the Savior; and my delight is not to destroy, but to save. "O Israel! your destruction is of yourself; but in me is your help." And no man's blood will lie at God's door, but at his own.

Therefore as God has prepared a Savior, so there is no lack of love, or mercy, or power on his part, to draw men to the Savior; but this is the condemnation, that men harden themselves against the drawings of his Spirit, and against the operation of his holy light and power, when it appears, and is willing to work in and upon their hearts. This is not the condemnation of men, that light does not shine in their hearts; but that they love the darkness more than the light, which appears and shines in them, and is there witnessing against and drawing from the darkness. And so when it shall at last be made manifest, how light has appeared to all men, and God's Spirit therein and thereby striven with all men, and how they have refused, and would not be turned from their darkness to the light of the Lord; every mouth will be stopped before him, and all men that perish, justly condemned for refusing and neglecting so great salvation: for the light of the sun of God's everlasting day, and the sound of his Spirit of life, visiting dark man, reaches throughout all the earth, and his voice and words to the ends of the world.

XVII. Some Observations concerning the Priesthood of Christ, from several Passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Observation 1. WHO is the apostle and high priest of our profession. It is Jesus Christ the Son of God, whom God has appointed heir of all things, by whom he made the worlds; and who is the express image of his Father's substance, etc. Heb. 1. and chap. 3:1.

Observation 2. Why this high priest was to suffer death; which was, that he might taste death for every man, and so through suffering become a perfect Savior, or perfect Captain of salvation, to all the sons that were to be brought by him to glory, chap. 2:9-10.

Observation 3. Why he partook of flesh and blood; one reason whereof was, because the children (and that therein he might show them an example of righteousness, that he might condemn himself in the flesh) were partakers of flesh and blood; for that was the very ground or reason that he took part of the same: another reason was that which was mentioned before; that he might taste death, and through death destroy him who had the power of death, and so break open the prison doors, and deliver those who were captives under him, chap. 2:14-15.

Observation 4. Why he was tempted; and why in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren; which was, "that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." For his own suffering under temptations (even the sense thereof) renders him merciful, tender, faithful, and ready to help and succor his in all their temptations, chap. 2:17-18.

Mark: Christ was not only to die, and so offer up a sacrifice of atonement, but he was also to make reconciliation by it ever afterwards for his children (in case of transgression) whenever occasion should be. So says John, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father" (to plead for the forgiving and blotting out of the sin); and he is the propitiation (or reconciliation) for our sins; as the old translation renders it. 1 John 2:1-2.

Observation 5. Christ, our apostle and high priest, is as faithful over all his house as Moses was over his. There is not one of the children, not one of his family, but he will teach: not one soul belonging to him, but he will succor, being tempted; nor any one, but he will be an advocate and reconciliation for (in case of sin), in and according to the way that God has appointed. Heb. 3:2.

Observation 6. Who are Christ's house; over whom is he an apostle and high priest. It is over his own house; whose house are all such as are called by him, if they receive and hold fast that which gives a right to him, and interest in him. chap. 3:6. and ver. 14. For as under the law, the high priest was priest only over the outward Israel, the Jews natural; so under the gospel, Christ is appointed of God high priest over the inward Jews, the Jews spiritual.

Observation 7. How this apostle or high priest of our profession does work in the hearts of his family or household; which is by the Word of Life, by the Word of his own eternal power, which pierces deep, and divides between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, discerning and judging every thought and intent, and bringing every high reasoning and imagination into captivity, that the heart, soul, mind, and spirit, with all the thoughts and intents thereof, may become subject to his Spirit and power. chap. 4:12.

Observation 8. What an advantage we have, by having such a high priest (as was tempted like us, and touched with the sense of our infirmities), or coming boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need! For he who experimentally knew what the weakness of our flesh is, and what it was to be tempted therein, and how needful and seasonable help from his Father then was; surely he cannot but be ready to give out and multiply grace and mercy to his in the time of their need, chap. 4:15-16.

Observation 9. How Christ came to be a high priest; which was not by his own taking the honor to himself, but by God's glorifying him with the call thereto, chap. 5:4-5.

Observation 10. How God fitted Christ, and made him a perfect high priest; which was by preparing for him a body of flesh, and exercising him in the days of his flesh with many trials and temptations; and at last with a bitter baptism, and cup of death, in which he felt and bare the griefs and sorrows of his people, and cried mightily to his Father, and was heard in that he feared; and so, having himself perfectly learned obedience to the Father, he knows how to become the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him. For Christ, who was heard and saved from death in his obedience to his Father, is appointed to be the leader and Savior of his people, to save and redeem them in their obedience unto him, the leader into, and in the way and paths of, life, chap. 5:7-9.

Observation 11. Where Christ mediates for his people; which is within the veil, in the heavenly place, in the holiest of all, where the anchor of our hope reaches to him, and fastens upon him, and there remains sure and steadfast; so that we are staid upon him, the rock of life and power, against all the storms and tempests of the powers of darkness, both inward and outward, chap. 6:19-20.

Observation 12. After what order Christ was made a high priest; which was after the order of Melchizedeck, who was king of righteousness, and king of peace, even after a holy and heavenly order: not after the order of the earthly priesthood, the high priests whereof were taken from amongst men, but after his order who was made mention of; without father, without mother, without descent, (for who can declare his generation?) without beginning of days or end of life, chap. 7:1-3, and 15.

Observation 13. That this priest put an end to and changed the laws of the other earthly, shadowy priesthood of Levi, by which perfection was not, that he might bring in that priesthood of his own, by which perfection was to be, chap. 7:11. etc.

Observation 14. How Christ was made a priest after a different manner from the priests of the law; for they were made priests after the law of a carnal commandment; but Christ was not made priest so, but after the power of an endless life, chap. 7:16.

Observation 15. That the work of Christ's priesthood continues until it be finished; that is, till this high priest has saved all whom he is to save, which is thus: as in all ages the Father draws souls to him, so he is to save them; to destroy their enemies, to blot out their sins, to break down what stands between God and them, and so to bring them into the true oneness; for God will never be reconciled to his enemy, the devil, nor to man while in union with him, chap. 7:24-25.

Observation 16. That this high priest needs not to offer many sacrifices to atone by, as the priests under the law needed to do often: for he was a perfect priest, and offered up one perfect, spotless sacrifice; and is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, chap. 7:27-28.

Observation 17. What sanctuary is Christ the high priest and minister of; which is, of that sanctuary and true tabernacle which the Lord pitches, and not man, chap. 8:2.

Observation 18. What has he to offer; for every high priest was ordained to offer both gifts and sacrifices. He has the heavenly gifts and sacrifices to offer; even all the gifts and spiritual sacrifices that are revived and brought forth by him in the holy place, even in his temple or spiritual house within the veil; he is to offer them all up to his Father, ver. 3. etc.

Observation 19. What covenant he is the mediator of; even a better covenant than the priests under the law were mediators of, which is established upon better promises: a covenant, wherein there is no defectiveness or imperfection, wherein all shall certainly be redeemed and saved by him, who come to him in the drawing of his Father, and abide with him. For in such God will put his laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; and "will be their God, and they shall be his people;" and will so teach them, that they shall need no other teacher; but shall all know him, from the least to the greatest. For as men come into this covenant, God will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will he remember no more, ver. 6. to the end.

Observation 20. That Christ is not a high priest of the figures of things, but of the good things themselves (which came in the time of reformation), even of the perfect covenant, the perfect tabernacle, and of the worship and service in Spirit and in truth; where the perfect refiner (by his Spirit of judgment and burning) purifies the sons of Levi, that they may offer to God an offering in righteousness, chap. 9:9-11. and Mal. 3:3.

So that there is a different state witnessed by the people of God in this covenant, from what was witnessed by the Jews in the other covenant: for what was amiss there, is reformed here by the Spirit and power of our God, in all those that abide and walk in this covenant; who live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, and do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, which grieve and provoke God's Holy Spirit.

Observation 21. How Christ came to obtain eternal redemption for all his: which was by his blood. For as the high priest under the law entered into the holy place of that tabernacle made with hands, by the blood of goats and calves, and so obtained remission for the sins of that outward people, the Jews; so Christ entered into the truly holy place, into the greater and more perfect tabernacle, and there by his blood obtained remission for all that should receive repentance from him, and believe in him, ver. 11-12.

Observation 22. How Christ purifies, purges, and sanctifies the people with his blood? which is, by sprinkling it upon them. For under the law, in that outward covenant, the unclean were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice, that they might be sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; and under the gospel, in this inward covenant, believers are sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, that their consciences might be purged from dead works to serve the living God, as his cleansed, holy, renewed people, ver. 13-14.

Observation 23. For what cause Christ was mediator of the New Testament; which was, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressors under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance, ver. 15. For God has made Christ a propitiation for all men, both Jews and Gentiles, that through faith in his blood, his righteousness might be declared for remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, that he might be just, and a justifier of

him who is of the faith of Jesus. Rom. 3:25-26. So that they that were under the first covenant, hearkening unto him, and believing in him, were justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. Acts 13:39.

Observation 24. The necessity of Christ's death; which was, because he was to make way by his own blood into the holiest, to appear before God for us; and to sprinkle the heavenly things with the blood of a sacrifice, of a higher and better nature than the blood of bulls and goats was; for that was the blood of the covenant which was to pass away, but he was to sprinkle his with the blood of the everlasting covenant; and by this his death and blood (sprinkled upon the hearts of his) his covenant comes to be of force, ver. 16. to 25. and chap. 13:20-21.

Observation 25. That this high priest need not often offer sacrifices, to put away sin, as the priests of the law did; because this one offering is sufficient, and the blood thereof sprinkled upon the conscience, is able to purge away dead works, wherever it is sprinkled. There needs not any other offering, nor any other blood to do it: but all that is now further needed, or to be expected by his is, his appearing the second time, without sin, unto salvation, in the pure virtue, power, and life of his own Spirit, ver. 25. to the end.

Observation 26. What it was, that was the thing of great value with the Father, in Christ giving up himself to death. It was his obedience. He did obey his Father in all things, not doing his own will, but the will of him that sent him. "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross:" and so, as by one man's disobedience, death came upon all; so by the obedience of one, the free gift came upon all, which free gift is unto life; for life comes upon all that come to him, and believe in him, through the free gift, which is freely tendered to and come upon all, chap. 10:7. Rom. 5:18-19.

Observation 27. That God took away sacrifices and burnt-offerings, which were appointed by the old covenant, that he might establish this obedience among all his children. Christ led the way, and all are to follow him in the new obedience, and to walk in newness of spirit before the Lord, ver. 9.

Observation 28. That we are sanctified by the same will, by which Christ was sanctified, or sanctifies himself. In subjection to the same will, which the head obeyed (even in denying themselves, taking up the cross to their own wills, and submitting to God's) are the members sanctified. The Spirit of God works them into holiness by this will of God, and through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once, ver. 10. John 17:19.

So mark: there is the will of God, the offering up the body of Jesus, the pouring out the Spirit of grace, the new covenant, and faith in Christ, etc., — all these tend to work out one and the same thing, and they all concur thereto, in their several orders and places.

Observation 29. That as this high priest sanctifies men, so he perfects them; and when they are fully sanctified, then they are forever perfected; but till then, Christ, the high priest of our profession, has something to do upon them towards the perfecting of them, that he may present them spotless and blameless to his Father, ver. 14-15.

Observation 30. How the apostle proves, "That by this one offering, Christ has forever perfected them that are sanctified." He proves it thus: by this offering the covenant is established, wherein is the putting and writing God's law in the heart and mind, the remission of sins.

So, come into this covenant, come under this high priest; there is no more remembering of sin there, but perfect forgiveness through this one offering, and so no more need of any more sacrificing or offering for sins to such, ver. 15-19. For "he shall sprinkle many nations with the blood of this one offering" Isa. 52:15.

Observation 31. The great privilege of those who indeed believe in Christ, and are sprinkled with the blood; and how they are to improve and make use of that privilege.

First, They have liberty, confidence, or boldness, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, ver. 19. What is more holy than God's Spirit? Is not that the most holy place? Why, there they are to worship; for they that worship the Father in the new covenant, or according to the new covenant, must worship him in the Spirit, and in the truth; yes, and must also live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, which is the place of everlasting rest, and land of the living.

Secondly, Take notice how they come into the holiest, which is by the new and living way, which Christ has prepared, or consecrated through his flesh, ver. 20.

Thirdly, They have a high priest there over the house of God, who appears before God in the holiest, and stands ready there to perform all the offices of priesthood for his household, ver. 21.

Fourthly, There is an orderly way of drawing nigh to God, and worshipping him in the holiest. There is a certain manner, after which believers are to approach, and draw nigh to God; which is, 1. With a true heart. 2. In fulness of faith, or in full assurance of faith; not waveringly, but as those that are called of God, and shall be helped by him, and accepted of him through their high priest. 3. In purity of conscience and conduct, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water, ver. 22, 23. and Psal. 26:6. "Christ came by water and blood; so here is both the water and the blood, according to the figures thereof, under the law.

Observation 32. Where they came in the apostles' days, who knew Christ as their high priest and mediator, and who partook of the blood of sprinkling. They came to spiritual Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Heb.12:22.

Observe likewise where they walked, who felt the virtue of Christ's blood cleansing them; which was "in the light, as God is in the light." 1 John 1:7.

Now, what light is that which the redeemed are to walk in? Is it not the light of the Lamb's city, the New Jerusalem? Is it not the light thereof, that the nations of them that are saved must walk in? Rev. 21:24. Yes, this light, this city, and the holy waters of the sanctuary, which flow and stream from the river of life there, were in measure known and experienced in the days of old, which David prayed for, and experienced a sense of. Psal. 43:3. and 46:4. Yes, he knew also the blood of the everlasting covenant, praying and waiting to be sprinkled and cleansed therewith. Psal. 51:7. For he looked through the outward figure, to what his soul needed to purge and wash it inwardly; which outward hyssop, or outward water of purification, he knew would not do; for he that saw through the outward sacrifices, to the inward, could not choose but see through these also.

But that power, virtue, and life of God's Spirit, which could "create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit in him," and bring him into God's presence, where he might feel the uphodings of his free spirit, and partake of the joy of God's salvation and deliverance from that which had defiled him; this was it

he prayed for; knowing assuredly, he should here meet with the true hyssop, and water of life, and blood of the covenant, which purges the heart and conscience from dead works, and makes it whiter than the snow in God's sight, ver. 10-12. For he that delighted not in sacrifice, nor burnt-offerings, neither could he delight in hyssop, or water, or blood, outward or natural; but in that which melts the heart, and purifies the conscience, from that which is dead and unclean, in that is God's delight; and in that which is melted, broken, and purified by it, ver. 16-17.

Observation Lastly, That there is a sin unto death, a kind of sinning for which there is no sacrifice (but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, to destroy and devour the adversaries, ver. 26-27), which is a willful despising this covenant; which he that does, must die without mercy; as he that despised Moses' law did, ver. 28-29. For the Lord will revenge this sin, wheresoever he finds it; and such shall know, that it is a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," when he comes to judge them, ver. 30-31.

XVIII. A brief Relation of the Estate or Condition the Lord found many of us in, when he came to visit us, and make known to us the blessed Ministration of his Spirit and Power, and of some of his Dealings with us, in instructing and nurturing us up therein; with a few Words of Exhortation.

THERE are chambers of imagery in many people; and strong-holds, and reasonings, and imaginations, and high thoughts, exalted above the pure seed and measure of life in their hearts. For every true Christian, every true believer, has received something of Christ's Spirit, some proportion of grace and truth from the fulness of Christ, which is as leaven and salt, to leaven the heart, and season the mind and spirit with.

But all do not distinctly know this, nor are all that do know it subject to it; so that this does not lead, and command, and rule in all; but there is something which holds captive, and the enemy of the soul has the rule and dominion in many men's spirits, professing godliness; whereby the seed is kept under in them, and their souls kept back from that redemption and deliverance, which they should partake of, in and with the seed. So, many talk of the gospel (and speak great words of Christ, and redemption by him) who know not "immortality brought to light," nor the dead raised by it, to live to God, and praise his name.

Now, in these chambers of imagery, in these strong-holds, there are many pleasant pictures, many images of the heavenly things, which men form in their minds, from their own apprehendings and conceivings upon the Scriptures. For men reading the Scriptures, not in the life, Spirit, and power which gave them forth, but with that which is natural, they come not to the true, pure, heavenly, living knowledge; but only obtain a natural knowledge, according to which they believe and worship; and so fall down before, and according to, the apprehensions and imaginations of their own minds; and so one believes and worships one way, and another believes and worships another way. And truly, here men worship they know not what; but they that are the true Jews, know what they worship: for salvation is of the true Jews, who worship neither at this mountain, nor at the other mountain; but only in Spirit, and in truth, even in the life and power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus it is with all men in their several professions of religion in the darkness, in the apostasy from the true life and power, which all sorts have erred and wandered from, but few have returned to. Ah! few have found the pearl of price, which has been long lost; but have contented themselves with a literal relation and knowledge concerning the pearl, without knowing and possessing the pearl itself. Yes, indeed, this was the state of darkness the Lord found us all in, when he came to visit us; for the strong man armed had his strong-holds in us, whereby he held us in the bands of death, and kept us captive, and free from that righteous life and power which we thirsted after. But when the stronger than he came, he battered his strength, he assaulted and took his strong-holds: he break all his reasonings, knowledge, wisdom, and subtlety, wherein he trusted, and made spoil of his goods, and delivered the captive from under his hand.

For, indeed, when the mighty day of the Lord came upon us, and his pure, heavenly light shone in our hearts, God searched Jerusalem as with candles, discovering the most hidden things of Esau's nature inwardly; and then all the knowledge and wisdom, all the understanding and experiences, which were treasured up in us out of the pure life, out of the truth, which lives and abides, they were found dead, and condemned as dead in us, and so cast forth, as the treasures of Egypt and Babylon, and thrown to the bats and moles; who either creep up and down in the earthly nature, or soar aloft in the dark dreams and imaginations of the night of darkness and apostasy.

For when the true light shines, it discovers what the day is, and what the night is; and the things which are of the day, and the things also which are of the night.

Now, when the Lord thus appeared unto us, and caused the light of his Son to shine in us, many of us quickly came out of Egypt, turning our backs upon the darkness; and went willingly into the wilderness, to travel along with the Lord, and to be exercised and fitted there for the good land, the land of the redeemed, the land of the living, the land which flows with milk and honey (which is pure, heavenly food), where they that come, find the excellent vine, which bears the heavenly grapes, of which is the wine of the kingdom; and the true olive, which yields sweet oil; and houses which they built not, wherein are many mansions of rest and pure glory; and vineyards which they planted not, wherein the living plants grow, and spring up in the presence of the Lord, who dwells among his, and walks in the gardens and holy plantations.

But there were others, who were unwilling to come out of Egypt, or to forsake the idols and way of worship in Egypt and Babylon, whom the enemy long held captive in their thoughts and reasonings, and in the disputings of their minds.

Now, these suffered much, and felt many of the strokes and dreadful judgments of the Lord, poured out upon that spirit in them, which held them captive, and upon them for their hearkenings and joinings to the subtle twinings, and entangling reasonings and suggestions of that spirit. For the enemy uses all his strength and subtlety to the utmost, to hold his captives in subjection to him, and under his power, as long as ever he can. He keeps every hold, he strengthens every reasoning, and every thought and imagination of the mind against God's call, against the appearances of his Spirit in the heart. Do not go yet (says the enemy), your way is not yet plain before you, your light is not yet clear enough; the reason or consideration which is objected, is not yet fully answered. You are to try all things; but there is this, or that, or the other consideration, which you have not yet tried, or considered of fully, and satisfactorily to your own heart. Thus many pure drawings of the Father (in which there was light sufficient for the soul to follow) have been lost, and the soul thereby has missed of the hand which was

put forth (in the tender love of the Lord) to help and save it.

Question. But some may say, What have you learned of the Lord more than we, or more than you knew before, when you walked among us, and practiced the ordinances which we practice? Have not we good directions from the Scriptures? Do not we practice them? and is not the Spirit of God in the Scriptures? Are they not joined together? and so, having the Scriptures, we have the Spirit of God too.

Answer. It is not in my heart to enter into dispute now, though I am sensible of the darkness from which this objection arises: and oh that it were removed from their hearts in whom it is! for truly, we ourselves were once there; and when we were there, we knew not the Scriptures aright, as we ought to know, nor the power of God. But to answer plainly and directly to the thing itself:

There are three things I shall mention (besides many others, which might be mentioned) which the Lord has taught us, since his Spirit and power has appeared to us, and led us out of the darkness, towards, and into, the land of light; which are these. He has taught us to believe, he has taught us to obey, and he has taught us to pray to him in the name of his Son.

Objection. Why, did you never learn these before?

Answer. No, not so far as the Lord has now taught us. There was indeed some true faith from the true seed in us, and some true obedience, and some pure breathings to the Father, in the days of our former profession; but we knew not the root from which they came, so as to turn to it, and abide in it; and so the holy desires, and true sense in us, were often made a prey of, and we still in lack and penury in a strange land, and could not enjoy (possess or retain) what was freely given us of our God and Father in Christ; but still a fleshly wisdom, a fleshly comprehension, a fleshly nature, mind, and knowledge (which in that day went with us for spiritual, as well as it does so with others now), pecked up over it; and so Hagar was in the house, and would be mistress there, but was not cast out with her seed. Oh, who can read, and truly understand this! But when the Lord turned us to the light of his Spirit, and by the light and power of his Spirit brake the bonds and chains of darkness in us; then we could believe in him who appeared, and (in the strength and virtue received from him) we could obey him, yielding our members instruments of righteousness to do his will; and in the Spirit of the Son (which we then received in the faith, even the heavenly Spirit, the most excellent Spirit) we could pray to the Father; first, sighing and groaning before him, afterwards pouring out our requests and supplications to him, with giving of thanks.

Question. How did the Lord teach you to believe? Or what did he teach you to believe now, more than before?

Answer. It is written in the prophets, "all your children shall be taught of the Lord;" and in the new covenant it is promised, "they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest."

Now, as we were brought by the Lord into the light of this covenant, we were taught thus to know him, and to believe in him, and his Son, as thus made known. So that we knew the Father revealing the Son, and the Son revealing the Father; and our hearts were drawn to believe in both, as they were both revealed in us, and to us, and the revealing was in the Spirit of both, in the light of both, in the life of both, in the power of both; which Spirit, which light, which life, which power, are one; and he that indeed knows the Son, knows the Father also; and he that indeed knows the Father, knows the Son also.

Very deep and weighty was that answer of Christ to Philip, when Philip said, "show us the Father, and it suffices. Have you not seen me, Philip?" said Christ. How is it that you sayest, show us the Father? He that has seen me, has seen the Father also." Are they not one nature, one wisdom, one power, one pure, eternal being? Can the one possibly be seen, and not the other? Though they may be distinguished in manifestation, in the hearts where they are received; is it possible they should be divided and separated the one from the other?

Those that thus apprehend, plainly manifest, that they never received the true knowledge of the Father and Son; but have only notions and apprehensions of man's wisdom concerning them.

So now to us there is but one God and Father, "Of whom are all things, and we in him;" and "one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him;" and but one Spirit and one power of life, which we have received of the Son and Father, through which we believe, and lay hold on the pure eternal power and strength of the Almighty, which redeems and saves the soul; and so believing on him, who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, here we meet with justification, and are at peace with our God, laying hold on his strength, and being held by it.

And so here, in the new covenant, under the teachings of God's Spirit, we witness that scripture fulfilled in our hearts. Isa. 27:4-5.

Question. How did the Lord teach you to obey? You do not obey the ten commandments; you neither learned nor teach them: but all that you obey is all light and spirit within; which may be a spirit of delusion, for aught we know; and we believe it is so, because we do not find it agreeing with the Scriptures, nor you in the practice of the ordinances of Christ, according to the Scriptures.

Answer. That harsh spirit, which in this manner objects, is not very fit nor likely to receive or embrace information, from the meek and tender Spirit of the Lamb; but there are some, who are broken and tendered, and fit to receive impression and information from the Holy Spirit and power of our God; and to them, and for their sakes, are my answers given forth and directed. So, for their sakes, I shall proceed in plainness and evidence of truth, answering, as the Lord shall open my heart.

Truly, the Lord has taught us obedience, so as we never learned before; putting his laws into our minds, and writing them in our hearts, and giving us his good Spirit to dwell in us, to quicken and help us to obey and perform his holy laws. And those two commandments (on which the whole law and prophets hang); namely, "To love God with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves," as taught by Moses and Christ: yes, the very substance of the law written in tables of stone, he has inwardly written in our hearts, and taught us to observe and obey; so that we have no other God but him, who brought us out of spiritual Egypt, by his out-stretched arm and holy power, revealed inwardly for us, as it was outwardly for that people of the Jews, whom God redeemed out of outward Egypt.

Indeed, before, other lords had rule over us, and something still got between us and our God; so that, when we were without the limits of the pure power, we were idolaters in God's sight, though we then knew it not; but now we make mention of the Lord's name only.

So the Lord has taught us not to make any image, or likeness of his appearance, or of the heavenly things; not to form any thing in our minds from the Scriptures; but to wait on God, to know his truths revealed in their own pure nature.

The Lord has likewise taught us to sanctify his name, which he has made known to us, and not to take it in vain; but to reverence his holy power and Spirit, in every degree of his appearance; for the name of our God is living, and is only sanctified, and not taken in vain, by those that are living.

Also the Lord has taught us to observe and keep his holy sabbath, and day of rest (even the day of the gospel rest, for that is the sabbath now), not doing our own works, or thinking our own thoughts, or kindling a fire of ourselves, on his holy day; but ceasing from our own willing and running, and from all the works of the flesh; and waiting to feel him work in us, both "to will and to do of his good pleasure;" which works in the Spirit (works of faith, of love, of mercy, etc.) break not the gospel rest or sabbath.

And having thus learned the duties of the first table (the Lord having circumcised our hearts to "love the Lord our God with all our hearts," and to exalt him, his Spirit, his nature, his will, his name, his day, in us), the duties of the second table are easy and natural to us, and we cannot but "do to others as we would be done unto;" and so love and honor all men in the Lord, as the Lord teaches us from the true and holy balance. Therefore, we cannot kill, or commit adultery, or steal, or bear false witness, or covet any thing that is our neighbor's.

Then, for the laws and ordinances of the new testament; the ministration of the gospel is a ministration of the Spirit and power; even of the light of the everlasting day, which the true ministry was sent to turn men's minds from the darkness to.

And here we see what was taught and required before the apostasy, while the church was in its first glory; and what was permitted and practiced by permission; which were such kind of things as were not of the nature of the kingdom, not of the nature of the light of the gospel day; but of a lower nature, of an outward nature, of an earthly (elementary) nature, which were to be shaken in due time, that that which could not be shaken (which they signified of and represented) might remain, and be established in the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem (which is the Jerusalem of the gospel) without any such thing as could be shaken; as is testified, Heb. 12:22, to the end. And we understand also from God's Spirit, and from the Scriptures of truth, that all such kind of things were part of, or belonging to, the outward court; which was shaken, and given to the Gentiles, when God's Spirit measured what he would have abide with his true, inward, spiritual Jews; and what he would leave to the professing world, who, in mind, nature, and spirit, and in God's account also, are but Gentiles.

Question. How did God teach you to pray? Surely you never learned the Lord's prayer; for you do not practice that among you.

Answer. As God brought us into a sensible condition, so we came to feel our lack, and the needs of our souls, inwardly and spiritually.

Now, waiting on the Lord in this sense, when we meet together, and when we are alone also, the Lord breathes upon us, and kindles in us fervent desires and longings of soul after that which is pure, and to be delivered from that which is impure; and that we might be ingrafted more and more into Christ; and that judgment and condemnation might pass upon all that is not of God in us; and that our hearts might be so united to the Lord, as that we might fear his name fully. For we feel and observe, that all our life and strength flow from the union of our souls with the Lord; and therefore, above all things, we cry for that, and for separation from that spirit which captivates into the things of the earth, and in the

earthly mind and nature.

So, we watch unto prayer, and watch for help from God in our calling upon him; and are deeply sensible that we have need both of watching and praying continually, the enemy is so near, and the soul's snares and dangers so many.

And truly, Christ, our Lord and Master, who taught his disciples to pray formerly, has taught us also to pray that very prayer; though not to say the words outwardly in the will of men, or in our own will; he has taught our hearts to breathe after the same things, even that the name of our heavenly Father might be hallowed or sanctified more and more, among all that call upon his name in truth, and especially in our own hearts; and that his kingdom might come more and more, that he might reign more in men's spirits, and the kingdom of sin and Satan be thrown down; and that his will might be done, even in our earth, as it is done in the heavenly places, where all the hosts of God obey him; and that we might have every day a proportion of the heavenly bread, whereby our souls may live to him; and convenient food and provision outward also, according as he sees good, who cares for us.

Now, as we are kept in the light, and watch to the light which discovers things, we see what we are kept out of, and what we at any time are entangled in and so trespass against the Lord; and then we are taught to beg pardon, and to wait where pardon is to be received, through our advocate, even as God has taught us to forgive.

Yet this does not embolden any of the little ones to sin; but they pray that they may not be led (or fall) into temptation; but may witness deliverance from the evil, which the enemy watches to betray and ensnare them with. And these cries are put up to him, who is ready to hear, and who can answer and fulfill the desires of them that love and fear him; and indeed not only so, but they are also put up in faith, that in the way of God the soul shall obtain and receive what it prays and waits for.

Now we witness this to be true religion, and undefiled before God; and we are sensible that the Lord has taught us this, and is with us in our faith, which he has given us; in our obedience, in our praying to him in the name of his Son, in our watching, in our waiting, in the silence of our spirits, before his mighty and glorious majesty.

Oh that you all knew our God, and his Christ, in the same covenant and power of life, wherein it has pleased him to make himself manifest to us! Oh, awake, awake out of your dreams, come out of the night of sin and darkness, into the light of the day!

Be not offended that I call them dreams of the night, for they are no better before the light of the day. Oh! be not contented with dreams concerning God; with dreams concerning fellowship with him and the saints in light; with dreams concerning remission, concerning justification, concerning peace, concerning sanctification, concerning the help of God's Spirit in prayer, etc.

Ah! friends, dear friends (for you, in whom there are any true breathings after the Lord, are so to me); oh, let go the dead for the living; away with dead knowledge, dead faith, dead hope, dead prayers, dead understanding of the scriptures, dead strivings after holiness, which shall never obtain, but you be still bowed down under corruption, when at any time truly sensible, notwithstanding all these (truly, groaning and complaining is your best state here, for your peace here is wrong); and come to feel that raised in you, in the true retired waiting upon the Lord, which shall certainly obtain in you, as your minds are united to it, and come into the true sense and subjection under it; and then you shall obtain

in it, and with it, what the hearts of all the upright (whether in captivity, or out of captivity) breathe after!

Oh! therefore, be not any longer prejudiced, by the subtle devices and deceits of the enemy, against that in your hearts which reproves because of sin; and likewise draws and leads into that which is holy; for it is no less than the pure, heavenly light of God's own Spirit, whatever you, through mistake, misunderstanding, or lack of true experience, may judge of it.

XIX. Concerning the Gospel State

THE Gospel is a ministration of the new covenant, or a spiritual ministration of the substance of all that was shadowed out under the law. There were many things under the law; but in the gospel, God has gathered all into one; in Christ there is but one seed, one Spirit, one life, one power, which redeems, one circumcision, one baptism, one faith, etc.

The law was given by Moses, and the ministration thereof continued through the prophets, until the seed should come, which was to put an end to the law, and the righteousness thereof (as in the letter), and bring in the righteousness in the spirit, which should last forever.

The gospel is by Christ, by whom God spake in the last days, who is the beloved Son, the prophet and high priest of God, who is to be heard forever; who taught his disciples, while he was with them on earth, in that body of flesh which his Father prepared for him; and afterwards by his spirit (or holy anointing), whereby he continues teaching his children, and bringing them up in the virtue, life, and power of the new covenant; giving them a new heart and spirit and causing the old nature of the earthly Adam to die in them, and pass away from them.

The law was given to the Jew outward, and is against nature in man, which seems forward to obey, but will not.

The law also is given to check that part (or nature in man) which is above the seed, to which were all the shadows and types outward.

But in the gospel, which is the power of God to the redemption of the soul, that part is done away, and the seed raised, and comes to live in the soul, and the soul in the power which quickens it, in and through the seed.

And so, here the life and virtue and nature of the seed overshadows all, and changes all in the gospel ministration; so that here is a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein God reigns, and where righteousness dwells; and the old things, wherein unrighteousness dwelt, and wherein the devil reigned, are done away, and so his kingdom is destroyed, and laid waste in man, and the kingdom of Christ set up, exalted, and established.

Then comes the mountain of the Lord's house to be known on the top and above all the mountains and hills; and then is the flowing of the enlightened soul there, to learn of the Lord in his holy sanctuary, that it may know his ways, and walk in his paths. Then is the voice of the true Shepherd heard, and the law known (the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus) which comes out of Zion, "and the word of the

Lord (even the holy one of Israel) which comes from Jerusalem." Then is the day of the Lord known; the mighty, terrible, shaking day of the Lord, which is then upon all flesh, silencing it in the dread and awe of him, who is holy and pure; and the seed is then raised to life, and in life and power, and the Lord alone exalted in that soul. "For the Son exalted the Father only, in the days of his flesh;" and it is so now, wherever the same seed and power of life is made manifest, and rules.

Then, after this shaking, after the work of this terrible day of the Lord in the heart, when God has purged away the filth and blood of the defiled soul and spirit, by his Spirit of judgment and burning, then that which is left shall be called holy, and dedicated to the Lord, even in every one that is written and reckoned by God among the living in his Jerusalem. And all God's tabernacles and dwelling-places on his holy mountain, and in his holy city, will he cover with the glory of his presence; and all their assemblies (by his cloudy pillar, and by his shining flame) will God be a defense about; before which brightness (and the arising of his life and power in the midst of his people) Satan with his devices and fiery darts shall fall like flashes of lightning, and his storms and winds shall not be able to prevail against the houses or dwelling-places which God builds on this his holy mountain of peace and salvation.

Then the rod of the stem of Jesse is known, and the branch which grows out of his root, and the Spirit of the Lord resting upon him. "For grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;" and where the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ is received, and his everlasting covenant entered into, there the same Spirit is poured forth, and rests (even upon all the sons), and true judgment is set up in the heart, and the soul established in the righteousness and peace of his kingdom.

So if any lack wisdom, let him ask in faith: it is presently given from the Spirit of wisdom, which is poured out upon the seed; which is a Spirit of understanding and knowledge, and of pure, heavenly fear, etc., which makes quick in understanding the fear of the Lord; which fear (being understood and observed) keeps the heart clean, teaching it to avoid and keep out of all that defiles; so that here is not so much as a touching the unclean thing by any of the sons and daughters, who are led by God's Spirit, and live and walk in the Spirit; but a following of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus fully and perfectly.

Let sin and imperfection be received back to Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon, from which they came; but let holiness and unstained beauty dwell in Zion; yes, let Urim and Thummim, even God's light and perfection, be with his redeemed people forever and ever.

Here the wolf dwells with the lamb, and the leopard lies down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and the little child leads them. Here the lion devours not, but eats straw like the ox; and the sucking child and the weaned child can play in the hole of the asp, and put his hand on the cockatrice's den; and they that are in the power can tread upon serpents, and they cannot hurt, wound, poison, or destroy; for there is safety all over God's holy mountain, and the venom or poison of the wicked spirit cannot reach there, to hurt or poison any there: for God's earth is filled with knowledge, with life, with pure, living knowledge, which preserves out of the reach of darkness and death.

No, here Ephraim does not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim; for the envying, vexing nature and spirit is taken out of them both. And here is turned to the Lord a people of a pure language, who speak the truth as they feel it, as they receive it from the Lord, in the life of it, in the true sense and

understanding of it, and not according to their own apprehendings or imaginations concerning it, which are the various and many languages of Babel. For in the seed, and of the seed, is the pure language; but out from the seed are the many voices and languages (even the confusion of Babel); one speaking as he apprehends, thus; another speaking as he conceives, thus; so plainly manifesting that they are out from the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, whose voice is one, and language one, in all, in the day of the gospel. And he that speaks otherwise than the law and testimony of life speaks in the heart, it is either because he knows not, or is not yet gathered into, the morning light of the everlasting day of the gospel; for there all are to speak, as the oracles of God, the truth as it is in Jesus.

In this day the anger of God is turned away, and condemnation come to an end (for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"); and the Comforter is come, by whom God comforts the soul; and the soul with joy draws water out of the wells or springs of the Comforter. Yes, the soul is gathered into the love (or into God, who is love), where the Savior and salvation is felt, and God found such a present help and strength in time of trouble, that fear is done away, and the Lord trusted and hoped in; yes, and boasted of in every condition. So that his name is made mention of, and sung of, and exalted over all that can come to oppose or break down the work of his power in the heart; insomuch that the inhabitant of Zion cries out and shouts against the enemy when he appears, because the Holy One of Israel is so great in the midst of her, who breaks the spear and the bow, the shield and the battle, Selah. See Isa. 12.

Yes, in this day the feast of fat things is made on God's holy mountain, of fat things full of marrow, and of wines on the lees well refined. And in this mountain the veil of the covering (spread over the heart) is done away: for in the seed there is no feigned covering; but an opening of the unveiled eye, to see the unveiled life and power, even the revealed arm of the Redeemer.

"Who has believed our report; and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" It was said so in the old covenant, in the law dispensation; but it is not said so in the new covenant, in the gospel dispensation; for the veil is done away in Christ, and the children there with open face behold (as in a mirror) the glory of the Lord.

And here, where the seed is revealed, and the soul come into the seed, and become one with the seed, that is felt which breaks the serpent's head; and when his head is broken, death is soon swallowed up in victory, and the tears of sorrow wiped away (so that there is no room for any tears now, but tears of joy, tears of melting love and sweetness, before the Lord), and the rebuke because of uncircumcision taken away. For when God circumcises the heart, "to love the Lord with all the heart," then it receives life from him, and then the shame and rebuke of the uncircumcised and dead state passes away.

And then says the soul, "Lo! this is my God I so much lacked, and so long waited for. Oh! he is come, he is come to judge my heart in righteousness, and to bring under all that has kept the seed under in me; and I feel him, my soul's salvation, and my heart is glad in him. And now I know the land of Judah" (for that land outwardly was but a figure of the inward), "and the strong city that is therein" (which the righteous nation that keeps the truth enters in at the gates of) "where God appoints salvation for walls and bulwarks." See Isa. 25 and 26.

And in this day, when the seed is raised, when the gospel power reaches to the seed, and raises up the soul with the seed, and punishes Leviathan, that crooked serpent, and destroys the place where the dragons lay, so that as such a place it can be found no more, because the Lord has made all things new,

and laid waste the old, then shall be sung, to her that was afflicted, a vineyard of red wine, which the Lord will keep and water every moment, lest any hurt it; yes, the Lord (who is the keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps) will keep it night and day; and though fury be not in the Lord, yet he will go through the briars and thorns which set themselves in battle against him, to hinder the current of his love and blessings upon his heritage.

But as for his people, God will be very gracious to them, answering them in all that they call upon him for, and being with them in the fire, and in the water; so that the waters shall not be able to overwhelm them, nor the flame of the fiercest fire kindle upon them. For the enemies' fire shall not be able to burn up God's heritage, nor their waters to overflow them; but God's fire and waters shall overflow and consume the adversaries, as he pleases to let forth his overflowing scourge and fiery indignation upon them.

The gospel is a state of pouring out the Spirit of God upon his seed, and his blessing upon his offspring; wherein he strengthens that which is weak, and confirms that which is feeble; wherein he comforts worm Jacob, and recompenses vengeance to that which oppressed him, that which wounded him, that which bowed him down, that which closed his eye, stopped his ear, made him dumb and lame, hardened his heart from God's fear, etc., that nature, that wisdom, that spirit, that power, is visited with vengeance. That which emptied him of the good, and made him desolate and solitary, is now smitten, distressed, and made solitary; and the prisoner of hope loosed, and brought out of the pit; and the blind eye opened, and the deaf ear unstopped, and the lame made to leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing, and the parched ground become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; and that nature wherein dragons dwelt is now changed; and life dwells there; and the holy new earth brings forth her increase of life to the Lord, and the way of holiness is made plain; which rough Esau, or conceited Ishmael, or sacrificing Cain (who has not the true brotherly love in him), cannot come into; but holy Abel, blessed Isaac, plain Jacob, walked therein, and inherited the blessing; and the ransomed of the Lord return from all their desolations, captivities, and scatterings in the apostasy, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, where they obtain joy and gladness, and where sorrow and sighing flee away. For when the Comforter is come to the soul, when the Spirit from on high is poured out upon it, then the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted for a forest; then judgment dwells in the wilderness, and righteousness remains in the fruitful field; then righteousness is known, and the work thereof; and the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness, and assurance forever. And the people of God then dwell (even his holy Israel, his spiritual Israel, the redeemed ones by his spirit and power) in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places, where their God is to them as a munition of rocks, and as broad rivers of love, righteousness, peace, joy, and blessedness forever.

In the gospel state, the Lord, the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, who is the teacher of his people in the new covenant, who teaches them to profit therein, and leads them in the way that they should go, — I say, in the gospel state he is known, and his voice hearkened to. "My sheep" (those whom I gather and redeem) "hear my voice, and follow me," says Christ; who feed my flock like a shepherd, guiding them by my Spirit into fresh and green pastures, gathering my lambs with my arm, carrying them in my bosom, and gently leading those that are with young. Yes, I bring the blind by a way that they knew not, and lead them in paths they have not known. I make dark things light before them, and crooked things straight. These things do I unto them, and will not forsake them. Yes, worm Jacob, which was

trampled upon by all, is now made a sharp threshing instrument having teeth, which threshes the mountains (beating them small) and makes the hills as chaff, which fans them, and the wind carries them away, and the whirlwind scatters them; but Jacob rejoices in his God, and glories in the Holy One of Israel; who opens rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of valleys; and makes the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. For the Lord has comforted Zion, and had compassion on her waste places, and on her oppressed seed in Babylon; and has said to the prisoners, "Go forth; and to them that sat in darkness, show yourselves abroad in the light;" and he has made her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; so that joy and gladness is found in her (even the joy of God's Spirit, which is unspeakable and full of glory), with thanksgiving, and the voice of melody: for the destroyer, and those that made her waste, are gone forth of her, and great is the Holy One in the midst of her. So that the barren that did not bear, sings; and she cries aloud, and breaks forth into singing, that did not travail with child; for she travails not now in vain, but also brings forth abundantly: so that more are the children of the desolate than of the formerly married wife. And how can it be otherwise? For the Maker is the husband, who has made an everlasting covenant of peace with the soul in the Son of his love, and keeps and preserves in that covenant, where the Lord can never be wroth with the soul, nor rebuke it: for here all the children of the Lord are taught of the Lord, and kept in his holy fear, and in subjection to his Spirit; and great is their peace, and in righteousness are they established, and are far from oppression, the terror whereof cannot come near them.

There are three or four things yet more on my heart to mention concerning the gospel state.

First, In it the gospel fast is known; which is not to afflict the soul, or to hang down the head like a bulrush for a day; but to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke, to deal one's bread to the hungry ("to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," and to keep one's self unspotted from the worldly spirit and nature, which defiles, and so not to touch the unclean thing.)

Then the light of the soul breaks forth as the morning, and its health springs forth speedily, and its righteousness goes before it (for that which judges unrighteousness, that is its righteousness; which instead of coming after, to reprove and condemn, now goes before), and the glory of the Lord is the rearward, coming after to preserve and defend all that springs up in the power. Oh, blessed is he that witnesses this state!

Secondly, In the gospel state the gospel sabbath is kept, and known to be God's holy day, and called a delight (the holy of the Lord, honorable), and the Lord is honored in it by the soul while it walks not in its own ways, nor finds its own pleasures, nor speaks its own words: and then the soul delights itself in the Lord, who then (in this state) causes it to ride on the high places of the earth, and feeds it with the heritage of Jacob its father. What is that? What is Jacob's heritage? What is it Jacob is to be fed with, and inherit? Is it any less than the life and blessedness of the promised land? Is it any less than the hidden manna? Is it any less than the fruit of the living vine? Is it any other than the sweetness and fatness of the true olive-tree?

Thirdly, In it the garment of salvation is put on, even the Lord Jesus Christ; for here the filthy garments are put off, and the pure garments put on. For here the Lord has appointed to them that "have mourned in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the

Lord, that he might be glorified. So that here the soul can truly say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness." For as the earth brings forth her bud, and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord has caused righteousness and praise to spring forth before the eyes of all that are truly opened by him; and he will not draw back his arm, or put up the sword which he has drawn, till he has destroyed his adversaries, and laid waste the mount of Esau, and made his Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth. Amen, hallelujah!

And here is the love which casts out fear, and removes care; so that they that dwell here are careful in nothing, but in every thing make their requests known to God by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving; "and the peace of God, which passes all understanding," guards the heart and mind, through Christ Jesus. So that here God glorifies the soul, changing it from glory to glory, in and by his Spirit; and God is praised and glorified in and by the soul, and the heart kept pure and chaste in the eye of the Lord; and the outward life ordered aright by his Spirit and power, in which the soul lives and walks, and his salvation seen and enjoyed daily more and more. So that here is a possession or inheritance of life in the kingdom (in the holy land of the living), of which there is no end. Everlasting, endless prayers to the Holy One of Israel (whose tabernacle is with men, and who dwells in the midst of his people) forever and ever.

Now, if any one doubt concerning the truth of these things, this word is in my heart to such, Come and see. Oh! come and see the glory of the Lord, and the power of his life, and righteousness of his kingdom, which is now revealed, after the long night of darkness! Oh, blessed, blessed be his name, who has caused his light to shine, and opened the eye, which was once blind, to see it!

Question. But how may I come to see the glory of the gospel state?

Answer. Come to the seed, and wait to feel and receive the power which raises the seed in the heart, and brings the heart, soul, mind, and spirit into union with the seed.

Question. But how may I come to the seed; and how may I wait aright to feel and receive the power which raises it?

Answer. Mind that in you which searches the heart, and what it reaches to, and quickens in you; what it draws you from, what it draws you to; how it shows you your own inability to follow, and how it gives ability when you are weary of toiling and laboring of yourself. Oh, this is he whom we have waited for! Thus he appeared to us; thus he taught us to turn in, and to turn from the kingdom of darkness within, towards the kingdom of light, which the good seedsman had sown in us as a grain of mustard seed; which when we found, we knew it to be the pearl of price, and were made willing to sell all for it; and now it is purchased, and also possessed in a good measure; blessed be the name of our merciful God, and tender Father, forever and ever.

O hungering and thirsting soul after life, after truth, after the Lamb's righteousness, do you also wait to be taught of the Lord, who thus taught us, and then do you go and do so likewise, and you will never repent of this purchase, or of what you parted with for it, when once you come to enjoy and possess any proportion of it.

The Lord make you sensible of the visits, drawings, and leadings of his Holy Spirit, and guide your feet thereby into the way of truth and peace. Amen.

XX. Concerning Baptism

"He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believes not, shall be damned."

Mark 16:16.

THIS is a very weighty scripture, and necessary for every Christian rightly to understand, that he may so believe, and be so baptized, as to witness salvation by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, what believing is this which is here required as necessary to salvation, and which the promise of salvation is to? Is it any thing less than a believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, from a sense of the power which the Father has given him to save with? Is it not an inward believing, a believing with the heart? And what baptism or washing is it which saves? Is it not an inward washing, a washing of the soul, a washing of the heart, a washing of the conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Does outward washing save the soul? Inward washing does; baptizing into the name does. Bodily exercise profits little; but godliness (the inward renewing and washing of the mind) profits greatly.

There is one faith, one baptism. Is not the one faith inward and spiritual? Is not the one baptism so also? Sure I am, that he that thus believes, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believes not, remains in the filthy, unwashed state, in which there neither is, nor can be, salvation; but judgment and condemnation, death and destruction, forever.

The apostle Peter shows, I Pet. 3. what the baptism is which saves, even that which is the antitype, or which inwardly or spiritually answers to Noah's ark. The Greek word is ἀντίτυπον which signifies the antitype, or that which answers to the type; the substance, which comes instead of the figure or shadow; and so it is more properly and naturally rendered in the old translation thus; The baptism that now is, answering that figure, saves. For as Noah's ark saved the bodies of those that were in it when God came to judge and destroy the old world; so the inward washing saves those that are washed thereby from the wrath and destruction which will come upon all that are unwashed.

Now, lest any should misunderstand and misapply his words, as if he spake concerning outward baptism, or washing, he explains himself in the following words: "Not," says he, "the putting away of the filth of the flesh," not the outward washing of the body, that is not it that saves; but that baptism which causes the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For this is the effect of the inward baptism; sin being washed away by the water of life, by the blood of the Lamb, that which is new, that which is renewed, rises up out of the water which washes away sin; and then the pure and good conscience answers to God, and the soul knows and partakes of both the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; and so being baptized by the one baptism, even the baptism of Christ, into the one body, comes into the state and fellowship of the living. Another apostle also speaks of the inward washing, even the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; by which, says he, "God according to his mercy saved us." Tit. 3:5.

The apostle Paul speaks of a "circumcision made without hands," and tells wherein it consists; namely, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh: and shows how this is effected; namely, not by Moses' circumcision, but by the circumcision of Christ. Col. 2:11. And truly, they who are thus circumcised are the true circumcision, the spiritual circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and have no

confidence in the flesh, but rejoice in Christ Jesus, who thus circumcises them. Now, in the next verse he speaks of baptism, "of being buried with Christ in baptism, and of rising with him in the same, through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead." What is this baptism? Is it inferior to the circumcision before spoken of? Is it not without hands also? What is it that buries into the death of Christ; that raises into the life of Christ through the faith of the operation of God? Is not this the one spiritual and heavenly baptism, wherewith the one body is baptized by the one Spirit? What does outward circumcision avail? Does it avail any thing? What does outward washing avail? Does it avail any more than outward circumcision? But the inward circumcision of the Jew inward, and the inward washing of the soul from sin, does avail very much.

Now, for that place Mat. 28:19. where Christ expressly commands baptizing, it is a question very weighty, and worthy duly to be considered, what baptism he there commands. For if it be outward baptism, they greatly err who apprehend it to be the inward and spiritual baptism; but if it be the inward and spiritual baptism which Christ intended in those words, then they greatly err who apprehend it to be the outward. Now consider the words in the fear and weight of God's Spirit.

It is said, "Go teach, baptizing;" but it is not said, baptizing with water, but "in the name," or rather (as the Greek is) "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Now, to baptize with water is one thing, and to baptize into the name is another; as they who experience the spiritual baptism know it to be. For the word of faith turns men from Satan to the power of life; and then as they receive the power, and are made partakers of the power, they are baptized into the power and virtue of life; and so they are buried (so far as they come into Christ) by the power of his Spirit, with this heavenly baptism, into death unto sin, and by the same power are made alive unto righteousness; and so the name of the Lord, the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, comes over them, and they rise up in it unto life and righteousness, and so are dead unto sin, and alive unto God. Now, any outward circumcising or washing can be but a figure of this; but the inward circumcising and washing is the thing itself. For Christ sent not his able ministers of the New Testament to minister the letter, or to minister the figures of things; but to minister the Spirit, (else how were they able ministers of the Spirit?) to minister the substance; not to minister a circumcision or baptism which might be shaken and pass away, as outward and elementary, but to minister the circumcision and baptism which cannot be shaken; which is the circumcision and baptism of the gospel, the circumcision and baptism of the Spirit, the circumcision and baptism of the kingdom, which is never to be shaken and pass away as elementary, but to stand and abide forever. Read Heb. 12:26-28, and consider how all elementary and outward things which could be shaken were to be shaken and pass away; that those things which were of a higher nature (even of the nature of the kingdom) might remain and be established in their stead.

And, indeed, as the inward circumcision could not be thoroughly and alone established while the figure thereof remained, the same may be truly said concerning the inward baptism; so that by this it may appear, that the baptism of water cannot be the baptism which Christ intended in this place, because the baptism here spoken of was to continue to the end of the world; but the baptism of water is plainly of such an outward, elementary nature as might be shaken as well as circumcision, and so was to be shaken in due time, that that which could not be shaken might remain. Read also Rev. 11:2. where it is plainly signified, under that phrase of the outward court being left out of God's measure, and given to the Gentiles, that things of such a nature were shaken; and so were those that were not

the true and spiritual worshippers in God's sight. For they are Jews under the gospel who are Jews inwardly; and they who are not Jews inwardly are, by God's Spirit, numbered amongst the Gentiles. And consider how, not only the notorious Heathen, but such as had got the "form of godliness, but denied the power thereof," were rejected, with their outside shadows, as really as outward Jerusalem was rejected to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles.

Objection 1. But against this it is objected, that the baptism of the Spirit cannot be the baptism spoken of in this place, because the baptism spoken of in this place is commanded; but the baptism of the Spirit was never commanded, nor was it any man's sin not to be so baptized.

Answer. Surely this is a great mistake. Was the inward washing of the heart never commanded? "Rent your hearts, and not your garments." What is this but the spiritual baptism? The gospel is a ministration of inward things, and the inward things are strictly commanded there. Can any man be saved without inward baptizing? and is he not commanded to receive inward baptizing? and does he not sin, if he do not wait to receive it, and give up his heart and soul to be baptized by God's Holy Spirit? If the eye were opened in people to look into the gospel ministration, and into the inward nature of things, this might easily be demonstrated to the least babe there. For as the gospel was before the law, and could not be disannulled by the law; so this ministration of the Spirit's baptism (for nature and kind) was long before John's baptism, and could not be disannulled by any outward ministration of baptism, but abides the same forever; and is to have its place in the gospel state, where the figures and shadows of things pass away, and that which is true, lasting, and substantial, fills up the room thereof.

Now, the baptism of the Spirit, or the spiritual washing and circumcising the heart (which is all one in substance), was called for and required of the Jews under the law; and it was their sin not to answer God's call and requiring therein. Consider these scriptures following, with many more of the like nature; "Break up your fallow-ground, and sow not among thorns" Jer. 4:3. Can the fallow-ground be broken up, and the thorns rooted out (else the sowing will be amongst them), without the circumcision or baptism of the Spirit, which is all one in nature and ground? Again: "Circumcise the fore-skin of your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked" Deut. 10:16. "Make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will you die, O house of Israel!" Ezek. 18:31. (Is not this all one in substance with that scripture, "He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved"?) "O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved! how long shall your vain thoughts lodge within you!" Jer. 4:14. "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it" Isa. 1:16 to 20.

Is not here the true baptism, and the remission of sins, which ensues thereupon, with the blessing on the baptized estate, and the curse on the unbaptized, which extends both to Jew and Gentile? for with God there is no respect of persons.

Oh that men could read the Scriptures of truth, with the true Spirit and with the true understanding! For these things, which were written to the people of the Jews, were written for our learning; and precious things may be learned from the Scriptures, by those whose eyes are opened by the Lord, and

who keep close in their reading to that which anoints and opens the eye; whereas others cannot but misunderstand and wrest them, to their own great danger at least, if not to the ruin and destruction of their souls.

I shall here mention but one place more, which is that of Psa. 51:17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." Can any offer up the sacrifice to God, but he who is inwardly and spiritually washed from that which defiles and hardens? And does not God require this baptism? And what is this but the baptism of the Spirit? who thus washes the soul with his heavenly water, in the ministration of his word and power, when the virtue and efficacy thereof reaches to the heart, in and through the faith.

Objection 2. The baptism of the Spirit cannot be here intended, because this baptism is to be administered by men; but the baptism of the Spirit was never administered by men; Jesus Christ was the alone minister of this baptism.

Answer. The apostle says, "that God had made them able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" 2 Cor. 3:6.

Mark: They were made able ministers by God, of that which gives life: and that they did minister the Spirit by imposition of hands is manifest, Acts 19:6. and in many other scriptures.

Indeed the apostles were not able of themselves, or by any virtue or strength of their own, to beget men to God, or to baptize men into his name and power; but their sufficiency was of God.

Again, Paul was sent to the Gentiles, to open their eyes. Acts 26:18. Now, opening the eyes of the blind is as peculiar to Christ, as baptizing with the Spirit can be.

When Christ gave his apostles commission to teach, baptizing, he told them, "All power in heaven and earth was given him;" and bid them not "depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father: for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence;" and that then they should receive power. What to do? To baptize with water? or to baptize into the name with the same baptism wherewith they themselves were baptized? See Mat. 28. and Acts 1.

Now, if this commission, here given to the apostles, Mat. 28:16, etc., was to baptize with water, then Paul was inferior to the other apostles; for he, though he had seen the Lord, and was sent from him to open the eyes of the Gentiles; yet he was not sent to baptize with water, as he expressly says, he was not sent to baptize (that is, outwardly with water), "but to preach the gospel." But if the baptism intended by Christ was inward and spiritual, even into the name, virtue, life, and power of the Spirit, then Paul had the apostolic commission as fully as any of the rest, and the grace and power of God did work as mightily in him to this end, as in any of them.

But men are as much mistaken about the teaching required by this commission, as about this baptism; for this teaching is not a literal teaching of things, or a discipline into an outward knowledge and way, but a teaching in the Spirit and power; and him whom God enables so to do, he also enables to baptize into the same Spirit and power. Yes, indeed, when the life and power ministers (the word spoken being mixed with faith in them that hear), it brings the earthly part under, and brings the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ over the heart and spirit. And this is true baptism, and the substance of the

figure or shadow, which was before the figure either of baptism or circumcision was, and remains when they are gone.

Objection 3. This baptism in the commission was to all nations; but the baptism of the Spirit fell only on some few at the beginning.

Answer. The promise of receiving the Spirit is upon believing, and it extends to every one that believes. "He that believes on me," as the scripture has said, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;" but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. John 7:38-39.

Answerably Peter said to that great assembly to which he preached, whereof there were added about three thousand souls, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:38-39.

Indeed, several gifts of the Spirit were given, some to one, some to another, according to the pleasure of the giver, and diversities of manifestations and operations of the same inward life and power: but every one received so much of the Spirit as to make him a son, and to cry Abba, Father, and to wash him.

And this is the one washing which all the flock are washed with, and so baptized into the one pure, living body: and this is the substance of the figure, which substance belongs to the gospel state; though God also saw a use of some figures in that day, and so inclined their hearts then to make use of them, which his gathered sons and daughters, by the gospel Spirit and power in this day, would make use of also, if the Lord did so require them. For the Lord is our judge, and the Lord is our king, the Lord is our lawgiver; who, by his Spirit and power, determines in every age what he would have his people do; and who leads into the way of life, truth, and holiness, which always was and is but one and the same forever.

And what if the Lord, who has caused his everlasting day to dawn again, and the everlasting gospel to be preached again, will have every shadow and figure to fly away, seeing they are of but one elementary nature and use, and not everlasting and abiding; who may gainsay him herein, and say, that this is not the ministration of the everlasting substance, or the same gospel the apostles preached, because some shadows which they expect, and have a strong belief concerning, are not found therein?

Objection 4. The baptism in this commission cannot be the baptism of the Spirit, because it is to be administered in the name of the Spirit.

Answer. The Greek word is not $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, which signifies in; but $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, which signifies into: so that the baptism here commanded is to baptize into the name, into the Father's name, into the Son's name, into the Spirit's name, by turning them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God; and then the power and life of God's Holy Spirit comes over their hearts and minds, and breaks the power of Satan, and washes their consciences from that which is dead, and plunges or dips them into that which is living.

Now, as God made them able ministers of the New Testament, which is a spiritual ministry, an inward ministry, and gave them the heavenly treasure of life, and of his Spirit to minister with; so he required and expected of them the work of the spiritual ministry, which was the spiritual teaching, and spiritual

baptizing into the inward name.

But that there was also a baptizing with outward water, that I do not deny; and that it was of use as a type to the weak and ceremonious state the Jews were in, when Christ sent forth his apostles to gather them out of the law state, into the gospel state, I am also satisfied in: but it has been since corrupted, and set up above its place by apostates; and every one should consider and wait on the Lord, to know what God requires, and will accept of him. For the kingdom of God stands not in meats and drinks, or any outward washings, nor comes in the way of man's observation, but in a heavenly seed, and in the Holy Spirit and power of life; which, happy are they who are made partakers of, baptized with, and led by. God will try every man's religion, work, and practices, by the true reed or measuring line: blessed is he whose religion will bear that trial!

It is a great matter to know the gospel state and ministration, the gospel Spirit and power, the gospel church and ordinances, the words of the holy prophets concerning the day of the gospel, the words of Christ concerning the kingdom and power of God, the words of the apostles concerning the mystery of faith, and the Word which was from the beginning.

These are weighty things, and of great concernment, about which men may easily miss and wrest the Scriptures, unless they be enlightened by the Lord in the renewing of their minds, and their eye kept to the holy anointing, that they may not out-run (and so imagine and conceive of themselves according to their own ability of understanding), but know and keep to the gift and inspiration of the Almighty, which gives true understanding. For as no man knows the mind of a man, but man's own spirit within him; so the mind of God (in the words which his Spirit spake), no man knows but his Spirit. And there is a key of knowledge to open the words of scripture by, which they cannot be opened without, — I mean such scriptures as relate to the mystery of life and salvation, which was always hid from the wise and prudent in every age.

The Pharisees had got a great deal of knowledge and understanding of the law of God, and prophecies of things to come, from the words of Moses and the prophets; but they had not the key of knowledge; and "so they erred, not knowing the Scriptures" (notwithstanding all their diligent reading and studying them), nor the power of God.

Every one had need be wary lest he err after the same manner, and so set up his own apprehensions from the Scriptures, instead of God's truth and the mind of his Holy Spirit; for then he cannot but also oppose that which is indeed his truth, and truly agreeable to the Scripture, though to man's mis-biassed judgment it may seem different or contrary.

The Lord beget in people's hearts true desires after himself, and guide them into the way wherein they may obtain all the desires of their souls, which he begets in them; and the Lord preserve all that fear him, from clashing against the present dispensation of his life and power in their day and generation!

The Pharisees little thought they would have killed the prophets, had they lived in their days: no, they greatly condemned their fathers for so doing; and yet they themselves crucified Christ. And many now little think they would have crucified Christ, had they lived in the days of his flesh; and yet they disdain, reproach, and persecute the appearance of the same Spirit, life, and power, as it now appears in his saints, whom he has redeemed and dwells in, and in whom he manifests himself, preaches and suffers, whatever men think of them.

Oh, blessed are they that are not offended in Christ, in the present appearance of his life and power! For they are not offended at him who gives life in the Father's name to all that receive him and wait upon him, and worship in the quickenings and virtue of his Spirit.

XXI. Some Questions answered, concerning the Gentiles doing by Nature the Things contained in the Law; and so showing the Work of the Law written in their Hearts. Rom. 2:14-15.

Question 1. By what nature did the Gentiles the things contained in the law? By the enlightened or unenlightened nature? By nature, as it lies corrupted in the fall, or by nature in some measure renewed by the light of God's Spirit shining in the heart? And by what covenant was the law written in their hearts? Is not the writing of the law in the heart a promise of the new covenant? And can it be writ in any heart, but by virtue of the new covenant? Is not the least writing of the law in the heart a degree of the promise? For the old covenant contains only the law in the letter; but the new covenant contains the writing of the law in the heart by the Spirit.

Answer. The apostle had showed before, that that which might be known of God was manifest in them, for God had showed it unto them; so that they had a manifestation of the light of God's Spirit in them, whereby they might discern his eternal power and godhead, in or by the things made; for that which is visible shadows out and declares that which is invisible, which the inward eye sees, it being opened by the Lord.

Now, their hearts being joined to this manifestation of God within, it changes the heart and nature; and in the changed heart and nature, God writes his law; and the law being writ in any measure in the heart, it has some power upon man, to cause him to subject to it, and answer what God requires of him thereby; and so his heart and conscience will accuse him, or excuse him, as he is found answering or rebelling against the holy light and law of God's Spirit within, manifesting the will of God unto him. For God, though he peculiarly chose the Jews, and in that sense had cast off the Gentiles, not choosing them so to be his peculiar people, yet he was not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also; and had a care of their precious souls, visiting them with that light, and inward manifestation of his Spirit, which was able to save and deliver them from the darkness. And it is testified, they came thus far by this inward manifestation of God in their hearts, and what God had showed them thereby, that they knew God. Rom. 1:21. They had a true knowledge of God from the light within; they had a measure of the pure and heavenly gift: but they were not thankful for so great a gift, in their dark state; and when they came to some true knowledge, did not glorify God, according to what they knew of the Lord, from the light of his Spirit within; but ran out from the measure of the gift into imaginations, into the conceivings of their own wisdom; and this brought darkness upon them, and gave deceit power over their hearts.

Now, if they had not professed themselves to be wise, but kept low to the manifestation of God's Spirit, and denied their own wisdom, they might have been truly wise; but running out from the measure of the gift, into their own wisdom and thoughts, they became fools as to the true wisdom, and wandered into gross idolatrous conceptions, and brought great judgments from God upon themselves. And this was their condemnation (not that the light of God had not shone in their hearts; not that that which

might be known of God was not manifest in them; but) that they loved their own dark wisdom, thoughts, and conceivings, more than the manifestation of the light of God's Spirit within.

Question 2. But if God was the God of the Gentiles, and thus visited them, were any of them saved thereby? Did not all the Gentiles universally perish, notwithstanding this light, or manifestation of God's Spirit within?

Answer. God forbid, that the inward manifestation of his light and visitation of his Holy Spirit, should be of no effect to none of the Gentiles; but that they should all perish notwithstanding it! It is testified here, that some of them came so far as to have their nature changed, so that they were a law to themselves, and did by nature the things contained in the law; which it is impossible for corrupt fallen man to do. And these hearkening to that, and following that which led them thus far, could not choose, but like to retain God in their knowledge, which the generality (who followed their own wisdom) did not; whereupon God gave them over to a reprobate mind, ver. 28.

But now, those that had the law written in their hearts, and answered it, fearing God, and working righteousness, and liking to retain God in their knowledge, such God did not give up to a reprobate mind, but kept them savory to himself, and made them more and more partakers of the true and inward circumcision; so that their lack of outward circumcision was no hindrance to them as to acceptance with God, but their uncircumcision went with God for circumcision.

And this their state (from the inward life and power) judged the Jew, who boasted so much of his state, because of the letter of the law, and outward circumcision. Rom. 2:26-27. Yes, this state shall be justified by God, when "God comes to judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel," said Paul, ver. 16. Jesus Christ, is the judge, who will justify whatever his Spirit has made known of God the Father in the hearts of the Gentiles, and them in their sense thereof, and subjection thereto.

That man who has bowed to the Spirit, been taught by the Spirit (having had the law of God written in his heart), and learned obedience in the new nature, so as to do the things contained in the law, and has received the inward circumcision, which cuts off, teaches to deny, and keep down that which is corrupt; which will never answer the law, nor allow the man in whom it rules to answer it, — I say, he that comes into the sense of God's Spirit, and the law thereof, and into the denial of his own spirit, he bears that which in substance is the cross of Christ, which crucifies the worldly nature and spirit; and as he is truly circumcised, so must he needs also be justified and saved under this yoke. For the Lord God of life, the Father of glory, will condemn none whom he finds in Christ, subjected to Christ, one in nature with the image of his Son; and Christ will condemn none whom he finds in his Spirit, taught by his Spirit, receiving holy laws from his Spirit, and walking in obedience thereto. And, indeed, I doubt not, but the merciful God has saved many among the Gentiles, in all ages and generations, by the light of his Holy Spirit working their minds into the sense thereof, and into subjection thereto, according to the manifestation thereof within them. For it is not the having much knowledge that saves, but the being subject to the measure of the gift which comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior.

Question 3. But how can those be justified according to Paul's gospel, who never heard Paul's gospel?

Answer. Paul's gospel is the gospel of Christ, the everlasting gospel, the one gospel, which is the power which saves, which is manifested in the new covenant within; which is hid in them that are lost, but

revealed, in some measure, in all that are saved. Wherever the new covenant is, there is the gospel; wherever the law is in any measure written within, there is something of the gospel.

If a man believe in that which shines within, which manifests the will of God within, he believes in that power which raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave; and if he lay hold on it by faith, he lays hold on God's strength, which inwardly visits to save the soul; yes, and if he obey it, he obeys the gospel, and shall not be condemned for disobedience, when Christ appears in flames of fire, to judge and condemn all the ungodly.

XXII. Concerning the Rule of the Children of the New Covenant.

WHAT was the rule of the Jew outward, as to their outward state? Was not the law and testimony outward? Did not God make the law in the letter? What is the rule of the Jew inward? Is not the law and testimony inward? Is not the gospel a ministration of Spirit and power? And is it not a more glorious ministration than the law of the letter? Under the law, God spake by Moses and the prophets; but under the gospel he speaks by his Son: and do not his sheep hear his Son's (the true Shepherd's) voice? We all, like sheep, have gone astray; but (blessed be the Lord) are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls: and shall we not hear him, and follow him, whithersoever he goes and leads by his holy and good Spirit? "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me; him shall you hear in all things," said Moses. Did Moses say, My words shall be your rule; or the words of the prophets shall be your rule then, in the days of the new covenant? No, he did not say so; but, "him shall you hear in all things;" and he that will not hear him shall be cut off; yes, verily, it is so. He is the minister of life; and he that does not hear him, and receive life, virtue, and power from him, he builds but from the letter (from what he apprehends from the letter), but is really separated and cut off from the ministry of the life and power. "He that has an ear, let him hear;" and he that has a heart, let him consider.

Now, the true Jew, the Jew inward, in whose heart God writes his law by the finger of his Spirit, he is to read and to meditate on the inward law written in his heart, as the outward Jew was to read and meditate on the outward law. And as, in obedience to the outward law, the outward Jew was blessed, and free from the curse, and his outward enemies; so, in obedience to the inward law (the law of the Spirit of life), the inward Jew reaps the spiritual blessings, and becomes inwardly free from his inward and spiritual enemies. "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," said Christ to his disciples; and every true disciple in the obedience of the truth witnesses it.

And here the mystery of all (which was outwardly written and testified of) is known; the mystery of the law, the mystery of the prophecies, the mystery of the gospel, the mystery of the fellowship in and with the saints in light; the mystery of the faith, which is held in a pure conscience; the mystery of the love, which arises from the true and inward circumcision; the mystery of the hope, which anchors within the veil, and purifies the heart, as he is pure. For the true children, the children of the heavenly wisdom being children of the hidden life, are begotten in a mystery; for the Spirit of God breathes upon them no man knows how; and thus is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Now, as they are begotten in the mystery of life, so the mystery belongs to them, and is revealed and

opened in them; insomuch that they know God not only as outwardly described, but as inwardly revealed and manifested in Christ, his bright and heavenly image.

So here the one truth is known, even as it is in Jesus; the one way is known; the one name of the Lord (which is and was the strong tower in all ages and generations, which the righteous did, and do still, fly unto and are safe) is known; here the one baptism is known; here the one supper is known; yes, here the one God is worshipped, as Father and Son, in the one Spirit and truth. So that here is no dreaming in the night, by men's comprehendings and conceivings upon the Scriptures; but here is seeing with the true eye, in a measure of the light of the everlasting day, which is given to the children of light, who live in the light, and walk in the light, and in the true light (which now shines) see the pure and eternal light daily more and more.

Who would not count all dross and dung (even all the knowledge he can gather and comprehend of himself) for the excellency of this knowledge which God gives to those that are turned to the light and power of his Spirit, from the darkness of their own thoughts, reasonings, and conceivings upon the Scriptures, and do wait upon him therein, even in his holy temple, night and day? For all under the gospel are to be priests to God; and all his priests are to wait upon him, and worship him in his holy temple; and to watch diligently that neither the fire go out, nor the lamp go out, nor the salt be lacking to season and keep the heart melted and broken, that it may be a continual acceptable sacrifice to the Lord.

Time was, when we also did believe that the Scriptures were the only rule of faith and practice; and so bent ourselves to search out and observe what we found written therein, hoping thereby to have attained to that which our souls desired after. But we found all the directions thereof weak as to us, through the flesh, and sin had still power over us; and we knew not what it was to be made free by the Son; free by the truth, free indeed from that which stood near to tempt and draw us into sin. But when the light of God's holy Spirit shined upon us, and our minds were by him turned thereto, and his law written on our hearts, in and by the new covenant, which he revealed in us, and made with us, in and through his Son; then we felt the ministration of the power of the endless life, and were experimentally assured, that in the gospel administration, which is an administration of the Spirit and power, nothing less than Spirit and power can be the rule.

Mark; In the old covenant, letter (or outward directions) was a rule; but the living commandment, or Word in the heart, is the rule in the new covenant; living laws; laws livingly written; laws that give life to them in whom they are written; they are the living, powerful, and effectual rule.

Nor do we undervalue the Scriptures, in thus giving honor to Christ and his Spirit; for it is their honor to testify of Christ and of his Spirit, who is the pure, certain, infallible rule of the new life, and who gives to fulfill all the holy directions, which are written in the Scriptures, concerning the way of life.

And man, at a distance, may easily speak uncertainly; but let a man be joined to God's Spirit and feel his holy nature, movings, leadings, and guidings, he cannot but acknowledge them to be his certain and infallible rule; for nothing is more certain than God's Spirit, than the holy anointing, which is truth and no lie, and leads into all truth, and out of every lie and deceit.

XXIII. Some Queries concerning the Law, or Word, Statutes, Testimonies, Judgments, etc. which David was so delighted in, and prayed so earnestly for.

DAVID said, "Your Word is a lantern to my feet, and a light to my paths." He found it sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb. He desired to be taught God's statutes, and to learn the way of his precepts, etc., as may be abundantly read, Psa. 19. and in other places.

Query 1. What was this Word or law, which there was such an earnest desire in David after; by observing whereof he became wiser than his teachers? Was it the law of Moses, the law outward; or was it the Word and law of life inward?

If it be said, It was the law of Moses; then I query in the second place:

Query 2. What rule had David from the law of Moses to say, That God desired not sacrifices, nor delighted in burnt-offering? Did not God desire and require of his people under the law, that they should perform these things? And did he not accept of them, and delight in them, when they performed them aright, in faith and obedience to him? Was not the Lord pleased with Abel's sacrifice? And did not God smell a sweet savor in Noah's sacrifice? How could David say in truth, and from a true Spirit, That God did neither desire them nor delight in them?

Query 3. Ought not David to try this Spirit which spake thus in him, whether it was of God or no? Should he receive a testimony from any spirit so directly contrary in appearance to the foregoing testimonies of God's Spirit in the holy Scriptures, without a full and certain evidence and demonstration that it was the Spirit of God?

Query 4. How was David to try, or how might he certainly try this Spirit, whether it was of God or no? Was he to try it thus, whether it spake according to the testimony and law of Moses, according to what Moses had spoken in this matter, which certainly was of God, and was given by God for a law or rule to that people the Jews? If he had tried it thus, would he not have judged it a spirit different from the Spirit of Moses, speaking contrary to the law and testimonies which God gave forth by him? For sacrifice and burnt-offering was strictly required there, and God often testified his acceptance thereof, and delight therein. So that God did accept and did delight therein in one respect, and did not accept nor delight at all in them, in another respect; but his aim was at another thing, and at other sacrifices, which David clearly saw. And so David's eye, mind, heart, and spirit being gathered inward, even there where God's eye and heart was, he there had a clear sight, and gave a certain sound concerning what was acceptable in the eye of the Lord, and what not; and so says, "God did not desire sacrifice, nor delight in burnt-offering." Psa. 51:16. Though the language of the law of Moses speaks far otherwise, where circumcision, sacrifices, and such outward things are expressed as of great value with the Lord, and as great and high privileges, which were bestowed upon that people in that day.

Query 5. May not the same Spirit, or the children of God in the same spirit, say to the Lord in this day, concerning things of the same outward nature, You desire not such outward things, else would we perform them. You delight not in outward shadows of the things of the kingdom. You desire not outward washing the body with water, or eating and drinking of outward bread and wine, which avail no more than circumcision and the passover. If your delight were in things of this nature, and you did require them of us, how willingly would we be found in the practice of them before you: but your delight is in that water which washes the soul from its filth, and in the souls that are washed therewith.

And you desire to see your children feeding on the living bread, the bread which comes down from heaven, and to drink of the wine which refreshes, and makes glad the heart both of God and man?

Query 6. If any of the children of the Most High should in this feel the life wherewith God has quickened them open in their hearts, and such a testimony arising from his Spirit in them, how should they try whether this Spirit and voice were of God or no? Should they look into the writings of the evangelists and apostles, to see whether baptism with outward water, and eating of outward bread, and drinking of outward wine, was ever commanded and practiced in the apostles' days? And if they suppose strongly that it was commanded, or find it was practiced, may they thereupon safely conclude that it was a wrong spirit, and wrong voice, that testifies thus in them, and not the voice and Spirit of the Lord? Had David tried and judged thus, might not he have judged and condemned the Spirit and voice of God in his day? And if we try and judge in this manner, may not we judge and condemn the Spirit and voice of God in our day? David saw clearly that outward sacrifices were not the abiding thing, but significations of that which was abiding; and this sight greatly shook them in his spirit. The Lord has likewise shown us clearly that outward water, bread, and wine, are not the substantial, the spiritual, the heavenly water, the heavenly bread and wine; but of the nature of such things as were to be shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken, may remain in the gospel state and kingdom.

Oh! therefore, let men take heed how they build, or how they judge concerning the appearances of God, by their own apprehensions upon the letter of the Scriptures. But let every one be careful to build upon the rock, Christ; upon his Spirit, his life, his power inwardly revealed, which the birth, being kept to, reveals in and to us; but no man, by his own conceivings and apprehensions upon the letter, ever knew, or can know the Spirit and voice of the Lord.

And thus men may come, waiting here in humility and fear upon the Lord, to judge true and righteous judgment concerning the appearance of God, and the things of his kingdom; which they can never do by their own understanding, and comprehending things from the Scriptures, out of the light and quickening life of God's Spirit. For man is dead, dark, and corrupt, but as he is quickened, enlightened, and his heart sanctified by God's Holy Spirit. What can a dead man see? What can a dead man hear? Can he hear the living sound before he is quickened by it? Do not the Scriptures relate, and treat of, spiritual things? And can the natural man understand them? Can man's unholy mind understand the words of God's pure, holy Spirit, which were given forth through vessels that were sanctified (some from the womb), and when the Spirit of the Lord was upon them, and they gathered by his Spirit into a holy, living sense?

Oh that men saw their need of the Lord to open their hearts, and that flesh might be silent in them, that they might come to witness the birth of God's Spirit, and the precious understanding of the heavenly things which is therein given! And then that understanding which is not precious, nor living, nor of God, but of themselves, would not be of so great value with them: for indeed, through this great mistake, many (some whereof are zealous and knowing, according to the esteem of men) reject that which is of God, and set up that which is of themselves, even of their own apprehending and conceiving; which will be bitterness and sorrow in the latter end, when that eye shall be opened in them, which is at present closed in too many.

Blessed is he who can truly say, The Lord has opened an eye in me, even the true eye, the pure eye, the living eye; and with that eye I now see; but with the eye wherewith I saw before, I now see not: and now I know the difference between seeing the same things with my own eye, and with the eye which

God has given me. So that now my earnest desire and prayer to the Lord is, to keep open in me forever that eye which he has opened; and also to keep that eye shut which he, in his tender mercy to me, has been pleased to close up in me.

And truly, this is the ground of the great difference between us and others, about the things of God; for though we own the same things, and speak of the same things, yet we own them not alike, nor speak of them alike. Why so? Because we see them with different eyes, and so have a different sense of them.

Others call things true, and so acknowledge them as they apprehend them from the letter: we call things true, as they are demonstrated to us by God's Spirit, and as we feel the virtue, life, and power of them from God, in our hearts.

Now, this we are assured is the true way of knowledge; therefore is it our hearts' desire (in true love to all, especially to those in whom there are any tender breathings after God), that people might so wait upon the Lord, as that they might be led by him into it, and quickened daily more and more by him in it.

And indeed, those teachings and demonstrations of truth, which are given and received in the pure sense, and in the quickening life, they are the teachings of God's Spirit according to the new covenant; which is a ministration not of the letter (no, not of those shadowy or dead things which are administered therein), but of the power and life. For the law is letter, but the gospel is Spirit and power. The gospel state is a state of fulfilling those things in the Spirit and power of the endless life, in the new covenant, which were spoken of, promised, and shadowed out under the law in the old covenant.

XXIV. Some Observations on 2 Pet. 3:14-16

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, has written unto you: as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

Observation 1. WHAT Peter, Paul, and the rest of the holy men of God wrote of. They wrote of the grace of the gospel: they wrote of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, and the salvation of the soul; and true rest, which believers should receive, and enter into in him. 1 Pet. 1:2, etc. and Heb. 4:3. They wrote concerning the times of reformation, wherein those things should be reformed under the second covenant, which had been amiss under the first. Heb. 8. They wrote of the times of restoration, and refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Acts 3:19,21. For in the new covenant, there is a renewing and restoring; and the pure presence of God, which refreshes, is witnessed and enjoyed there. They wrote of the everlasting kingdom, the kingdom which cannot be shaken, Heb. 12:28. which stands in that power which shakes all things that may be shaken, but itself is unmovable. They wrote of the day of the Lord, the day of the gospel, which brings darkness and confusion upon man's spirit and glory, and desolation upon his buildings, melting and dissolving the

old heavens and the old earth, wherein unrighteousness had a place, and bringing forth the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. Isa. 51:16.

"For if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation: old things pass away, and all things become new," at Christ's appearing in his glory in the heart; to which they that truly believe in him cannot but hasten; that the earth, with the works thereof, may be burnt up, and the heavens also; that so the new heavens and the new earth may be inwardly witnessed and experienced, and the King of glory found sitting on his throne, and reigning therein.

Observation 2. How Peter and Paul, with the rest of the apostles and holy men of God, wrote. They wrote according to the wisdom given unto them. They wrote not in their own wills, or according to their own wisdom; but kept to the gift and light of the Spirit, which they had received from the Lord. They waited to observe the Lord go before, the Spirit of the Lord move, and also give ability from the measure and gift of life, which he had bestowed upon them.

And these are the proper limits of writing and speaking under the ministration of the gospel; which is a ministration of the Spirit and power, and not of the literal knowledge of things, according to man's understanding and comprehension.

Observation 3. That there are some things in the writings of Paul (and in the other scriptures also) hard to be understood; which every one that has true life and true sense does not at first understand, but only such as are grown to a capacity. For the writings of the apostles, and ministrations of the Spirit, are to several states and capacities, and can only be understood according to the growth and capacity of each state; much less can the carnal understand or digest that which is high and spiritual.

Observation 4. That there are some among those whom the Lord visits, and reaches to by his power, who do not attain to the knowledge of the truth, nor come to the establishment therein: some that are always learning, but never come to the true, heavenly, spiritual knowledge of the things of God; some that know Christ only according to the letter, but not according to his Spirit and power. Some there are that learn in such a way as they can never come truly and thoroughly to understand: for it is God that opens the heart and ear; it is Christ who has, and gives, the key of knowledge; but many learn what they can of the things of God and Christ, without having their hearts and ears opened by the Lord, and without the true key of knowledge; and so those remain unlearned and unstable as to the mystery of godliness, as to the mystery of life and salvation, and as to the nature of the things of God's kingdom.

Observation 5. That those who are unlearned and unstable in the mystery of truth, are wresters of the Scripture. They cannot understand things as they are, not having the key; and so they wrest them, and strive to make them speak, as they apprehend and would have them.

And here in this state, in this wisdom, is both adding to, and diminishing from, the holy words of truth: for in many places they add of their own conceivings, and in other places diminish from the drift and intent of God's Spirit.

Observation 6. That wresting the Scriptures tends to the destruction of those that do it. God is the Savior, and the holy words of the Savior tend to save; but being bent aside by man's nature and spirit, they are not the same they were when they came from God, nor have at all the virtue and nature in them.

And indeed wresting the Scriptures is a high, presumptuous, and provoking act, and brings God's displeasure against, and curse upon, the soul.

Now, it is impossible for any man not to wrest the Scriptures, unless he keep close to God's Spirit to receive from him the understanding of them; for the inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding, and not another thing. God knows what he intends, in the words he spake concerning the heavenly things; but man knows not, but as his spirit is opened and enlightened by the Lord.

Blessed is he who waits upon and watches to God's Spirit in reading the Scriptures, not leaning to his own understanding and apprehension of things, but waiting to feel his mind opened and quickened by the Lord, that in the renewings of his mind he may learn of God that which is new and living, which is not comprehended in the letter (or in literal descriptions of things), but in the Spirit and power itself, which is the limits of the new covenant, out of which the children of life are not to depart, but to abide, dwell, and grow up therein.

XXV. Concerning the Gospel Ministry, or right Way of teaching and learning the Mystery of Life and Salvation

WHEN Christ came in the fulness of time, in that body prepared for him by the Father (he who was filled with the Spirit, and anointed of God to preach the gospel), he preached the kingdom of God, bidding men seek it, directing them where to seek it, and how they might find it; telling them, in several parables, what it was like, and where to look for it, even within their own hearts; and that they might the better discern it, shadowed out the being, nature, and properties of it, in several resemblances. He compared it to a "treasure hid in a field," which the wise merchant sells all to buy; to "a pearl" hid in the earth; to a lost "piece of silver," which they that sweep their own houses, and search with the true candle, may find; to "a talent" (for such is the free gift of the pure and heavenly life); to "leaven" (hidden leaven); to a "seed"; to "salt," etc.

So when Christ sent his apostles after him, in the same Spirit and power wherein he himself came and ministered, he sent them to preach the same thing, giving them this message to declare to men, "that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all; and that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; and that the life was manifested;" so that they heard, and saw, and tasted, and handled of it; and so were to direct men how to come into fellowship with them in this life, and to walk in the light, as God is in the light.

Thus Paul likewise, who was sent after the rest, was sent to "turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" Acts 26:18.

Now, people being turned to the light, where they may receive understanding, and feel virtue, and know the anointing, and hear the voice of the Shepherd, those who are over them in the Lord, and are made use of by him as instruments to turn their minds here, may be sensible of their conditions, and may have a word of direction from God to speak to them. And this teaching is not the teaching of man, but the teaching of the holy anointing; and he that hears this teaching, hears Christ; and he that rejects this teaching, rejects Christ.

Yet, though the Lord pleases thus to minister from the heavenly treasure in some vessels, which he has prepared for that end, people are not always to be expecting pensions, or portions of food from others without; but to know and to come to the bread and water of life in their own houses, that there they may eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, as all do who have true life in them.

Now, to give forth precepts of holiness, as the way in the apostasy has been, before men's minds are turned to that which enlightens, and gives power to believe and obey; that is not the way of the gospel; but the way of the gospel is to bring to the foundation of light and life in the particular, and so to dissettle the spirit from that which is dead, and found it upon that which is living; that a living building of pure life, of living materials, of living stones, may be raised up unto the Lord; in which temple he dwells and appears, exercising his authority and power.

For indeed, God dwells in the temples of his own building, which are built by and in his Spirit; but in all other temples, which are built out of the Spirit, and only by men, not by God, in a way of imitation, from the letter, in which they set up the likenesses of things, and so set themselves to pray and preach, according to their apprehending and forming of things, — I say, in these buildings the Holy Spirit of God dwells not; but that spirit which has thus deceived them.

And thus men erring in their hearts concerning the light, concerning the power, concerning the foundation (not knowing how it is indeed laid in Zion), concerning the Scriptures of truth (which can only be understood in the light and inspiration of the Almighty, from which they were given forth), they can never come to know Christ and his Spirit livingly revealed in power in their own hearts, nor the new and living way, and how to walk therein, nor the truth as it is in Jesus, according to the ministration of the New Testament, which is not after the letter, but after the Spirit, nor the new covenant, which is made with the soul in Christ, wherein all things are made new, and the old done away; nor the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus written in the heart, which blots out the other law, even the law of sin and death, and makes free therefrom; and so they cannot witness what it is to come from under the law, where sin reigns, into and under grace, where life reigns and has the dominion.

Who knows the truth which makes free? Could men then say, they shall never be made free from the body of sin on this side the grave? Who has received grace for grace from Christ Jesus the Lord, and knows the virtue of it? Could men then testify against it for sin, as if the grace of Christ could never deliver from it, and give dominion over it here in this life? Who knows the faith which gives victory, the hope which purifies, the love which unites to God, and constrains unto the obedience of the gospel, and whose strength in the heart is stronger than the strength of death?

Oh, the gospel religion, the gospel spirit, the gospel power, the gospel love, the gospel faith, the gospel obedience, the gospel knowledge, the gospel worship, has been lost for many ages and generations! And now God has caused it to shine forth and appear again, what a flood of reproaches does the dragon send forth against it! And how do men strive to uphold their dead knowledge, and their dead buildings, their dead ways, their dead worship, etc., which they think highly of, and magnify; blaspheming that which is living, which came from God, is accompanied with his power, and has the evidence and demonstration of his Spirit going along with it!

Well, all flesh is grass, and its beauty shall fade. Let it paint and make a flourish as long as it can; yet the breath of the Lord has blown upon it, and it is already withered, and shall wither daily more and more. But the Word of the Lord, which quickens and changes the heart (which his despised servants

have been visited with, and have testified, and do testify of), shall abide forever, when that spirit, wisdom, and religion, which has opposed, shall vanish like smoke, and sink under eternal condemnation.

XXVI. A few Words concerning the old and new Covenant, with some Queries thereupon

THE old covenant was that covenant which God made with that people, the Jews, when he took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt outward. The new covenant is that covenant which God makes with the soul, when he takes it by the hand to lead it out of Egypt inward, which is the land of darkness and pollution.

The old covenant was made with the outward people, with the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. The new covenant is made with the inward people, with the seed of Abraham according to the spirit, according to the faith, according to the promise: for in this covenant, not they that are the children of the flesh are of Abraham; but the children of the promise are accounted for the seed.

The old covenant was made by Moses, the servant, who was faithful in all his house as a servant. The new covenant is made by Christ, the Lord and King of his church and people, who is faithful in quickening them all, reconciling them all, interceding for them all, according to the tenor and way of this covenant.

The old covenant consisted in laws and directions outward, which that nation and people had fully and exactly given them from God, above all nations and people of the earth. The new covenant consists in life and Spirit inward, which the holy people, the renewed people, the redeemed people, are visited with, and made partakers of, above all other people.

Under the old covenant, though the Lord did great things before the eyes of that people in Egypt, and exercised them with signs, miracles, and trials also in the wilderness; yet the Lord did not give them a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto that day; as mentioned in Deut. 29:2-4. the veil was over their hearts. But the other covenant contains the giving the new heart, the opening of the blind eye, the unstopping of the deaf ear, the writing the law in the heart, the putting the pure fear in the inward parts, the putting God's Spirit within them, and so causing them to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments and do them. Whereupon these Queries are in my heart:

Query 1. Will not this covenant inwardly reform the heart, soul, mind, and conscience, and amend all in this inward, spiritual, renewed people, which was amiss in that outward, earthly, unrenewed people?

Query 2. Does not the soul begin to enter into this covenant so soon as ever it answers the Lord in the visits of his love, turning from sin unto him?

Query 3. How precious is that grace of the gospel which brings into this covenant! For the people of the Jews came into the old covenant by the law which was given by Moses; but the children of the new covenant come thereinto by receiving the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ.

Query 4. Can any possibly enter into this covenant without coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, and receiving grace from him? Can observing precepts and directions from scripture bring into this covenant? Or is it receiving grace, truth, life in the inward parts, from Christ, the Lord, which brings into this covenant? Oh! wait to know the ministration of the gospel, and covenant of life, with the entrance thereinto, O all that truly desire the salvation of your souls!

Query 5. Wherein does the ministry of this covenant consist; or how is the teaching thereof? Is it by getting a form of knowledge out of the letter, or ministering the letter? Is it not a ministration not of the letter, but of the Spirit? The apostle said so, who knew what it was, and was made an able minister thereof by God. 2 Cor. 3:6. Truly, none can minister gospelly, none can minister under the new covenant, but those that minister from and in the Spirit.

XXVII. Queries on Rom. 6th, 7th, and 8th Chapters

From Chapter 6

Query 1. WHAT is it to be baptized into Christ? Is it not to be baptized into his death? Are not they that are truly baptized into Christ buried with him by baptism into death? That "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so they also should walk in the newness of life." How can they that are dead to sin live any longer therein?

Query 2. What was the end of Christ's manifestation in the flesh, and sending his Spirit? Was it not to destroy the works of the devil; to crucify the old man, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin?

Query 3. Is he that is crucified with Christ, and dead unto sin, freed from sin? Does the truth of Christ, the life of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, the power of Christ, make those that receive and obey it free indeed; so that sin cannot have dominion over them, to make them do what they hate, or to hinder them from doing what God requires? Did not Christ himself die to sin once, but now lives to God? And are not believers after this manner to reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord?

Query 4. Have believers received power from Christ ("who had all power in heaven and earth given unto him") to become sons? Have they received the Spirit of the Father, which has dominion over sin? Can they stop or hinder the reign of it in their mortal body, and refuse obeying the lusts thereof, and not yield their members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin?

Query 5. Are believers alive from the dead? And can they yield their members servants to righteousness, for God to work in and by them, according to his will and pleasure? Can they ever come to such a state, as to do nothing against the truth, but for the truth; "to do all things through Christ that strengthens them"?

Query 6. Is this true, that to whom people yield themselves servants to obey, his servants they are to whom they obey, whether of "sin unto death," or of "obedience unto righteousness"?

Query 7. Do men, or is it possible for men, in receiving, joining to, and obeying the truth, to be made free from sin, and become the servants of righteousness?

Query 8. Cannot men have their fruit unto holiness, and at the end everlasting life, without being made free from sin, and becoming servants to God? Is the wages of sin death after a man has believed? After a man is turned from sin to Christ, if he hearken afterwards to Satan, and commit sin, does he reap death thereby? See also Gal. 6:7-8.

From Chapter 7

Query 1. What law is that which has dominion over a man as long as he lives; and what life is that in man which the law has dominion over?

Query 2. How does a man become dead to the law, that he might be married to another, even to "him who is raised from the dead, that he should bring forth fruit unto God"? Can any be married to the raised, living husband, but the quickened, raised, and living soul? And can any else bring forth fruit to God?

Query 3. What is the state of being in the flesh, and of knowing the things of God after the flesh? of receiving directions and practicing duties in that state? Do not the motions of sin (which all outward laws and directions do but stir up, but cannot overcome) work in the members there, in that state, to bring forth fruit unto death?

Query 4. How comes a man to be delivered from the law? Is it not by the death of that in him which held him captive unto sin? And why does God quicken with a new life, and kill in the hearts of his that wherein they were held? Is it not that they should serve him in newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter? For the letter kills, and the literal service and worship is dead, and that worship alone is living and gospel worship, which is in the newness of the Spirit; for such alone the Father seeks to worship him, and such worship alone he accepts.

Query 5. Is the law sin because it stirs up sin? No; the law itself is not sin, but that which discovers and makes it known; for no man can know sin, but by the law or light which discovers it.

Query 6. How is sin dead without the law? And how does it take occasion by the commandment to work in the heart all manner of concupiscence?

Query 7. How was Paul alive without the law once? Could he sacrifice, could he read the Scriptures, could he be knowing, could he be zealous, could he walk according to the law in the letter blameless in that state? See Phil. 3:4-6.

Query 8. What commandment was that, upon the coming whereof sin revived, and he died? Was it the law in the letter, or the law in the Spirit? He says, "the commandment which was to life, he found to be unto death." What is the commandment which is to life? Is it not the "word nigh in the mouth and heart"? See Deut. 30.

Query 9. How came sin to take occasion by the commandment (which came forth holily, and as just and good from God), to deceive and slay him? What was it which it deceived and slew? Was it not that part which thought it could obey and serve God, if his will was made manifest; which now, when the

law indeed came, found it could not? Nor can any man obey the holy law of life, till this nature, wisdom, and spirit be in some measure slain in him.

Query 10. Does then the holy law of God, which God ordains and sends unto life, minister death to the soul? or does sin, being provoked and stirred up to put forth its strength to save its life, and retain its dominion in the heart, take occasion by the commandment to work death, and show the exceeding evil and sinfulness of its nature?

Query 11. Is not the law spiritual? Can sin gain any strength, or advantage by that which is spiritual? Surely no; but it takes occasion then to tyrannize over and captivate me (who am carnal, and sold under it), till the power of the Lord make a change in my state, working me from under the dominion of it.

Query 12. How is it with the soul in the state of captivity, when sin is revived by the law, — the soul dead as to its former life and strength, and not yet come under the dominion and power of grace? Does it not do what it allows not, and not do the good it would? Yes, does not the enemy oftentimes even force it to do what it hates, the soul being as yet weak in the faith, whereby alone strength is received to resist him? Is not this state experienced in some measure by every traveler? Does not every one feel the strength of sin, and his own inability, either to will or do of himself that which is good, etc., before he witness help and deliverance from the Lord?

Query 13. Does God impute to the soul, or to sin, the effect of this captivity, and work of sin and Satan upon the heart, against the bent and earnest desires and endeavors of the soul?

Query 14. When is the soul in this state of trouble and captivity? Is it not after some appearance and operation of God's power in the heart? Is it not after the mind is turned from sin, and desires to be joined to the holy law of life and obey it? Is it not after God has wrought the will in the mind to do good; so that the consent is given to the law, and the will is present; but how to perform that which is good it finds not, because faith is yet so weak, and sin and unbelief so strong in the heart?

Query 15. Is not this the time of bitter warfare, and day of terrible distress in the heart, and of feeling the wickedness of the estate, because of sin; and of crying out, and longing after the salvation and deliverance of the gospel? Oh! woe is me, who shall deliver me, poor captive, says the soul, in this state!

Query 16. Is not God very tender to the soul in this state, daily blotting out, and not imputing, sin? Oh, if it were not for the exceeding mercy, and tender love, and help of the Lord in this state, it were impossible for any ever to come through it! But thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who both upholds in it, and carries through it, so that a change comes to be witnessed, and a better state known by those who consent not to sin; but continue in taking part with the good, holy, and spiritual law of life against it.

From Chapter 8

Query 1. What is that state wherein there is no condemnation? Is it not the state of the redeemed souls in Christ? Does not condemnation follow, where there is sin and disobedience? See Heb. 2:1, etc. Does not God condemn sin, and the soul because of sin, till it be driven from sin by the law unto Christ, and

learn of him to walk as he walked, even "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"? For to the Spirit, to the seed, to the heavenly man, there is no condemnation; nor to them that walk after the Spirit.

Query 2. How came any to walk after the Spirit? Can any walk after the Spirit, but as they are made free, by the power of Christ revealed in their hearts against the power of Satan, from the law of sin and death? Will not sin and death captivate a man, and entangle him in lusts, evil motions and works, till their strength be broken in him, and his soul delivered and set free therefrom?

Query 3. How does the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus make free from the law of sin and death? Is it not thus? Did not God condemn sin in Christ's flesh? and does not the same Spirit and law of life condemn it in ours also, and bring the judgment and justice of the holy law of life over it? And so bringing the soul off from that which is unholy, unto the holy and righteous Spirit and nature of Christ; and bringing it to walk out of the deadness of sin, in the newness of life; it is removed from there where the condemnation is, there where the condemnation cannot come: for in Christ, in the new nature, in the heavenly image, in the newness of the Spirit, there never was, nor ever can be, any condemnation.

Query 4. Would God have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in his children? Would he have them walk exactly with him in the new covenant, which both comprehends and exceeds the righteousness of the old covenant? Consider whether Christ fulfilling the old covenant be their righteousness, or his fulfilling the new in them and for them: for he both does take away their unrighteousness, and also brings in the righteousness into them, which is of his own pure, heavenly, and everlasting nature. Is not he the image of God? Is not he righteous? And when he is in them, and they changed into his nature and Spirit, is not he their righteousness? Oh, wait to determine this thing, all that desire to know and partake of the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the true and pure sense of life, and in the evidence and demonstration of God's Holy Spirit!

Query 5. Do not all men act according to the principle, whether of flesh or spirit, to which their minds are joined? Do not they which are of the flesh mind, savor, approve, desire after, and delight in that which is fleshly? But they that are after the Spirit, do not they mind, savor, desire after, approve, and delight in the things of the Spirit? Therefore is not this of great concern to all to consider, not so much what their profession and appearance is outwardly, as what their root is inwardly, and what nature, spirit, and growth, they and their religion are of?

Query 6. What does it produce to have the mind exercised by the flesh? Does it not produce death? Is not the nature, spirit, and wisdom of the flesh separated from God's nature, who is life? and can it bring forth any thing in the heart but corruption and death? But the minding of the other principle, and being exercised by the other principle, that produces life and peace; does it not? Let all that have inwardly experienced these things, assent and testify in spirit before the Lord to his praise.

Query 7. Is not the flesh enmity against God? Can any thing which is enmity against God, who is the quickening life, do any thing but deaden and kill where it finds entrance? Life and peace is witnessed in subjection to God, who gives it to them that obey the law of his Spirit. Is that which is in the enmity, and stands in the enmity, subject (or can it be subject) to the holy law of God? No; there must be a new creation felt in the heart, before there can be a subjection to that which is pure and living.

Query 8. Can any men that are in the flesh, that are not truly and inwardly changed by the Spirit and

power of the gospel, — I say, can they please God in any thing they do? Can they believe, or pray, or read the Scriptures, or practice any thing they observe from the Scriptures, so as to please God thereby? No surely, without changing the principle, without having the heart changed by God's power there is no right believing, praying, or doing any thing to please God. This makes most men's religion and performances unsavory, because they know not, nor are turned to, and guided by, that principle and seed of life, which seasons and makes savory.

Query 9. How may a man know whether he be in the flesh, or in the Spirit? If he be in the Spirit, does not the Spirit dwell in him? For the Spirit creates anew, and the Spirit dwells in that which he new-creates. It is the strong man armed who keeps and dwells in the old house; but the Spirit of Christ keeps and dwells in the new house: and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ (notwithstanding all his religion, knowledge, faith, prayers, etc.) he is none of his.

Query 10. If Christ, the quickening Spirit, (the living power) be in a man, does he not kill sin there? Is not the body dead there because of sin? Can sin live there, where Christ dwells? and is not his Spirit life there, to quicken in and unto righteousness? Yes, is it possible that Christ should dwell in any man's heart by his Spirit, and his Spirit not be quickening the mortal body in which he dwells? Oh! how precious is it to feel the quickening life and power! This is a daily seal of the true religion; and the daily operation of God's Spirit in the hearts of his children, shows who dwells there.

Query 11. To which are we debtors, who are redeemed to God by his Spirit and power? Are we debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh, which brings into bondage to sin and death? Or are we debtors to that Spirit and power of life, which has made us alive to God, and preserves us in life, and quickens us unto life, day by day?

Query 12. Is it possible that any one should come to life, but by the mortifying, denying and destroying of that which nourishes sin, and leads into death? and what can do that but the power of God's Spirit?

Query 13. Are not all the sons of God led by his Spirit? Oh, how necessary then is it for every man to be sure, both that he has received God's Spirit, and that he be led by it!

Query 14. What is the Spirit of bondage, which begets fear when God awakens the soul? and what is the Spirit of adoption, whereby the soul can cry Abba, Father? Can any cry Abba, Father, but those that are begotten of God's Spirit? Many men put up requests, and are able to make long prayers (perhaps such as may be taking to the eye of man's wisdom), and yet know not that Spirit which begets life in the heart, and teaches to cry Abba, Father.

Query 15. Is it not a precious thing for people truly to feel the Spirit of God bearing witness with their spirits, that they are God's children; heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ; and so leading them through the sufferings, that they may come to partake with him of his glory? But do any come to partake of his glory, who do not first come through the sufferings?

XXVIII. A further Testimony in brief concerning the Work of GOD upon our Hearts, who are called Quakers

IT has been with us, and so we have felt it from the Lord, just as is expressed, Tit. 3:5. Not by works of

righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

We are a people who have been greatly distressed (many of us) for lack of that life and power which was revealed in the apostles' days. We are a race of travelers, who have been traveling out of the nature, wisdom, spirit, and course of this world (which is vain and passes away) towards our resting-place. We have wandered from mountain to hill, from one way of religion to another, seeking after him whom our souls dearly loved. Indeed the watchmen have often laughed at us and mocked us, wishing us to return to them; but that would not still the cry of our souls, which were sick with earnest desire, not after formal ways of religion, but after life and immortality, that it might be again brought to light (as it had been in the apostles' days), and our souls made partakers thereof. Now, after many a weary step and deep sickness of heart, when we were come even near to despair of ever finding and enjoying what our souls so sorely longed after, it pleased the Lord at length in his tender mercy to appear among us, and by the directions of his Holy Spirit to turn our minds inwards; showing us, that that which we sought without, was to be found within: telling us, that there was the kingdom, which was not to be found by observations without, but by meeting with, and subjecting to, the light and power of life within. And when we were solicitous how to know it from the darkness and deceit within, this answer was given us from the Lord; Its nature will discover itself; it will find out and reprove whatever is reprovable, and furnish the soul with strength against it. Oh, blessed sound from the Lord God of life, who thus drew our hearts to wait upon him; and showed us how to wait, and what to wait for, and where we might meet with that which our hearts so exceedingly desired and panted after! And truly as our minds were thus turned inwards, the holy light did shine upon us from the Sun of righteousness, and the pure life and nature from the Son of God did spring up in us; and we felt the power of God revealed in our hearts, and the old image of sin and unrighteousness daily defacing, and our souls creating anew (in Christ Jesus), into the holy and heavenly image. So that here we felt the mercy of God, which saved his people in all ages, reaching to us also; and his Spirit regenerating, renewing, and washing us, with the water and blood which cleanses: and as we were regenerated and renewed more and more, so we were still washed more and more, and came more into fellowship with Christ in his death; and were also raised up by him more and more into his life, and taught to set our affections more on things above, and less on things below; which are of an ensnaring and entangling nature, in which the minds of the sons of men are held captive, until they meet with that royal, excellent, noble Spirit and power, which breaks the chains and fetters of darkness, and redeems out of them. And now we can testify (in true sense, and in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit), that not by working, willing, or running of ourselves; not by any works of righteousness which we had done or could do; but by the tender mercy of God visiting, and by the operation of his Holy Spirit upon us (in and through regenerating, renewing, and washing us from that which defiled and stained our souls, and made them guilty in his sight, and liable to his wrath), were we saved from the wrath to come, and from the ways of transgression wherein we walked, before our God thus visited us.

Now, it is the sincere desire of our souls, that this tender mercy of God might take effect on others also; and that they might likewise be lighted by him to the place where wisdom teaches her children, and where the true redemption of the soul is witnessed, and the true knowledge of the Father and of Christ (which is life eternal) given and received; that people might not be hardened to destruction, and deceived of their souls, by a foolish and vain religion, wherein is not the substance and kernel (which alone can nourish up to life eternal), but only some show and appearance thereof, which cannot really satisfy that which is indeed begotten and born of God's Spirit.

**XXIX. A brief Account of the Ground of our Worship, and how it comes to pass
that we cannot conform to the spirit of this world, or to the wills of men therein,
but only to the Spirit and Will of our God**

WE fear God, who made heaven and earth, whose power is over all, who has caused the light of his Holy Spirit to shine in our hearts, thereby teaching us how to worship him acceptably in Spirit and truth; which worship he has required of us, and that we meet together so to do in those assemblies, which he has gathered by his power, and orders by his Spirit, either in silence or sound of words, according to his pleasure.

And God, who has appointed us thus to worship him, has power over our bodies and souls, and can destroy and cast both into hell, if we should deny that truth and way of worship which he has taught us. Yes, if we should deny this way of worship, we should deny Christ, and be denied by him before his Father in heaven. For he himself has said, that neither at the mountain of Samaria, nor at Jerusalem, should men worship; but they that worship the Father must worship him in Spirit and in truth. Now, men cannot worship in Spirit and in truth as they please, or in the ways of their own inventing and setting up; but he that worships in Spirit and truth must first be made spiritual; and then must wait in silence of the flesh for God's Spirit to quicken him unto spiritual worship. For they that worship otherwise than thus, worship at best but after the oldness of the letter, and not in the newness of the Spirit, which is the only worship God seeks and requires under the New Testament.

Besides, we have found God's presence with us, and blessing upon us, in this way of worship; and our hearts greatly melted and warmed therein, and power given us over our passions and corruptions inwardly, and to order our lives and conduct holily, righteously, and innocently outwardly: which presence of God, and holy power over sin and vanity, affections and lusts, we would not lose for ten thousand worlds. And what an unjust and unthankful thing were it in us to turn from this way of worship which God has called us to, where we have met with these things, to that way of worship where we did not meet with these things, and where others do not, nor can, meet with them! For these things are only to be met with in that way of worship which God has appointed and blessed, and not in that way of worship which man has invented and set up, which every profane and wicked person can cry up, and enjoy his lusts under; but they that are otherwise taught of God can by no means submit to, without grievously sinning against him.

Now, magistracy was never ordained of God, nor power given to men by him, to force people to sin against him.

And is it not a great sin to worship against one's faith, according to the wills and precepts of men, contrary to the teachings and requirings of his Holy Spirit? Are not they that do thus hypocrites? Was power given unto magistrates to make men hypocrites; or to encourage people unto truth and uprightness both towards God and men? To wait upon God in his fear, to be taught by him the true way of worship, is not this good and right in his sight? And to worship in Spirit and truth as he teaches, is not this to do well? And was not the magistrate ordained of God to be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well? The magistrate says we do not obey him; but he should rather inquire whether he does not require that of us wherein we cannot obey him, without sinning against the Lord, and against the light of his Holy Spirit in our own hearts and consciences, and so bring God's wrath

upon us, and provoke him to destroy us both body and soul. But if men will needs be angry with us for serving the Lord, and worshipping him according to his holy law and will, we had better undergo their anger and unjust punishments for obeying our God, than come under his wrath for disobedience. And God is our witness that no stubbornness, willfulness, or contempt of authority, engages us in the least to continue, through many sufferings, in this way of meeting together to worship our God; but only obedience to the gospel and power of Christ, which we have found this visitation and ministration of life from on high to be to us, by its redeeming us out of sin, and from the spirit of this world. And the same that has redeemed us in some measure has required us thus to wait on the Lord to have our redemption perfected; and in thus waiting upon him, it is daily added to and carried on; blessed be the name of our God! But if we should forbear thus to meet, we should turn from, sin against, and provoke our God (who has already redeemed us in part, and is still further and further redeeming us), and turn back to Egypt, Sodom, and Babylon, where is the darkness, lust, and confusion, and not the holy order of God's Spirit, neither in the lives nor in the worship of those that dwell and abide there.

XXX. Some Queries concerning knowing and owning the Lord Jesus Christ truly and aright, who has been the only Savior and Redeemer in all Ages and Generations; and there never was, and never shall be, any other

Query 1. WHETHER they know or own the Lord Jesus Christ truly and aright, who only know and own him as outwardly described and related of in the Scriptures, but know him not inwardly revealed in their hearts, as the Word and power of eternal life? Or whether they are the true knowers and owners of Christ, who know and own him not only according to a literal description of him in the Scriptures, but also as inwardly revealed by the Father, witnessing him formed in them, and their hearts changed into his holy and heavenly image, by the virtue of his inward appearance, and operation of his Spirit and power in them?

Query 2. Whether they truly and rightly know the death and resurrection of Christ, who know only the relation of them in the Scriptures, but are not made conformable to his death, nor raised up by him in the power of his life? Or whether they are the true and right knowers of his death and resurrection, who are buried with him by the holy baptism of his Spirit into death; who, through the Spirit, have mortified the deeds of the body, and witness the holy seed of life raised and living in them, and themselves raised and made alive to God, in and through the power of the Father revealed in them?

Query 3. Whether they truly and rightly confess Christ to be the Lord and King, Priest and Prophet, of his people, who confess it only from the reading of it to be so in the Scriptures? Or, whether they are not the true and right confessors of Christ's kingly, priestly, and prophetic offices, who witness him exercising them in them; who witness him overcoming and reigning over sin and death in them; over whom other lords, even the spirits and powers of darkness, have not dominion now, but Christ only; and in whom he ministers as in his temple, offering spiritual gifts and sacrifices to his Father, and who also prophesies there, opening and revealing the mysteries of his kingdom to them, as he does to the least babes that are truly begotten and born of his Spirit?

Query 4. Do they or can they truly know Christ's voice, who never experienced the Word of life speaking in their hearts? Where does the false prophet speak? Does he not speak within? And where does the true Shepherd speak? Does he not speak also even in the heart? And do not the sheep hear,

know, and distinguish his voice there?

Query 5. Who knows the truth as it is in Jesus? Do any do so but those that have felt the drawings of the Father; come unto the Son in the drawings; and receive life from and abide in him? Do any know the truth in Jesus but those that witness virtue, freedom, life, and power, by the truth in some measure? Does not that saying and promise of Christ (John 8:31-32) stand firm in every age? "If you continue in my words, then are you my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Query 6. Who are ingrafted into Christ? Can any one be ingrafted into him, but as he is inwardly revealed and made known? Yes, is not he in them who are ingrafted into him, and are not they in him? Is not he that is truly regenerated cut off from the old stock within, from the root of bitterness within; and is not he implanted into the new stock within also; insomuch as he sensibly feels the pure, holy root of life bear him, and the sap thereof springing up in him, causing him to bring forth fruit to God in due season?

Query 7. Who prays in the name of Christ? Does he who says these or such like words in the best seriousness and sensibleness he can in his own will, "Hear me, O Lord, for Christ's sake: I confess I am unworthy; but I beg of you in his name who is worthy," etc.; or he who prays in the child's nature, on the Father's breathing upon him, in the Spirit of the Father which is given him, and in the time and will of the Father? He that does but sigh or groan in and from the Spirit, does not that sigh or groan ascend up to the Father in Christ's name? Alas! how outward is men's religion! But the inward streams and current of the true, pure, and heavenly religion they know not.

Query 8. Who receives Christ? Do any but those who receive and bow to the light of his Spirit inwardly revealed? Can any receive him but they that hear his knocks and open to him? Do any know the inward voice of the Shepherd, besides the sheep? And can any receive his voice, and not receive him? And can any who are ignorant of and refuse his voice, receive him?

Query 9. Who do truly and rightly believe in Christ? Do any do so, or can any do so, but they who first feel life, from which the true faith springs? Ah that all the faith in men were dashed, but what comes from life, unites to life, and abides in life!

Query 10. Whom does Christ gather from the barren mountains? Are they not his sheep; his poor, distressed, scattered, wounded, fainting, and almost famished sheep? What are the mountains he gathers them from? Are they not the several dead ways, worships, and gatherings without life? And out of whose mouths does he rescue them? Is it not out of the mouths of the shepherds that made a prey of them; who fed them not with life, with virtue, with pure, living knowledge; but with words, with dreams, with apprehensions of their own, concerning the things of God? And where does he lead them? Is it not to his own holy mountain (which is exalted by God, and established over and on top of all those other mountains), where the fresh pastures are, and where the streams of life flow, and run plentifully?

Query 11. Who are Christ's kindred according to the Spirit? Who is his mother, sister, brother? Are any so but they that do the will of the Father? And is this obedience a working according to the law, or of the righteousness of the law? No; is it not rather of the nature and righteousness of the gospel? Is not that which flows from him who is righteous, righteous also; even as he is righteous?

Query 12. To whom does Christ give power to become sons? Is it not to as many as truly and rightly receive him, and believe in his name? To as many as received him of old, to them he gave power to become the sons of God. Does he not do so still? What is it to receive power to become a son? Let the heart that has received it answer; for the notionist cannot.

Query 13. What is the reason so many who are high in notion and profession, cannot own this precious appearance of the Spirit, power, and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, in this our day, in the hearts of his children, after the long night of darkness, which has so long covered the earth? Is not this the very reason, even because they do not truly and rightly know either the Father or the Son? Can any see or know him that begets, and with the same eye not see or know him that is begotten of him? Can any love Christ, and not love his brethren? Is not wisdom, in her appearances, justified of her children in this age, as well as formerly?

Query 14. Are there two Christs, one manifested without, and another revealed within; or is it the same Lord Jesus Christ, who, in the days of his flesh, appeared outwardly, and was afterwards manifested within as the mystery of life, and hope of glory; who also, in this our day, is revealed and made known within unto us, by the same eternal Spirit?

Query 15. He that truly and rightly knows the Spirit of Christ, does he not know Christ also? even as he that knows Christ must needs know the Father also. Are not the Father and Christ one? Could any one see Christ, even in the days of his flesh, and not see the Father also? See John 14:9. So is not Christ and the Spirit one in like manner? And are not all that are truly of Christ, begotten by, gathered into, and do they not live and walk in, that one Spirit of his? And do they not there know the things of God as they are, and testify of what they have seen and known? Though they that are out of that Spirit and power knew neither him, nor the testimony of life that comes by him, no more than the Jews knew his appearance outwardly in their day.

A Query added concerning Imputation

Query. IN what state was Abraham when faith was imputed to him for righteousness? Was he in the ungodly state; in the state of unbelief and disobedience to the Spirit and power of the Lord; or was he in the sense of God's power, in the belief of him who could raise up his son from the dead, and in the performance of obedience unto him, giving up his son at the Lord's command?

And in what state must we be, when we witness faith imputed to us also for righteousness? Must we not be in the sense of the same power, and in the belief of it, and in the obedience of faith? Read Rom. 4. and consider: for the righteousness of the gospel is not imputed in or by the works of the law, but in the obedience of faith.

It is true, God justifies the ungodly; through faith he makes them just and godly; but does he justify or accept them in the ungodly state? Does he not first make a change in them by his power? Does he not first in some measure purify their hearts by faith?

THE CONCLUSION

THERE are a great many who profess the gospel state, and that they are in Christ, and under grace, and freely justified by grace; so that they look upon their sins as covered by the Lord, and not imputed to them, they believing, as they pretend, in the name of his Son, and obeying his gospel, etc., I say, many profess these things, who do not at all know what they mean truly and rightly, as in God's sight.

For it is a great matter to be in Christ, even to know him that is true, and to be in him that is true; to come out of darkness into his light, out of death into his life; out of Satan's kingdom, and out of subjection to sin, into his kingdom, and into subjection to his Spirit. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and all things become new." Is this true? Does he that is in Christ witness this? And he that does not witness this, is he in Christ?

Ah! how many then are deceived about their being in him, and of their hope in him! For how few of those who talk of being in Christ know what the new creation in him means, or what it is to have Christ formed in them! How few know his Spirit by receiving it, by union with it! which yet if a man have not, he is none of his. How few know how to try spirits by the holy anointing, which is only able to try and discover such false spirits as come in the sheep's clothing, and as ministers of righteousness, and yet come with the deceivableness of unrighteousness, to draw men from the Spirit and power, or to keep them in a dead form of knowledge and worship without true life!

So for being under grace, few truly know what it is; for grace is that which has dominion over sin, and which gives dominion to those that are under it. "Sin shall not have dominion over you," said the apostle; "for you are not under the law, but under grace." Therefore yield not your members servants or instruments to sin. You did so when you were free from righteousness; but now let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, seeing grace gives you power over it, and makes you free from it unto righteousness.

So, justification by grace is only to them who are taught by grace. The grace of God brings salvation, redemption, justification, to them, and no others; for their sins only are blotted out, covered, and not imputed, who receive grace, hear the voice of it, and obey it. "Hear, and your souls shall live." In hearing the grace which teaches from God, souls come to light in his sight; and the living are justified by him; and in the living way and path of life are the sins blotted out, and the garment given which covers the nakedness; which garment is to be girt about the soul, and kept close on, or the nakedness and shame will appear, and be seen again.

So, to believe in the name of Christ, and to fly to his name, and trust in his name, and to pray to the Father in his name, and to obey in his name and power; these are great matters, and very few of those that make profession of them truly know them: for his name is living (he was dead, but is alive), and his presence, heavenly virtue, and power is in it. They that know his name, know that which is above every name. They know that which has an authority from God to bring all things under, (both in the heart, and also in the life and conduct) that God alone may be exalted.

The gospel state is a great state, a high state, a state not of shadowy things, but of the everlasting kingdom, where the substance of the things under the law is given to, and possessed by, those that are there, as they grow up in the gospel power and covenant. There the gospel fast is known, the fast which God has chosen, which is to loose the bands of wickedness (which bind down the good, even that

which is of God in the heart), to take off the heavy burdens, under which, and by which, that which is pure is bowed down, and to let the oppressed seed go free. This is the fast which God has chosen under the gospel; the pure and undefiled fast, even to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world. And to those that observe this fast God makes a feast of fat things; for their light breaks forth as the morning, and their health grows up speedily; and their righteousness goes before them, and the glory of the Lord gathers them up, or is their rearward; and the Lord is nigh unto them, and is ready to answer them in all that they call upon him for, as was promised. Isa. 58:8-9. Now, being come to this feast, they are to keep it with unleavened bread, as to the flesh, and as to man's wisdom; but with the bread which is leavened with the Spirit, leavened with life; and with the wine of the kingdom; which Christ eats and drinks with his redeemed ones, new in the gospel Spirit and power, which is his Father's kingdom: for the kingdom of God stands not in meats or drinks, or any other outward thing, no, not in good words concerning the things of the kingdom; but in Spirit, power, and life itself, and in the righteousness, peace, and joy, which is in the Spirit.

Reply to Queries and Criticisms

[1667, published posthumously]

Concerning the Rule of the New Covenant, or that which GOD has appointed to be the Rule to the Children of the New Covenant.

THE way, the truth, the life; the everlasting way, the everlasting truth, the everlasting life; that is the rule in the new covenant. God sent Christ his Son, the Word of eternal life, a light into the world; and the message and drift of the gospel, is to turn men from the inward darkness to the inward light; and being turned to it, the manifestation of this light is to be the rule, which manifests the way of light and truth as immediately in the heart, as ever the darkness did the way of deceit and error.

The promise of the new covenant is, "I will put my Spirit within them;" and this Spirit has an inward law and testimony, which it writes in the heart; which inward law and testimony is to be the rule of the heart. And as the outward Jews were to have recourse to the outward law and testimony, so the inward Jews are to have recourse to the inward law and testimony; and to witness the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus revealed in them, and their minds and spirits subjected thereto: and this is near, bright, and powerful in those who receive the Spirit, and with him the law and power of the endless life.

The letter kills: the Jews understood not the way of life by the letter; therefore the promise was, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh:" and because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son; and you shall hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it." And this voice is to be hearkened to; this prophet (which God raises up to the soul in the new covenant) is to be heard in all things: and he that hears his voice, and obeys, lives; and he that hears not is in death, even until now, profess what he will.

In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but the new creation; if any man walk according to this rule, peace be upon him, etc. What does the apostle call the rule here? Oh! wait on the Lord to read in the Spirit, and rightly to understand.

If a man receive the Spirit, and walk in the newness of the light, and quickenings thereof every day, has he not a rule which is certain and infallible? If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation; and the limits of that new creation (which is the light and power of the endless life, or of God's Holy Spirit dwelling within) are his rule. And within the bounds of that (within the bounds of his light, his life, his motions, his instructions) man never errs; but out of it, deceit and darkness and error are always at hand.

Yet, though we do own Christ to be the rule, we do not deny making use of the Scriptures to try doctrines and forms of religion by; but know that what is of God does and will agree therewith, and what does not agree therewith is not of God; and that our fore-fathers in the faith were led to batter the superstitions and idolatries of the Papists, by the testimony of the Scriptures. And we have also the testimony of the Scriptures with us, both to the light and Spirit within, and against forms formerly invented, or now practiced, out of the life and power. But we believe the Spirit to be a touch-stone beyond the Scriptures, and to be that which gives ability to try and discern, not only words, but spirits; whereas a man may hold the form of doctrine and godliness, and yet lack the power: in which case, nothing can try such a spirit, but the Spirit of God, which is in the spiritual man. And for calling the Scriptures the Word of God, we cannot but look upon it as an improper expression, they being many words, not the one Word; and Christ is called in the scripture, not only the Word God, but the Word of God. And if, in the fear of the Lord, and true sense, we keep herein to the expressions of scripture, and its form of words, which is sound; surely we cannot justly be blamed for so doing.

But whereas you affirm the scripture to be the rule; consider seriously, and answer me this question, How is it a rule? Whether it be a rule as it is literally understood, or whether it must not be interpreted before it can be understood as a rule? If it must be interpreted, what must be the interpreter, whether it be the Spirit of God, or a man's wisdom?

As to that question, Whether the writings of any now be of equal weight with the Scriptures; I have this to say:

The weight of the words which are from God's Spirit is according to the strength of life which he pleases to clothe them with. He sent forth Moses, the prophets, the Son in that body of flesh, the apostles in his name and authority; and the angel that he sends with the everlasting gospel, after the apostasy, to preach to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, he sends not without his authority; yes, the message that he thus sends in any age has a peculiar reference to the state of the world, and the state of the people of God in that age; and none can slight it (whether it be signified by word or writing) without dashing against God's authority, and despising him that speaks in these latter days. Yes, the immediate word of the Lord, spoken and declared at this day, by any man to whom it pleases the Lord to commit the same, is of no less authority, nor more to be slighted now, than it was in his servants in the days past, by whom the Scriptures were given forth.

Concerning Christ

CHRIST is that Word of eternal life, which was glorified with the Father before the world was; who, in the full appointed time took up the body of flesh prepared by the Father, to do the will in, and did the will in it, fulfilling all righteousness, to the satisfaction of the very heart of the Father; for whose name's sake the sins of believers are pardoned. And this same Word of eternal life, and no other, which took that body of flesh upon him, is also manifested, and dwells in the hearts of his saints; who (as they receive him in the faith which is of him) dwells in them richly, manifesting in the vessel the treasures of his divine wisdom and knowledge. Now, this is the precious knowledge of Christ indeed; and this is it every one is to wait for, to find a measure of knowledge. Now, this is the precious knowledge of Christ indeed; and this is it every one is to wait for, to find a measure of the same life, the fulness whereof dwells in him bodily, dwelling in our mortal bodies, and making us like unto him, in spirit, nature, and conduct. And he that knows not, but opposes, this (in any of its appearances or operations), either in himself or others, is so far of the dark anti-christian spirit.

Concerning the Form of Sound Words

NOT only the form of sound words, but also the good knowledge of the heavenly things themselves, have been miserably lost, and buried in the ruins of the great apostasy. And though God has oftentimes touched men's spirits, and given them some sense of the anti-christian state of darkness; yet have they not had that regard thereunto, so as to be led thereby out of the state of darkness, but are found in Babylon, by the Spirit of the Lord, at the very time of his coming to destroy her. For though the Spirit of the Lord call out of Babylon; yet there is great danger of not observing and following the call; but of abiding still there, and partaking of her plagues.

Now, though men have had the Scriptures, yet lacking the Spirit of God, and not knowing how to turn their minds thereto, and distinguish his voice from the voice of their own spirits and reasonings (yes, of the enemy also, who lies in wait to steal into men's minds false apprehensions from the Scriptures), they have not come into a clear understanding, either of the things or words of scripture; but with that knowledge, and those apprehensions of things, which they have gathered, they have many times been ready to fight rather against Christ than antichrist; and so their confessions of faith, and expositions of scriptures, have been mixed things; rather suiting to their own beliefs and apprehensions, than the true nature of the things themselves: yes, by this gathered knowledge they have been in great danger of a desperate opposing the pure administration of God's truth, from and in the light and power of his own Spirit. Likewise the churches they have gathered and built up, they have done in a way of imitation of what was done once formerly by the power, and in the authority, of the Spirit; but not in the same power, life, and authority. I might say the same about their ordinances and duties; wherein the Lord (God knows) has manifested to others, and can manifest to them, that they have erred very much.

It is true, you have rejected some wood, hay, and stubble; and we acknowledge the Lord's goodness to you, in that you have gone so far. Yes, but there is yet more to be rejected; and all imitations, and knowledges, and interpretations of scripture out of the pure life, are to be laid aside; and the Spirit of

the Lord waited upon, in the light which is of him; to which the mind is to be turned from the darkness, and in which it is to abide. Now, here you are very short; not so much as to come to the outward owning or understanding of the way; so far are you from walking therein.

That you seek to find the power and operation of truth in your hearts, I do believe concerning many of you; and do bless the Lord in reference to any of you that it is so with you; and from my heart desire for you, that your hearts may be answered by the Lord therein, and that you may feel preservation through that which is of him in you; though distinctly you know it not, nor how to have your minds turned towards, and to wait upon, the Lord in it.

So, to seek to have Christ formed in you, and to know union with him, and a real implanting into him; to know him as a vine, as head, a living stone, a root, as meat indeed, and drink indeed, etc., this is precious indeed to desire after, but much more precious to witness: and oh that you also knew the way, the living way, wherein God communicates these things abundantly, to those who once sat in the desolate and barren places, mourning and sorely crying out for the lack of them! for then you would not oppose us for turning people from darkness to light, but be one with us therein.

The integrity which is in any of you is of God; and though the soul mistake about a duty or ordinance, yet the cry therein after him is not wholly rejected and despised by him. But you would know much more of him, if you were acquainted with him in his own way, and worshipped him in the everlasting ordinance, which is the pure light of his Son; which was before the letter, brings the soul nearer to the Lord than the letter can, and gives a fuller communion with the Lord in Spirit, than can be had or enjoyed through words or conceptions of things. And the end of the letter's testimony is to bring into the Spirit and power which is the administration of the gospel.

Concerning Inward Impressions

ALL the impressions which are from the holy, pure power of the living God, are of the gospel administration, and are of great use and virtue; and he that is gathered out of the dark power, into the pure power of God, who is light, and who gathers into the light, by the message and ministration of the gospel, in that light has a discerning of the power into which he is gathered, from the power out of which he is gathered. And here he neither can nor dares receive any impression of the dark spirit and power (which is known and experienced to work in great subtlety and deceivableness), nor refuse any motion or impression which is of the pure and holy One. But you lay the great stress upon owning doctrinals according to your apprehensions of them; whereas you must come much further out of Babylon, out of man's spirit and wisdom, more into the pure fear and waiting upon God, more into the sense and power of truth, and into the light and knowledge which is thereof, before your doctrinals can be owned and subscribed to, by that which is of God. And this springs in my heart in true love, and tenderness, and melting bowels concerning you: Oh that you held the head! I question not, but that you hold notions about the head, according to your understanding of things; but to hold the head is a far deeper thing than so.

As for that passage about communion with God, apply it; oh! apply it, or rather wait for the Spirit of the Lord to apply it close to your hearts! For it is possible, by his light and Spirit, in his own due season, he may make manifest to you, that much of that which goes with you for communion with God,

is not really so; and, indeed, in the true love and upright tenderness of my heart towards you, I would not have you mistake about these things. As for raptures, the error is easy; but in that which lies low in the pure fear is the preservation. And, friend, I pray consider this question which is now in my heart to you. You speak of departing from the faith: ah! friend, are you yet come to the faith? Do not answer it slightly; for I put it not slightly to you, nor without a cause. For through the faith of the Son of God, another knowledge, and sense of things, in this day of the Lord's power, is received, than you have yet attained.

That a man's doctrinals are right according to scripture in all the main substantials, is no infallible rule to try what power it is that works in him, or what his spirit is; because deceit works in a mystery; and the spirit of error may come in sheep's clothing, and may get good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple. And there were those that held a form of godliness, and had not the true power, but denied it; and such were to be turned from; because, denying the true power, they denied the Lord that bought them, and so held not the head; and he that does so, whatsoever he holds of the doctrine of scriptures, has sufficient cause to question his communion with God, and also the truth of his ravishments and spiritual enjoyments, and all his duties and graces.

Again; a man may apprehend his doctrinals to be right, as to the main substantials, when indeed they are not so. For the doctrines of the gospel are mysteries. Faith is a mystery; the love of God in the Spirit a mystery; obedience to the truth a mystery; the right confession of Christ in and through the Spirit a mystery; the worship of God in Spirit a mystery; justification, sanctification, and the peace and joy of the Spirit, mysteries of the kingdom, etc., and it is easy missing and misunderstanding these things, but hard to come to the true knowledge of them; and if any of the true, inward, spiritual knowledge of these things be received at any time, it is hard retaining it, no, impossible rightly so to do, but in that which gave it. And, indeed, this is the great mystery of religion; namely, to begin in the Spirit, and so to travel on in the pure light, life, and knowledge thereof, and not to entertain or mix with any thing of the flesh. But now if a man have not the Spirit of Christ, or if he be not able to distinguish the Spirit of Christ, in its voice, motions, and workings, from the other spirit, and from his own wisdom and understanding; when he reads a scripture, he may easily err and mistake about the doctrines thereof, and let in something of his own, or the other spirit's forming, instead of that which is the pure truth of God. And then this which he has so let in, will cause him to misjudge concerning the truth, when God manifests and brings it forth purely and unmingled in others, and make him a great enemy to it.

This was the case of the Scribes and Pharisees and great priests, in the time of Christ; they studied the law, gave interpretations of it, being appointed by God to preserve the people's knowledge; and by their understanding of the law and prophets, Christ could not be the Messiah; for, plainly, that appearance of his disagreed with the law and the prophets, according to their understanding of them. Christ was to abide forever; but he said the Son of man must be lifted up. Yes, the very disciples themselves understood not this for a long time: and if the sense of the life and power of the Father in him had not bowed down their spirits, they also would have reasoned against him in many things. "When Christ comes, no man will know where he is from: but we know where this man is from." And when Nicodemus (who was touched with the sense of his power) seemed to savor him; what said they to him? "Search and look, for out of Galilee arises no prophet." And they themselves, in searching, and looking, and trying by the Scriptures, found him not agree with Moses, and the law which he had given from God (who they said they knew was of God:), but whereas Moses had given a strict command

about the sabbath, upon which there was no work to be done, nor burden borne, etc., he, on the other hand bids a man "take up his bed and walk on the sabbath-day. How could this be the Messiah, of whom Moses wrote" (would they say in their hearts)? Would he teach and practice contrary to Moses? So that there is no certain trying by the Scriptures, further than a man is certain that he has the understanding of those scriptures which he tries by, from God's Spirit. For was not this plain to them, that no burden was to be borne on the sabbath? And do they not herein (according to their understandings and knowledge of the Scripture) find Christ contrary to Moses and the prophets? What then would follow naturally? A deceiver! a deceiver! would they presently cry. He cannot be of God; let him talk of what power he will, it cannot be of God's power: we need a further sign from him, before we can believe him to be the Messiah.

But the way of trying doctrines by the unerring Spirit, and pure light of truth in the heart, is certain and infallible. He who is truth, and no lie, never deceives about truth; yes, the very instinct of his life and nature distinguishes things truly, and never teaches the heart to err, who is acquainted with it, and keeps to it. And what is the Spirit which is given, and why is he given? Is he not above the letter? And where he is received, is he not to be acknowledged above it? Is not his law of light, written by his finger in the heart, above any literal description or command of it? We must set the Spirit above the Scriptures, and the ministration of the Spirit above the ministration of the letter. We cannot be clear before the Lord, in giving way to any professors on the earth herein, but must testify for God against them. Yes, he that has received the anointing, and knows how it teaches, and how it preserves from all that seduces, cannot but give the honor to it, and acknowledge that it is the great ordinance of God in the gospel, even above and beyond the letter. And till he is so known and received, men can never be able to distinguish the truths of God, as held forth by him in the Scriptures of truth, from their own conceivings and apprehensions about things, but will be ready to take their own apprehensions and conceivings for truth; and having so done, they cannot but mis-see, mistake, and misjudge about that which is truth indeed. So that the doctrine which they thus set up, is not indeed the doctrine of truth according to the Scriptures, but rather that which they conceive and have imagined so to be.

So that, whereas you say, "Your religion consists, first, of right apprehensions, etc." we, on the other hand, cannot but testify, as we have been convinced by the Lord, and felt and understood in him that is true, that a man must first receive the Spirit, before he can have right apprehensions about the mystery of God, Christ, etc., because the Spirit searches the deep things of God; and the things of God knows no man but by the Spirit; therefore, there is a necessity for people first to be turned to the Spirit of God, as being the first step in the way to true, saving knowledge.

Concerning the Light

CHRIST, who had all power given him by the Father, and authority to send forth messengers to preach the gospel of his salvation, he sent forth his apostles and servants to testify and declare of it.

That which they were to preach and testify of, was, "That which was from the beginning;" even the "eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto them." And this is the message which they heard of him, and were to declare to others, "That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." And this Word of faith, this Word which was from the beginning, this Word which reconciles the soul to God, they were to preach, as near in the heart and in the mouth. And the intent of their

preaching and testifying of this, was to turn men to it; from the darkness within to the light within; from the power of Satan within to the power of God within. Thus was the gospel preached before the apostasy, and thus is it again preached after the apostasy; and this light, this life, this power of the invisible Word, is witnessed again to become the salvation, as it was before the apostasy.

Now here, being turned to this, this discovers the darkness, the lost estate, the captivity, the bands, the misery of the soul, and gives to long after the Savior; and not only so, but it also shows the Savior whom it causes the soul to long after; and in the waiting upon the Savior in the light which is of him, gives to partake of his salvation.

And so here we come to have that work of God renewed in our hearts and spirits, which at any time was formerly wrought; and wrought more clearly and effectually; as it must needs be, as the mind is turned toward and gathered into the pure light, life, and power. And in this we are taught to own Christ, as he appeared in that body of flesh, and what he did in the life and virtue of the Father; yes, the preciousness of that his sacrifice, both in its own nature, and in the eye of the Father; and we bless the Lord for him, and believe in the Father through him. Yes, we bless the Lord for the declarations of the good things in the Scriptures, and read them with joy and thankfulness to the Father, and in the watch against that which would imagine about them; for we know any such thing (let into the mind) darkens. So that we do not fall short in a true owning of Christ, as he appeared in that body; and also we know and own the same Word of eternal life appearing in us; so that we can say truly with the apostle, "It has pleased the Father to reveal the Son in us, and it is the eternal life, it is the Son indeed of the Holy God, and not another."

Now, for that way of working which you speak of, of seeing a man's nakedness, filthiness, wretched, lost, undone condition; of being convinced of his own impotency; that his help is not in himself; that all his righteousness is as filthy rags; of crying out, what shall I do! Woe is me, I am undone! What shall I do to be saved? How shall I appear before the Lord? And so of mourning in secret, and the sore running, etc., and the discovery of Christ, as was in that day, as offered without money, without price, etc., and so the soul's humble and cordial casting itself upon him, etc., and desiring to know him, not only as a Savior, but as a Lord also, reigning over it, etc. — all this we knew, in the true and sensible experience, as it was revealed in that day. But we knew not the Word of life within to be the Word (though we felt operations from it); and so were not founded upon the rock, upon the Word of life, as revealed within; and so when the storms came, they had greater power upon our spirits than we believed they could possibly have. And now in the Lord's fresh visiting of us, we have not lost any thing we had before, nor do deny any thing that God wrought in us then; but have it again with advantage, and precious additions, from the Lord God, in that pure light of life wherewith he has visited us.

And now God having demonstrated this thing to us, showing us what it is, and giving us to partake of the precious virtues of it; how can we call it less than a measure of Christ, of his Spirit; than the seed of the kingdom; than the heavenly leaven, etc.? knowing and experiencing it assuredly to be that very thing which Christ so called in his parables; and that in you which is offended at us for it, we know to be not the true birth, but the birth of another wisdom, which is to be cast out with its mother: and it will be a happy day with you, if ever you come to witness the casting of it out; which you can never do, till you come to know, and own, and be subject to, Christ within, to the pure commandment and Word of life in the heart, to the law which comes out of Zion, and to the testimony and word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And they that come not to know it cast out of them by the power, they thereby will be cast

out with it.

But that there are some glimmerings of light remaining in fallen man, directing concerning many things morally good, as to honor parents, to deal justly, to do as we would be done unto, etc., there is, you say, a light discovering these things as duties, and the contrary to be evil, and there is also some answerable strength to come up to such moralities. If you mean a light distinct from the Spirit and divine nature of God, I desire you to manifest it from scripture: for Adam was to die the death that very day that he sinned. And the death and curse came upon his posterity, who are dead in trespasses and sins; but the light that discovers and leads out of evil is from Christ. That which makes sin manifest, is his light. I read that the grace which brings salvation, has appeared to all men; and that that teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and gives them strength so to do; and that it is the work of the Spirit to convince of sin; and that the Spirit of the Lord strived with the old world to reduce them from their evil ways; and that he gave the Jews his good Spirit to instruct them, but they rebelled against him: but that there are some glimmerings of light distinct from the Spirit of Christ, teaching fallen men to do this, and some answerable strength in him to walk up thereto, I read not.

It is the promise of the new covenant, that God will write his laws in the heart; and whatever of his law is written in any man's heart, it is by virtue thereof; for man is dead unto God's law naturally, and his eye blinded by the god of the world: but that which opens his eye to see what the law says, is the light of the Spirit. For that which makes manifest is light; and that which may be known of God in the Gentiles is made manifest to them by the light of God in them; which shines in their darkness, but their darkness cannot comprehend it; but it fathoms and comprehends the darkness, and is able to gather the mind out of it, being subjected to it, in the will which it creates and begets, through the eternal power which visits by it, and is present with it, to work the mind out of, and deliver it from, the darkness. And as this light comes from Christ ("for he is the true light, that enlightens every man that comes into the world"), so it discovers and makes manifest Christ, in his nature and Spirit, and leads and guides towards him; and he that is led to him in Spirit, and born of him in Spirit, cannot miss of the benefit and virtue of what he did in that body of flesh; being gathered into and found in that which is of him, to which all belongs. And in and by this is received that nature wherein the law is answered; and the work of answering the law is through the renewing of the mind, and an evidence of something of a new nature; every degree of which nature is begotten and maintained by Christ, the power of God; who is over the fall, and the whole corruption thereof. But by the old corrupt nature or mind, can no man do the things contained in the law; for it is enmity against God, and is not subject to his holy law, neither indeed can be. But the law is spiritual, holy, just, and good, converting the soul, and making wise the simple; which work it effects, wherever it is written in the heart by the finger of God's Spirit.

Then again, as touching God's imputing Christ's active and passive obedience, etc., we do not lay the stress of justification in believing a notion concerning Christ's active and passive obedience; but this we know, that Christ did obey and suffer, and that it was for our sakes; and that, for his sake, there is a gift given us from the Father, to draw us to Christ; and that he that is overcome to God, by the gift of his light, is thereby drawn out of the darkness; and that that gift brings every man (that hears the heavenly voice thereof, and follows it) into the Son's light, into the Son's nature, into the Son's life, into the Son's Spirit; in which the Gentiles might partake of remission of sins for his sake, being gathered thereby out of the darkness, into his light and power. For though they had never heard the outward sound or name Christ; yet feeling the thing, and being gathered to God by the thing, the value and virtue of it could not but redound to them; for it is not the outward name, but the inward life and

power, which is the Savior.

And whereas the voice of the Spirit says, "Ho, every one that thirsts, come you to the waters;" what are the waters to which the thirsty are invited to come? Did we not believe in Christ, and cast ourselves on Christ in that day, according as you apprehend? And yet the thirst and cry of our souls was not satisfied. But the living waters satisfy the thirst. Nor is it a believing a relation concerning the thing, but a receiving of the thing, of the milk, of the wine, of the living water, which answers the desire of the thirsty soul. And by coming to the living waters, and hearing the living voice, and eating and drinking the living food, the soul lives, and the everlasting covenant is made with it, even the sure mercies of David, which are sure in the covenant of life forever. And those that are living, in and by the true life, cannot desire to reap or enjoy any thing out of the new covenant of life, but only in it.

This is in my heart concerning you; You lay the stress upon a notion, and upon an act of the creature from and upon a notion; which they that are out of the life may perform; and who (that has any sense of a man in him) would not perform, to avoid perishing? That is, who would not thus cast himself upon Christ, if believing after such a manner would save him? And yet there is also a difference, a very great difference, between doing of it now, when Christ is generally owned as the Savior, and doing it then, when he was generally disowned. Then, who thus believed, it argued the teachings of the life and power so to do; but now the form of owning Christ is far more common than any form or way of disowning. So that now, not the word, nor the form, nor the outward owning, nor the casting of the soul upon Christ, is so much to be considered or valued; but rather the power, the light, the life, the gift, wherein and whereby this is alone rightly and truly done. And he that owns Christ aright will own that which is of Christ, the manifestation and gift of his Spirit, the shining of his pure light, first in the darkness, and then out of the darkness, to that mind which it has gathered and preserves out of the darkness.

And then for being complete in Christ in a relative way, while the heart is unmortified, and unsubdued to God; it is a dangerous mistaking about these things. I do confess that sins are pardoned upon a true belief, and the soul enters into the covenant of life, and is accepted with the Lord, as it finds entrance thereinto, and walks therein. And there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." But if there be a hearkening to the flesh, and walking after the lusts and desires thereof, is there no condemnation then? Is not the justification in the covenant, and according to the laws of the covenant? Alas, alas! how do men imagine concerning things! and so, in their imaginations, justify themselves wherein the Lord condemns them; and know not the way of the covenant, and of the justification thereof. For there is a new covenant, as well as an old (and the new is not like the old); and a walking with God in the new covenant; and every step in it his life justifies, and every step out of it his life condemns; and the Mediator of the new covenant justifies it according to the new covenant, and never otherwise. For the way of God is perfect (the way of life, the way of reconciliation, the way of redemption), and the soul is only accepted and justified of the Lord therein. Yes, justification is a mystery to man's wisdom and understanding, with all his knowledge he can gather from scripture: and he only knows it who feels it, and has the experience of it, in that which is true, and which cannot deceive.

Concerning Justification

THE apostle James says expressly, that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only; and his words were from God's Spirit, and are true, and the Lord saw a use and service of them. There are works which are excluded the covenant of life, and there are works which are not excluded, no, not to justification. There are works required by the covenant; works wrought in the faith and by the power of God; and when they are brought to the light, it is made manifest that they were wrought in God; even works that are of his Son, wrought in the life and by the Spirit of his Son, and these the Father always justifies. Yet we do not say this is a man's justification for his sins past, but they are forgiven for his name's sake: nor do they expiate sins afterwards committed, etc., but the advocate intercedes, and his blood washes them away. But this we say, that alone in the faith, in the obedience of the new covenant, the justification of the new covenant is witnessed: and the new covenant justifies no sin, nor the soul in sin; but purges away the sin, and justifies from it, washing off the venom and defilement of the wicked spirit from the conscience, which the Lord purges by the faith, and by the virtue of the water and blood which the faith brings in.

Now, having been led by God into the pure covenant of life, and having there had the true sense, knowledge, and experience of things, even of the truth as it is in Jesus, we cannot but speak and testify of it as we have felt and received it; and here we know and find certainly and infallibly, that it is not the law of works which justifies the believer, nor the obedience or righteousness thereof; but there is a righteousness revealed, of a higher nature and kind than that righteousness of the law, which is made the soul's in and by the faith. And this is Christ's righteousness the righteousness of his life, the righteousness of his nature, the righteousness of his Spirit, which is revealed in the soul, and which, in the union with Christ, becomes the soul's, and Christ thereby is made of God unto us righteousness. And the works which are wrought in man by this righteous Spirit and holy power are of far more value in themselves, and of more acceptance with God, than man's obedience to the law could be, could he obey ever so exactly; for these are from a higher principle, and of a far more excellent nature, spirit, and kind, than man's nature and spirit is; and yet the acceptance is not for the work's sake, but for the sake of the worker of these works.

Concerning God's Love to Mankind

GREAT is the love of God to mankind, who desires not their destruction, but their redemption and salvation from that which destroys. Now, from and according to this love, he sent Christ as a ransom, a propitiation for the sins of the whole world: and not only so, but he has given him as a light to enlighten all the dark parts of the earth, that every soul might believe in his life, and by its guidance and power come out of the darkness: and the free gift is as large and as powerful to save, as the offense or offenses are to destroy. So that God has not only said it, but he has manifested that he desires not the death of a sinner; but would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of his truth, and gift of his grace, that they may be saved thereby. And this is the gospel, even the grace which brings salvation, and the power of eternal life, to all men's doors; by and in which the Spirit of the Lord God (who is able to save) strives with them and in them (according to his pleasure) against the enemy.

Now, for men to interpret a scripture so as to overturn this, contrary to the very drift of the gospel, and contrary to the very nature and heart of God, they do not well, nor by the guidance of his Spirit in so doing. And now in love to you, though I have not much freedom to open these things, knowing that they are above the state of most people to understand, and that it is rather proper for them to wait in what is clear and manifest, than to meddle with things hard to be understood, and deeply mysterious, before the Spirit of the Lord opens them to them: yet I say, in love I find freedom in the Lord to say a little to you. Mind the words of the apostle, in fear and reverence towards the Lord. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?"

Now consider, how is God willing to show his wrath, and to make the power of his destroying a vessel known? Is it a thing natural to him? Is it not contrary to his nature to destroy? Any who can testify any thing of the life of God in their hearts, do they find any thing of a destroying nature in it? Christ, who was the express image of God, did not he come to save? Did he come to destroy any? And when any resisted the counsel of God against themselves, was it not grievous to him? "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered you!" Here the heart of God towards the sons of men may be read, as in a true glass. And before the Lord gives them up to destruction, does he not endure them with much long-suffering? And is it not the proper intent of the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of God to lead men to repentance? Rom. 2:4. And they that are led by the long-suffering to repent, do they not witness it salvation? 2 Pet. 3:15. Ah! wait on God, that you may understand these things from him as they are; and not according to the imaginations and reasonings of your own wisdom and understanding. It has been a long night of darkness, wherein many misapprehensions and false conceivings upon scriptures have been swallowed down, which the Lord pitied us under, and bare with us in them; but now it is high time to bow down to and receive that light which purges the vessel from all such misapprehensions and misconceivings, which are as really hay and stubble in the sight of God, as the grossest darkness of popery is.

Concerning Baptism

WE own the one baptism; and, blessed be the Lord, are baptized therewith into one body. That of water was but the forerunner's, but the shadow of Christ's baptism, which is with the Holy Spirit and fire. Now, when Christ sent his apostles to preach and baptize, did he send them to baptize with the forerunner's baptism or with his own baptism, when he said, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them into the name," etc.? Paul professes openly he was not sent to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Was he not an apostle? Had he not seen the Lord? Had he not his commission from him? Did not the apostolic commission contain baptism as fully as preaching? Is it not said, "He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved"? Yes, without doubt, it did contain Christ's baptism (without which there is no salvation) as well as preaching; but the baptism of water, which was a figure of the thing (which Paul did find freedom to do to some), Paul said he was not sent to do. He did it not by commandment, but he might do it by permission, as well as circumcise; which was another figure of the same thing.

Concerning Perfection

CHRIST is a perfect physician, and is able to work a perfect cure on the heart that believes in him, and waits upon him: yes, he came to destroy the works of the devil, to cleanse man's mind of the darkness and power of Satan, and to fill it with the life and power of truth; and he sent forth a ministry not only for the beginning, but for the perfecting of the work: yes, his Word in the mouth and heart is powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, and he can cast out the strong man, and cut down all that is corrupt and contrary to himself, and break down every strong hold in the mind, and spoil all the goods of the enemy. Christ likewise bids his disciples "be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect;" and the apostle bids men "perfect holiness in the fear of God," that they might be fully separated from, and not so much as touch, the unclean thing; but enjoy the promises of God's dwelling in them, and walking in them, whose temple, under the gospel, is to be pure. And if a man wait upon God in the work of purifying, and witness the power and virtue of the new covenant, even the fear put into the heart, which keeps the heart clean, and will not allow it to depart from the Lord, and witness the powerful law of the endless life giving him dominion over the law of sin and death in the members, and the Spirit of the Lord put within him, causing him to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and do them; surely this man comes near to perfection. Did Christ cure perfectly outwardly in the days of his flesh; and shall he not cure perfectly inwardly in the day of his Spirit? Yes, certainly; the lame, the deaf, the blind, the dumb, the lepers, waiting upon him in the way of his covenant, shall be cured by him as perfectly inwardly, as ever others were outwardly. And then is the day of joy, and of reaping the good things which the promises contain, feeding on the feast of fat things on God's holy mountain, in peace of spirit, in security from the soul's enemies, none of them being able to come near to hurt or destroy; no, not so much as to make afraid on the mountain of God's holiness: and then the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb is sung, and walking in the way of holiness witnessed; which no unclean thing can pass over to, but only the ransomed and redeemed of the Lord.

Now, if any man come in truth to witness this from the Lord, and has found by his consuming fire the dross burnt up in him, and his soul cleansed from what is corrupt and unrighteous; does he deceive himself, or is he a liar, if he say, the Lord has cleansed me from all my unrighteousness? And did John speak here of his own state, or of the state of the other apostles and believers, who were grown up in the life and power of truth, and had overcome the wicked one, by the strength of Christ in them? or did he speak condescendingly (as the apostles often did with the weak: becoming as weak, when they were exalted by God to a higher state than that condition signified)? Had he not fellowship with the Father and the Son? And was not his joy full? And is the joy of any full, while sin, while corruption, is near and has power; while Satan, while the powers of darkness, are not trodden under foot? There is a state of righteousness without Christ, wherein if a man say he has no sin (and so thinks he has no need of Christ) he deceives himself. But there is a power in Christ to perfect the work of redemption in the heart; to sanctify the creature wholly, in body, soul, and spirit; yes, his leaven received will work, and works daily, till it has wrought all out, and the whole be leavened; and he that truly feels it so, can say in God's presence, and in the true fear and humility of heart, The old leaven is wholly wrought out, and the new has wholly leavened me; this is not the voice of deceit, but of truth in him.

As for that question, Whether Christ has not reigned in his Spirit all along in the souls of his true people?

Answer. There has been little of Christ's reign in Spirit witnessed all along the apostasy. It is a great matter to come to witness Christ's reign in the heart: yes, there are many who never yet came through the suffering which goes before the reign: but the cross, the power of the cross, and the thorough death thereby of all that stands in the way of Christ's pure reigning, is yet to be taken up, and many journeys to be gone, before men come to witness Christ's kingdom, and the reign of his Spirit therein.

There are some other passages which I find in my heart to say something to. One is this: "That you know through mercy when you are well; that you are satisfied," etc.

There has been a cloudy and dark day; which for its thickness, may well be called night; wherein the people of the Lord have been scattered from mountain to hill, seeking their resting-place.

Now, it has pleased the Lord, after this thick night of darkness, to gather the scattered sheep, and to become the physician (in the ministration of his Spirit, life, and power) to heal them, and bind them up.

And those that have been sick and distressed, and brought into the true sense, they feel the need of the physician, and bless his name for the healing which he brings with him under his wings.

But there are some that are fat and strong, and whole and complete by an imputed righteousness, according to their own apprehending; and these are well; these are satisfied; they have no need of this visitation of God, nor of this dispensation of life and power from on high.

There was a church once, before the apostasy took place, that knew the truth better than you do, that said, she was rich, increased with goods, and had need of nothing; and yet lacked the tried gold, the white raiment, and the eye-salve. And if you knew how aright to wait on the Lord, and receive counsel and light from him, perhaps you might therein see also, that you are destitute of and lack the same things.

Now, in that we testify to you that we have been in your state, and fully experienced it, and seen in the light of the Lord the truth thereof, and the defects thereof; and in love, and in the leadings of God's Spirit, are drawn to testify thereof to you, and have from him received the knowledge of the living way, which was made manifest before the apostasy, and is now again; and are taught and enabled by the Lord to walk with him therein, the Lord having led us into that, and brought us forth in that, from which all the apostates have erred, and out of which they all are; this should not be a thing slighted by you; but being a weighty testimony, and of great concernment to you, should be weightily considered of, and determined in you, by that which alone is able to decide it. Now, if you weigh this testimony by scriptures, and have not a true understanding of those scriptures from God, you will but thereby err the more, and be the more confident and hardened in your errors, and so go on in a kind of satisfaction and peace in kicking against the pricks.

And as for our confidence, we can truly say in the Spirit of truth, we know that we are of God, gathered unto him by the life and Spirit of his Son revealed in us; and we could eat our bread in secret, and drink the water of life out of our own cisterns silently, but that the Lord required us, and his love constrains us, and it is due to the glorious work of his mercy and power towards us, to declare, in the seasons of his choosing, what the Lord has done for our poor, distressed, mourning, wandering, undone souls. Now, if others are confident without a cause; that does not make void our confidence, which is grounded upon the truth; nor the testimony thereof, issuing forth from and in the truth: but

that which is of God hears and owns it, and feels the work of his love and great power, and blesses his name therefor.

As for those expressions, It is enough for you that Jesus Christ is yours, etc., so far as you feel union with him, in the principle of life which is of him, you may say so truly. But is it not strange, that you should be of it, and not be able to know and own it, in this day of its manifestation; but call the light, which is spiritual and eternal, (and gives the true and certain knowledge of Christ) natural? What! of God, of Christ, (having received the Spirit, the living well) and yet not know the mystery of life within, nor its pure voice in this present day! but limit the unlimited One to a form of words formerly spoken by him! how do these things agree with what you profess? Surely they are deeply in the mist, who know not Christ from antichrist; but fight against Christ and his light, as if it were of antichrist or nature. Now, we are one with any of you (though you know it not) so far as you know and are of the truth, and feel true union with whatever is of God in you.

Thus in faithfulness to God, and in love to truth, and tenderness to you, I have given forth that which sprang in me towards you. And, indeed, I singly breathe to the Lord in my spirit, that it may be serviceable in the hands of the Lord for your good; even to shake that knowledge and sense which is not of him in you (though you strongly believe it to be of him), and so to bring you to the infallible sense and experience of the true foundation, and to a fixed building and establishment in Spirit thereupon, in that light which is of the Father; that therein you may own and partake of the ministration of the everlasting and pure power in your present day and generation; which is now so dispensed as it has not been since the night of apostasy. Blessed be his name, whose light shines, whose life is made manifest, whose power is risen out of, and reigns over, the darkness; whose love and mercy abounds in the hearts of his redeemed ones, who abundantly partake of the covenant of life, and of the precious promises of the gospel, to the praise of the riches of the grace and mercy which were to be revealed in the ages to come after the apostasy, and are so revealed, and are yet more to be revealed, to the increase of the glory of his name, and of the joy and consolation of his redeemed ones; who find that to be God's power and wisdom, and mighty redemption to them, which to others is a stumbling-block, weakness, and foolishness: and he who ever was, and still is, the life, is once again become a stumbling-stone, and rock of offense to both the houses of Israel; who though they have longed after him, and breathed for him, and prayed that his kingdom might come; yet now, when he is come, they know him not, but are wise and strong in resisting and opposing him; which is much to their hurt and great danger, as the Lord God sees in the light wherein he dwells, and as he has given his children, who dwell with him in the same light, to see with his eye. And, friend, take heed that you turn not the edge of your weapon, even of your scripture-knowledge, against Christ (there were those that once did so), nor that your table become your snare; for that was the curse which lighted on those who opposed Christ's appearance in flesh; and it may also (in the just and most righteous judgment of God) befall those who oppose his appearance in Spirit in this his day.

And as for what I have written unto you, you shall one day witness that I have written to you in true love, and in the true light and sense of truth: and if you can retire into that which is of God in you, and receive the true sense and understanding there, you will there feel it so now. And oh that you could distinguish between God's witness in your heart, and the voice of your understanding and gathered knowledge! that you might receive a being, life, pure sense, and understanding, in that which is pure of God; that the gold might be separated from the dross, and there might come forth a vessel for the refiner!

I am a lover of souls, and an earnest desirer after their welfare; but especially of such as breathe after and long for communion with the Lord, in that which is living and pure.

ISAAC PENINGTON

25th of the 11th month, 1667

A REPLY TO YOUR CRITICISMS

TO THE FIRST

A MAN is justified upon account of Christ, of being in him, believing in him, obeying his gospel. All these have reference to justification, according to the soul's experience, and according to the Scriptures, and none of them are to be excluded. God has appointed Christ to be a prince and a Savior, to give repentance, faith, and remission of sins; and in the exercise of that repentance and faith, the righteousness and justification is received. And the Lord condemns the unbeliever, because he believes not; and the disobedient, because he obeys not the gospel: and he also justifies the believer and the obedient, because of the faith and obedience of his Son which he finds in them. And in this faith, the righteousness, the pure righteousness, flows; the Spirit of the Lord covers; and it is not only the principle, but also the garment, of righteousness and salvation; yes, all that Christ did in the flesh comes in here, and the soul feels and partakes of the virtue and value of it all, being found here. But out of this are the notions and imaginations of men's minds, upon and about scriptures concerning the thing; who indeed and in truth (as it really is) know it not.

TO THE SECOND

There are two covenants, and there are works of each, works required by each. In the old covenant, obedience to the law of Moses is required. In the new covenant, believing in Christ ("this is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent"), and obedience to his gospel and Holy Spirit. Now these, and the works of the old, are not one and the same, nor have the same acceptance and justification with the Lord. No, though a man could perform all the law of Moses exactly, yet would he not be therein so justified in the sight of God as the believer is; his faith and obedience, which he receives from Christ, and performs in the strength of his grace and new life, being of a higher kind, and more excellent nature, than man's fulfilling the law in his own natural capacity and principle can be. I am sorry you have no better a knowledge and savor of the things of the kingdom, than to testify a dislike of this distinction. And as for the Papists, we meddle not with them, farther than we are led by the Lord: for my part, I know not what they hold as to this thing.

TO THE THIRD

God did threaten the Gentiles (wishing them to take heed of boasting against the Jews), that if they did not continue in the faith and in the fear, they should be cut off as the Jews were. Now, there was a great and general departing from the faith, and answerably a general cutting off. And though life was

reserved in a select number in the wilderness; yet the true way of gathering into churches and the church state fell. And now being fallen, the Lord alone is able to rebuild, as he built at first. Now, men reading the scriptures of the glory of the former church state, have been longing after it (which was good), but withal too forward to thrust themselves into it, and build by imitation, without the clear light, leadings, and guidance of the Spirit; and so have not built up in the same life and power by which the building was at first, and can alone be truly raised again. Now, the Lord being come forth in his power, and raising up his own building, the same Spirit that raises up that testifies against all the others, which are raised up without it. And, indeed, the testimony against the present churches and congregations gathered out of the power, is God's, not ours. But consider seriously; John had a reed given him to measure the temple, etc., when part was to be reserved for God, and part to be given to the Gentiles. But who gave you power to gather churches, or practice those which you call church ordinances? "Who has required these things at your hands?" And where do you read, that the Gentiles did tread down the outward court after it was given them? They trod down the holy city, indeed, forty-two months.

TO THE FOURTH

So far as you see, hear, taste, feel any thing in the pure light of the truth, as it is in Jesus, we rejoice therein; and heartily desire the increase thereof in you: but we would not have you mistaken about these things.

TO THE FIFTH

Concerning the word or commandment which Moses speaks of, and which Paul said was the word of faith which they preached.

If the first covenant had been faultless, there had not been place left for a second. "For if there had been a law given, which would have given life, righteousness should have been by that law." But notwithstanding the wonders which God did in Egypt and the wilderness, and the giving the law and ordinances, etc., yet the veil was upon them and "the Lord had not given them a heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, to that very day." Deut. 29:4. Well then, there was a necessity of another covenant; and these words which Moses now speaks to them from God, were words concerning another covenant besides that made in Horeb.

But where is the commandment of this covenant? Where is the law of this covenant? Where is the Word of this covenant? It is not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea; "but the Word is very nigh unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it." And this nigh Word, this Word of the other covenant, whereby God circumcises the heart, to love the Lord God with all the heart, is the Word eternal, and no other; who has received the power of the Father, and none else has received it: and in the obedience to him, his righteousness is revealed and received, and made the soul's, from faith to faith. And it is in vain for you to think to blind our eyes either concerning this scripture, or concerning the thing itself which this scripture testifies of; God having opened the eye and heart, which sees and knows, and which, in the true light which is from and of the Word, sees him who is invisible and eternal, even the life, holy power,

wisdom, and righteousness, which was in and with the Father before the world was. And this was the Word, before it took up the body of flesh, and is still the Word, and no other; and its commandment is life eternal; in the pure faith whereof, and in the pure obedience whereto, he gives life abundantly: but out of the faith and obedience thereto, he does neither give life, nor the justification of life; but the deceits of the enemy there prevail in men's minds concerning these things.

Now, had the Jews under the law come to this Word, they had by the light thereof understood the law, and by the power thereof fulfilled it. And when Christ and the apostles preached, had they that heard, felt this Word, they could not but in their hearts have believed him to be the Lord, and also have confessed his resurrection from the dead; which, in that day, it was a great thing to confess, being not revealed by flesh and blood; nor the testimony then easily swallowed by the fleshly and earthly part, but generally opposed by it. But now these things are received and acknowledged by multitudes without the power; and as so received, are of no value, nor can save; but the owning and receiving, and being born of the Spirit, life, and power (which was in him), saves, and gives such an acknowledgment of these things, as is of the life and power, and accepted with the Father.

But, alas friend! how have you wrested and perverted this scripture, turning aside the intent of God's Spirit, and putting your own meaning upon his words, striving to make them speak what you would have them! Is this reading of the Scriptures in reverence, humility, and godly fear? Oh that God would give you a sense of what you have done herein! For neither Moses nor Paul does thus restrain them, nor mention any such sort of people as you speak of; but you, by your exposition, make void the mind of God, and the drift of his Spirit in the Scriptures. If you have, in this wisdom and latitude of your own spirit, read the Scriptures, not knowing God's Spirit to gird and limit you from your own apprehendings and conceivings, what kind of rule have you made to yourself out of them? Ah friend! if you know God's Spirit, keep to it; if you know it not, wait for it to become your guide and leader, and the opener of scriptures and the mysteries of the kingdom to you.

The light which enlightens every man that comes into the world, and the eternal Word or Son of God is the same. And this light shining in the darkness, shines and enlightens with the true light: and the end of its enlightening is, that therein men might feel the drawings of the Father, the strivings of his Spirit; and in the faith thereof, and subjection thereto, come out of the darkness.

Now, the condemnation is not because Christ has not sufficiently enlightened them, or that there goes not sufficient power with his light to redeem from the darkness; but because men turn the deaf ear to him, will not hear him, but in love to the darkness, hear the voice of him who dwells in the darkness. But the Spirit of Christ, who is in the light, and dwells in the light, who strives with the dark world by his light, is able to conquer and overcome the darkness. Yes, the Word of life, nigh in the mouth and heart, is able to overcome the power of death there, to quicken, to gather to God, to set the captive free, etc. And the reason why men perish, is not through God's insufficient visiting of them, but because of their turning from the measure of the manifestation of his Spirit. They despise the day of small things; they will not come to that wherein the life and virtue was hid, and so lose the day of their visitation and miss of the good which God intended to them thereby.

And whereas you say, "The light does not, nor cannot, discover Christ, and his being raised from the dead," etc., I cannot but say, on the other hand, what does discover them, but the light? How came the Scriptures to declare of Christ? Was it not from the Spirit? And is not the same light still with the Spirit, by which the Scriptures were given forth? And can he not give it forth without the letter, where

he sees need of it, and vouchsafes so to do? But how can the vast unbelieving multitudes of the world experience what the light and Spirit of the Lord can do, being not subject to it, but rebelling against it. Job. 24:13. And why may not men now, by the light of the Spirit, come to know that Christ is come, dead, and risen, as well as these things were known and believed before the Scriptures were written? Yet if a man should not know the outward death of Christ, and his raising from the outward grave; yet being in the faith of the power (which whomsoever it touches and draws to it, it redeems) that gives him a right to all that was done by Christ; for then he has union with the thing which saves, and strength from it against that which destroys. Yes, there was a time when the disciples of Christ were in the faith, and yet neither knew nor believed his death and resurrection: yes, Peter, with no small confidence, said, "Lord this shall not be unto you." Mat. 16:22.

As touching that passage of renouncing the works not only of the old covenant, but even those of the new also, as filthy rags, that is manifestly unscriptural and unsavory; the works of the new covenant being fruits of God's Holy Spirit, which he works in us and for us. If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation (where the old things are passed away); and he that walks after this rule walks in the newness of the Spirit, and the Spirit moves and lives and works in him. Not I, but Christ in me. And as the root is holy, so is also the fruit. The fear which God puts into the heart is clean, and keeps the heart clean; and out of the good and honest and clean heart, comes good, honest, and clean fruit, which is not unclean, like filthy rags. Read Isa. 64:5. and consider it, waiting on the Lord to open your understanding. Were the works which the apostle speaks of, Heb. 11. and James 2:24. to be reckoned as filthy rags?

Abraham was acquainted with the invisible, eternal Word, and was turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; and in his converted estate had the promise of the seed; and saw, with the rest of the prophets, through the day of his flesh to the day of his Spirit. 1 Pet. 1:10-12.

David was a spiritual man, and knew the Word of the new covenant; which is a lantern to the feet, and a light to the paths, of the children of the new covenant, who witness and experience their way cleansed by taking heed thereto according to this Word. And the precepts, statutes, laws, commandments, ordinances, judgments, etc. of this Word are a mystery to all that are not acquainted with it. But they that are acquainted with it, and in the pure fear and humility wait upon it, they learn of it the way of its precepts, and are guided by the Spirit of the Lord in the way everlasting.

The wisdom which Solomon speaks of, is undoubtedly Christ, the Word eternal. It is much you should boggle at this. He is the Sun of the inward world, which enlightens the dark inward world; not that they should abide in the darkness, but by the virtue and power of his light come out of it. And, friend, mark these following words, and wait upon the Lord for the true understanding of them. Till you witness the inward Word, with the inward law and testimony thereof, and know its commandment to be a lamp, and its law a light, etc., you can never witness the perfect keeping and preservation from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of the strange woman; but will be apt to lust after her beauty in your heart, and to be taken with her eye-lids. But if you know and keep wisdom's commandments, you will thereby witness life indeed, according to that saying of Christ, "If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death." And Christ directed his apostles to wait for his Spirit to receive his sayings from, who teaches not only the greatest, but the least, in the new covenant; writing his law in their hearts, which law is light. And if any man hear the inward voice of wisdom, and turn at her reproofs, she will pour out her Spirit upon him, she will make known her words unto him.

The same thing that teaches to do justly, and love mercy, teaches also to walk humbly with the Lord. It is the same grace which brings salvation, which teaches to live godly, that teaches also to live soberly and righteously. What I had in my former profession and congregational way, the Lord brake by a mighty hand; but yet in tender mercy he was with me, preserving me in the midst of the storms, and floods, and roarings of the enemy upon me, till his fresh visiting of me. And he visited me with his own Spirit, with the eternal light, life, and power thereof; and I know it to be the same thing which had been with me from the beginning; yes, the child, being quickened and raised out of the grave, presently knew its Father, and cannot but honor and bear testimony to that appearance of truth, wherewith his Father visited him, and wherein he has felt the renewing and restoring of his former work. And they that knew me formerly, before the Lord dashed me to pieces, could and did witness, that the Lord had given me true humility, and my soul did witness a walking with him in the humility which he gave me. And now I witness from him, in this precious dispensation of his life and power, the very same humility (and blessed be his name, with great increase), and a fresh walking with him therein, in a fresh sense and meltings and bowings of spirit before him night and day. I do confess I took it to be a natural thing, and overlooked and despised it, till the Lord opened my understanding, and showed me what it was, and how he wrought by it, and that it was a mystery hid from all, but those to whom he revealed it. And, indeed, I do hang daily upon the Lord in this for life and power, and am very weak without, but strong as it pleases the Father to manifest himself in me, and to breathe upon me through it; yes, indeed, my life, peace, rest, hope, joy, delight, etc. is a continual gift from the Father of spirits, who has manifested himself near unto me, and shown me his dwelling-place. And I am satisfied that the Spirit of the Lord, by his immediate light, is able to reach the darkest heart in the darkest part of the world, and to turn his mind to, and give him belief in, that which saves, and to save him thereby.

The word of faith which the apostles preached, and the word of life eternal, and the light which enlightens every man that comes into the world, differ not, but are the same; and the light wherewith he enlightens them, that they might believe in him who enlightens, is of the same nature with the Enlightener, and sufficient to guide them to the faith of him. But, friend, take heed of reproaching the truth. Though you may do it ignorantly, yet it is not wholly excusable. Have you heard the preaching which you speak thus slightly of? If you have not, surely you should have heard and considered, before you had judged. You set up your own understanding, and a judgment according to the appearance of things to you, instead of the true and righteous judgment; therein exposing yourself to the righteous judgment of the Lord, who judges in truth and righteousness, and far otherwise in this matter than you do.

Christ is the pearl of price, or treasure hid in a field. The field is the world. The world is in man's heart. And yet this mystery was hid from ages and generations; and the kingdom which the Pharisees sought, was within them; who were as far from any sense and understanding of it, as the Gentiles; and so though it was within them, yet they were without it; they had no knowledge, no understanding, no sense of it, had reaped no benefit by it, but were enemies and alienated in their minds from it. Ah! what palate and understanding is that, to which this is unspiritual and unsavory? But how bold and presumptuous, do men's apprehensions (which they take up from the letter of the Scriptures, without the light and leading of God's Spirit) make them, even to fly in the face of that which is certainly known, witnessed, and experienced to be of God, as well as held forth in the Scriptures, as Col. 1:27, see the Greek.

As to those harsh expressions, vilifying the truth of our God, and the conversion to him thereby; I shall

only say this; well, friend, go on; reproach us and our testimony, and the truth of our God, as being able to lead us no further than morality, etc., we assuredly know and experience, and faithfully testify as in God's sight, that it has led us further into the mystery and power of life, and into union and fellowship with the Father and the Son, than your doctrines ever have done or can do. For the apprehensions of man upon Scriptures are passing away, and the pure truth itself, which the Scriptures testify of, is already revealed, and further to be revealed, and to have the glory.

You think we set up a natural light, and esteem it spiritual; but we are taught of God to distinguish, understandingly and experimentally, between nature, and him from whom nature came; who is the Word of life, the Lord God of life, besides whom there is no Savior; who is near to every man to warn him of, turn him and deliver him from, the devourer and oppressor of the soul. Now, though the vessels in which the light shines be natural, and filled with darkness, and become darkness in the darkness; yet the Discoverer, Reprover, and Checker thereof, which gives the living sound in the vessel, is spiritual; even the Spirit of the Lord God, which strives with fallen man in the midst of his darkness and captivity at seasons, according to his good pleasure. This the Shepherd of our souls has taught us, opening our ears, and causing us to hear and know his voice, and to learn of him; who is truth and speaks truth; who is life and Spirit, and gives of his own eternal life and Spirit to his children.

TO THE SIXTH

What others have been I know not; but this I know concerning myself, that I was settled firmly in the doctrines which you now own, and in the congregational way of worship, till the Lord smote me and brake me to pieces. Which such as I did converse with (namely, teachers, and others of esteem in that way) professed they could not conceive the ground of; but said it was a prerogative case, and did not doubt but the issue thereof would be good unto me. But what if the sheep were scattered, before the Shepherd came to gather them? What if they were wandering from mountain to hill, seeking their resting-place? What if they went mourning up and down from one watchman to another, from one sort of people to another, inquiring after their beloved? Did this make them unfit to be pitied and visited by the Shepherd? What sort did Christ gather in the days of his flesh? Were they not despised of the wise, learned, settled ones (in their knowledge of the law and prophets)? But blessed be the Lord, who has now manifestly revealed the foundation, and the kingdom that can never be shaken, and in his mercy and tender love, and by his power, fixed them thereon; that they know in whom they have believed, and how they came to believe; and have taken up the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, wherein the power is manifested to crucify that which cannot otherwise be crucified.

The Seventh has been largely spoken to already.

TO THE EIGHTH

The Lord God knows that it is not in my heart to judge or set at nought any man; but in faithfulness to God, and in tender love to souls, to testify to others what I have seen in his light, as he requires of me. And is this setting them at nought? It is true, they cannot believe nor receive the testimony in the state wherein they stand; but that does not disannul or weaken it; but truth and its testimony stands, notwithstanding their rejecting and rising up against it.

To the first particularly. To own and contend earnestly for the Scriptures aright is good; but it was not good formerly to set up the writings of Moses and the prophets above and against Christ; nor is it good now to set up the Scriptures above the Spirit, or to make them trier instead of the anointing. 1 John 2:27. For the Scriptures came from the Spirit, and they testify of the Spirit; and the Spirit is to be received, and to dwell in the soul as in its temple: and here the King and Lawgiver of the church (with the balance of the sanctuary) is indeed known. And he that receives the Spirit is to live in the Spirit, and walk in the spirit, and in the light of the new Jerusalem; which light is eternal, discovering, dispossessing, and working out of the darkness, and so taking up its place.

Now, though you may aim at having things concerning churches, and church-worship, regulated according to the Scriptures; yet you may easily err therein, and cannot but err therein, if your understandings be not opened and kept open by the Spirit; yes, you may not wait for the Spirit's gathering and building, but may gather of yourselves, and build of yourselves; whereas the apostles were to wait for the power from on high to do their work with. And were your eyes truly opened, you would quickly and easily see, that neither your preaching nor praying is at all like theirs. They spake what they received from the Spirit; you, what you apprehend and conceive concerning words spoken of by the Spirit. This is very short of speaking as God's oracles. And one sort of you conceives thus, and another thus, concerning the same scriptures, etc.

To the second. Till you know the Spirit, and come to the true waiting upon the Spirit, and understand his voice, you can never recover the form of sound words by reading the Scriptures; but will be liable to be setting up your own conceivings and apprehensions, instead of the truth itself. And till you have the true understanding of the Spirit, you cannot but also err concerning the power, and about your experiences of things; and so will be continually in great danger of being deceived, and of deceiving one another's souls.

To the third. You have a notion about Christ's active and passive obedience being imputed to the soul as its righteousness, which the Scriptures speak not; and which manifests that you do not know how the righteousness is revealed, and how the Son is made of God unto them righteousness, who wait upon him in the faith, and obey his gospel. For the righteousness is revealed in the faith, and is further and further made the soul's, in and by the faith.

TO THE NINTH

God is my witness (whom I worship in spirit, and in whose fear I write and speak) that I dearly love you; and in the truth and dearness of love, earnestly desire concerning you, that you may not mistake about Christ, his Spirit, his scriptures; about faith, love, mortification; and about the righteousness, peace, and joy of the kingdom, or any other spiritual thing; but may know, experience, and enjoy the truth and substance of things, as they are in Jesus. Now, if you know, and have received, the true, living faith, and witness the powerful, purifying virtue of it, which God has given to overcome the world, and the wicked one with; how comes it about that there is such a belief in you, that it can never do its work perfectly in this world, but only in part? Surely this belief is not of or from the true faith; nor to the honor of him that has given it. For the spiritual weapons are mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strong-holds, and bringing all (even every thought) into subjection to Christ.

TO THE TENTH

That God did as much for Judas as for Peter, is not our doctrine: for God gives more or less out of his rich treasury, according to his own good pleasure. But the unprofitable servant had also a talent given him, which he did not improve, but hid it in a napkin; and his Lord condemned him therefore. There were others had talents likewise, which they did improve, and their Lord accepted and justified them therein; saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things; enter into the joy of your Lord."

Now, is there just ground for any of these servants to boast and say, the other had a talent as well as I; but I made myself to differ; I improved my talent, whereas he did not? The true Jew does believe, does obey the gospel, and has praise of God (he that hates the light, does not believe nor obey); and yet he sees no ground of boasting: for it was not he, of himself, but the grace and power of the Lord, wrought all in him. And what is done in and by and through the power of the Lord; the honor and glory thereof properly belongs to the Lord. Yes, he that is in the true faith, feels that which excludes boasting, and keeps in the sense of the love and mercy. Oh that you knew a limit and check to this wisdom, and these reasonings in you, which are not of, but against the truth! as that light which you despise would manifest to you, if you knew the nature and virtue of it, and did cleave unto it. In this wisdom and understanding you may read much, and comprehend much, and be greatly taken with your apprehensions upon scriptures; but it is shut out of the true knowledge of them, and out of the Spirit and power of life, which they that wrote them were in, and witnessed of.

As for free-will; we own no such thing as man's free-will to do good in the fallen estate. But the Spirit of the Lord changes and renews the will in the day of his power; and whoever he strives with, and draws, may come in the drawing; virtue issuing out with the drawing from him that draws. And this is not the condemnation, that men cannot come to the Son, that they might have life; but that they do not come; that they do not turn, at the reproof of his wisdom, from that which he stands ready to turn them from.

There may be high admirations concerning God and his love, in the natural part; which we have known, and are made able in the Lord to judge of, since he has taught us to distinguish of things: and this is chaffy in all sorts of men. But there is a feeling of the pure nature of heavenly love, and a sinking therein into the deep sense thereof; and an acknowledging of it to God, in the humility, in the fear, in the Spirit, and in the power. Now, this is indeed from the beloved, and accepted with God in the beloved. And in this his children, who are stripped of their own ability of admiring and loving, are taught of him to love and admire him, being gathered out of that which is natural of man, into that which is spiritual, and of God.

As for the four Queries at the close, which I propounded in love, and for advantage to you; it seems to me strange you should say you would speak to the sense of them, and yet so wave the main drift and plain sense.

The first was, concerning Christ's being spiritually born of his Church; to which you have said nothing at all, but that the first Christians and churches were very glorious, etc. Which they also can own, who have denied the faith, and are not in the truth.

To the second you have answered as little, nor rightly according to the letter, putting in the dragon

instead of the beast.

Your third and fourth are also short, and not directly to the thing; but I wrote not to contend. The Lord God show you mercy, bring down the wrong wisdom in you, bring you into a capacity of knowing and receiving his pure, living truth, that you may not witness or fight against him; but in and by his Spirit, understand the Scriptures aright, and witness for him.

I. P.

Nineteenth of Twelfth Month, 1667.

POSTSCRIPT

THERE is a word of advice in my heart to you, which it behooves you seriously and uprightly to wait on the Lord, to be made able to weigh and consider aright; it is this. Take heed of setting up the letter above or against the Spirit (for that is not right in the sight of God); and take heed also of setting up your own wisdom, conceivings, and apprehensions above both; for that is a dangerous way of erring, and may prove a great snare to your soul, as it has been formerly, and is at this day to many. If you had known what this means, said Christ, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," you would not have condemned the guiltless. We own the Scriptures truly and singly, being taught of God so to do, and do not hold forth any thing contrary thereto, or deny any thing therein contained; but are witnesses, living witnesses, of the truths expressed and related therein; but men's meanings and conceivings thereupon (who, though they will acknowledge, that a man cannot understand the Scriptures without the Spirit, yet will venture, in their own wisdom, spirit, and understanding, to expound and give meanings) we cannot own, nor them, in such their apprehensions and practices.

That in you, or any, which breathes after the Lord, we have unity with; but that wisdom and comprehension which is above it, and a veil over it, and contrary to its nature, and which is a limit and bond to the precious seed, we cannot have unity with, because it is of the same nature with that which the Lord has condemned and destroyed in us, and he will not allow it to live in others, where his life and power prevails.

[The above appears to have been written in answer to the Queries and Criticisms of an Author not named therein. It is supposed our Friend Isaac Penington might have mentioned him in the Title, or pointed him out by some short introductory Address, which, through accident, was omitted by the Printer. - 1761 editor.]

**A FEW EXPERIENCES CONCERNING
SOME OF THE WEIGHTY THINGS**

RELATING TO

GOD'S EVERLASTING KINGDOM

GIVEN FORTH

IN TRUE AND TENDER LOVE

**FOR THE HELP OF ANY SUCH OF THE RACE OF THE TRUE TRAVELERS AS
MAY STAND IN NEED THEREOF**

BY

ISAAC PENINGTON

[1671, published posthumously]

A FEW EXPERIENCES, etc.

**I. A Faithful Testimony concerning the true and pure Way of Life; with
Breathings for such as have desires after it, and yet are Strangers to it**

THIS has been the cry of my soul from my childhood, even after holiness, after the presence of the Lord, after union with him, after the nature and image of his Son, after a separation from what was contrary to him, and a being brought forth in the power of his life.

Now, blessed be the Lord, that is revealed which answers the cry; which so far as my soul comes to partake of, it is refreshed and satisfied with the supply of that which it thirsted and cried after.

And all that have felt the true cry, oh that they might also be taught of God, and learn aright how to wait upon him, and to walk humbly and in fear before him, that nothing might come between them and the cry of their souls; but they might be led by him into the enjoyment and possession of that which the true birth (which is born of the Spirit and is Spirit) naturally longs after!

Now, truly there is no other way to life and satisfaction, than by believing in that power, and following that power, which raised Christ from the dead; for that is to work the work in all that are saved. To feel this power revealed within, to have the mind turned to this power, to follow this power in the

regenerating work and path, is the way to partake of its virtue, and to experience the redemption which is thereby and therefrom.

And he that is born of the Spirit, and has his eye opened by the Spirit, and daily exercised thereby; he knows the Spirit, and is acquainted with his stirrings and movings, and taught of God to distinguish them from the evil spirit, its stirrings and movings; and so does not quench the Spirit of God, nor grieve it when it moves; nor give way to the other spirit, when it moves and allures.

Now, the spirit of deceit allures and guides men not so much by outward rules, as by an inward evil nature, and by the law of sin and death. So the Spirit of truth leads into truth, by the newness and power of its own life revealed in the heart, by the pure instinct of life within, and by the law of God written in the nature of the new creature, which is nearer than words without. For God blots out of the hearts of his what Satan had written there, and writes by the finger of his Spirit what he would have the new birth read there; and indeed there is a kingdom of life, of righteousness, of true peace and joy (yes, of the holy power and wisdom of the Most High), for his children (which are born of his Spirit, and spring up of the immortal seed) to read.

Oh, why should men's eyes be closed, and their hearts hardened against the truth! Why should they cry up Christ in words, and cry out against his life and power where it is revealed! Is this to kiss the Son? Can such choose (who are guilty of this) but perish in the way of their soul's travels? And how many must needs perish in their resisting the power of truth, and precious testimony of God's Holy Spirit (in this our day) tending to their rescue and salvation from that which captivates and destroys!

Christ came to destroy sin, he having received power from his Father so to do. He knows it to be of a destroying nature, and that it will destroy the soul, where it is not by the power of life consumed and destroyed in the soul. Oh! most precious to us is that visitation of truth, light, life, and power, which searches out and discovers sin to the very root, and also destroys it. Oh! glorious is that axe of the Lord Jesus Christ which is laid to the root of the corrupt tree, and is daily hewing at and cutting it down, that it might cumber the ground no more; but that the heart might become good earth, sanctified earth, circumcised by the Lord to bring forth good fruit, good grapes, and good increase of the good seed of life to the good husbandman, who is worthy to reap, even in this world, the grace and mercy, love and goodness, wisdom and power, etc. which he plentifully sows in the spirits of his daily. Glory to his name over all forever, who has exalted, exalts, and will exalt that which the several sorts of high professors, in their wisdom, trample upon and despise.

II. Concerning the perfecting of God's Work in the Heart

IS it not the will of God that his people and children should be sanctified throughout, in soul, in body, in spirit?

Is it not the will of Christ that his disciples should be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect?

Did he not bid them pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"? And would he never have them believe and expect that it should be done in earth, as it is in heaven?

Does not he who has the true, pure, living hope, (which anchors within the veil) purify himself, even as He is pure?

Is not this the way to enjoy the promises of God's holy presence (who tabernacles in his people that are cleansed and sanctified), to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear? Will God dwell in an unholy temple? Will he dwell where sin dwells? He may indeed to such, when at any time they are tender, and truly melted before him, be to them as a wayfaring man that tarries for a night; but he will not take up his abode there, walk there, sup there, and give them to sup with him.

Has not Christ received all power both in heaven and earth from his Father? Is not this the end of receiving this power, to bring down the soul's enemies, and to purify and sanctify his church, that it may be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing? Is he not the Captain of our salvation, anointed to fight the battles of the Lord? Where is the fight? Where is the strong man to be found, cast out, his goods spoiled, and the house emptied of him, and all that belongs to him? Is not Christ the author of faith, the finisher of faith; and does not he carry on the work of faith with power? And what is the work of faith? Is it not to fight with and overcome sin; to be too hard for the enemy at all his weapons? Is there not a whole armor of light, life, and salvation prepared? What is it prepared for? Is it not that the children of light should be wholly armed with it? Were there never any wholly armed with it; or can the enemy prevail on those that are wholly armed with it? Are those that are armed with it afraid of the enemy, his power, his snares, his wiles? Or are they bold in the faith, following on, in the spiritual battles, him who rides before them, conquering, and to conquer?

Oh that men's eyes were opened by the Lord! then might they see the glory of truth, in the pure light which shines from God's holy mountain; and such dark doctrines of the night (which tend to the dishonor of Christ, his power and love, and to the upholding of the enemy's kingdom) would pass away, and prevail no more in the hearts of any that truly fear the Lord; but they would quietly wait and hope for his salvation, that by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, they might be made free from the law of sin and death, and not always be subject thereto. For all whom the Son makes free, they are free indeed; and being made free by him, may serve God in freedom of spirit, without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their lives. And then they know the power and virtue of the new covenant, and the defense which is thereby, where the wing of the Almighty overshadows, and his salvation (revealed therein) is experienced for a sufficient wall and bulwark against the enemy.

III. Concerning the true Christ, how it may be certainly and infallibly known which is he

WHILE people were in expectation and mused in their hearts concerning John, whether he were the Christ or not, John answers the case, and tells them how they might discern and know the true Christ. It is not he that baptizes with water, but he "that baptizes with the Holy Ghost and with fire." He "whose fan is in his hand," wherewith he comes "thoroughly to purge his floor, gathering the wheat into his garner, and burning the chaff with fire unquenchable." Now, he that knows him that does this work, and experiences him doing this work in him, does he not know Christ? Oh! is it not precious to be baptized by him whom God has appointed to baptize? Oh! the fan, the precious fan, wherewith

Christ, who is the power and wisdom of God, separates the precious from the vile, severs the wheat and the chaff, gathers the wheat into the precious treasury, and lets out the unquenchable fire upon the chaff! "Our God is a consuming fire," says the apostle. To what is he a consuming fire? Is it not to the chaffy, earthy, drossy nature in men and women? Why, bring the chaff to the fire, will it not burn it up? And then, as that is burnt up and consumed, that which is pure, that which is upright, that which is tender, that which is born of God, can dwell with, and delight in, the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings. For God is not terrible to the child which is born of him, to him who is brought forth in the image and Spirit of his Son; but to the transgressing nature, to the seed of evil-doers, which are naturally inclined to do evil, and every day doing evil, he is terrible for evermore. Oh, blessed are they who believe in that power, and experience that power near, which raised Christ from the dead, and are baptized with his baptism! They have access to God: for so the true Jews have been inwardly cleansed and kept clean; but the unclean, who have only a notion of Christ's blood, and of his righteousness, but are not washed thereby, nor clothed therewith, nor ever knew what it was to put off the filthy garment, and to put on the white raiment, they may pray in their own wills and spirits; but they know not what it is to draw nigh to God in the Spirit and life of his Son, and so are yet to learn what it is to pray to the Father in the name of Christ. For none truly know Christ, but they who truly know and are led by his infallible Spirit. "They that have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his;" and they that have his Spirit, have that which is infallible. It is one thing to have words spoken concerning Christ, or formerly by Christ; another thing to have the infallible Spirit itself; to be infallibly born of the Spirit, and brought up in the light and life of the Spirit, that he may certainly know the Shepherd's voice from the voice of every strange spirit.

IV. Some Queries to such as affirm the Scriptures to be the only Rule, and deny the Spirit, the seed of the kingdom, the new covenant, the holy leaven of Life, the Law written in the heart, to be the Rule of the Children of the new Covenant

Query 1. How are the Scriptures the rule: or which of the scriptures are the rule? Are the whole scriptures the rule, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelations? or are some parts of them the rule, some other not? If some parts of them be the rule, and some not, which parts are the rule, and which are not the rule? As to instance, in the book of Job; his friends spake many words concerning God, which were not so right as Job's. Job 42. And also Job himself, in some of his words and speeches, darkened counsel by words without knowledge, as he himself confessed. Job 42:3. Now, which of Job's friends' words are the rule, and which not; and which of Job's words are the rule, and which not?

Query 2. Moses was the minister of the old covenant (for he ministered to the Jews the old covenant, which was glorious in its day); but he was not the minister of the new covenant. Now, the new covenant, and ministration thereof, exceeds the old in glory. The writing of the law inwardly in the tables of the heart is a more glorious ministration than the writing of it outwardly in tables of stone.

Now, were Moses' words to the Jews under the old covenant intended by God to be the rule of the children of light under the new covenant? Shall the words of that ministration which was to pass away be the rule of the children of that ministration which is to abide forever?

Query 3. Did Moses say, that when Christ came, my words which I speak or write shall be your rule, or part of your rule? Or did he not rather say, When God raises up that prophet, him shall you hear in all things? Is there any one that is truly a sheep, who is not so made by him who gives life to the soul? And after he is made alive, and knows the Shepherd's voice, is he not to hear his voice forever, who gives life eternal, and who leads into the pastures of life, and to the pure, still waters, all that hear his voice and follow him? Read John 14:3-4. and Acts 3:22. and consider.

Query 4. Was not John as great, if not greater than Moses? Had ever any the honor besides him to be the immediate forerunner and preparer of the way, and to point to the Lamb of God as he did? And yet was not he to decrease in his ministry (it being not the gospel ministration of the Spirit and power, as Christ's was), and Christ to increase in his gospel ministration? Is not the least in the kingdom greater than John? And are not all that are quickened by Christ, and follow him, led by him into the kingdom? And who can give the rule of life in the kingdom but the King thereof? In the last days does not the Lord speak to his people by his Son? And is not he faithful in all his house, as a son, to give the law and rule of life to them in Christ?

Query 5. Are not all that are soldiers and subjects under Christ to follow him, their Lord and Captain, whithersoever he goes or rules? How can they know where he goes or rules, but by an inward eye and ear fixed upon and open to him? So that when once they know his Spirit (the voice of his Spirit, as his true sheep do), his movings, his drawings, his leadings, his going before, is their rule to follow. And they are not to grieve or quench his Spirit, in drawing back from any thing that he leads and draws them to.

Query 6. Is not Christ the way, the truth, the life; the living way, the living truth? Is not the living way the rule to them that live? Is not the truth itself the rule of all that are true? What should rule and guide the spiritual man, that is born of the Spirit, but the wisdom of the Spirit, but the oracle of God manifested in his temple and sanctuary? That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, in which the Spirit is to dwell; and he in whom he dwells is to be ruled by him.

Query 7. What is that which the apostle calls the rule, Gal. 6:15-16. which if a man walk according to, peace will be upon him? Is it not the word, power, and wisdom of God? Does not he that walks according to that walk in the newness of the Spirit? Does not he that walks out of that walk in the oldness of the letter at the best? Does not he that believes according to that, hopes according to that, prays according to that, — I say, does not he believe, hope, and pray according to the rule? Does not he that believes, hopes, prays otherwise (though ever so zealously and affectionately), yet, at best, can any better be said of it, but that it is in the oldness of the letter, and so is not in the right way which God requires in the gospel covenant?

Query 8. Is not the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus the law of the new covenant? And is not that the rule to the children of the new covenant? Is not the truth which makes free the way and rule to them who are made free by it? Is the letter or Spirit the rule under the ministration of the Spirit? Let that which is sensible, and which feels and knows the truth and way of life (as it is in Jesus) answer. Men may search the Scriptures, and yet not come to Christ for life; and men may get descriptions and a knowledge of things out of the Scriptures, and yet not receive from him the rule of the new life.

V. Concerning the Light, wherewith Christ the Life enlightens every Man

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." John 1:4-5.

WHAT is the darkness which comprehends not the light? Is not man in the unregenerate state? "You were darkness," says the apostle, speaking concerning them as they had been in that state.

Now, it pleases the Lord that in this darkness his pure light should shine, to gather man out of the darkness. For unless light should shine on man in his dark state, he could never be gathered out of it; but he that is turned to the light, and follows it, cannot abide in the darkness; but comes into that which gathers and preserves the mind out of it.

But of what nature is this light, which shines in man in his dark state? It is of a living nature; it is light which flows from life; it is the light which has life in it; it is the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Word eternal, which is the light of men. And he who comes to the true understanding, may thereby distinguish it from all other lights whatsoever.

There is a vast difference between it, and the reason and understanding of a man: for the natural man, with his understanding, is dead; but this is living and powerfully operating in man, as it finds entrance, and as his mind is joined to it. He that is dead, indeed, knows it not; but he that is alive unto God, feels the virtue of it. This light is above all gathered knowledge whatsoever, and above all descriptions of things whatsoever: for it is the thing itself, even of the nature of him from whom it flows. A man may get a notion from this into his mind, which he may retain the dead knowledge of, yes, his notion may quickly be dead in them; but he that dwells in the thing itself, knows that, and dwells in that, which never dies.

VI. A few Words further concerning Perfection

WHAT was the intent of God in commending Job to Satan for a perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil? Was it not to represent him as a person whom he could not make any breach upon, or prevail upon to sin? You have been ranging up and down the earth, tempting many, defiling many; what say you to my servant Job, Satan, is not he perfect? Is not he upright to me in his heart, and all his ways? Can you make any breach upon him?

What says Satan hereto? Does he object any sin against Job? He is the accuser of the brethren; and if he have wherewith to accuse, he will not fail to lay it to their charge, even before the throne of God. But what has he to say against Job? What can he object (either against his uprightness, or against his perfection) to the Lord? Oh! says he, you have set a hedge about him. He serves you, indeed, perfectly and uprightly; I confess I have nothing to lay to his charge: but does he serve you for nought? But take away your hedge, allow me to winnow him, and you shall quickly see I shall have something to lay to his charge, and that no small matter neither: for do but take away your blessings from him, wherewith you have so abundantly blessed him, and he will soon curse you to your face.

Well, the Lord gives him leave to try if he can stain Job's uprightness and perfection: and now begins

the trial, whether the devil's temptations shall bring him to sin, or the fear of the Lord prevail to preserve him from sin.

First, the devil has power to touch all he has; which he soon does. What does this produce? Does he sin against the Lord, does he murmur, does he blaspheme, as the devil had said: No; he, fell on the ground and worshipped, acknowledging all to be the Lord's and blessing his name. So that in all this sore affliction, he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. Job 1:20-22.

But the commendation, which God had given him, to being a perfect and upright man, fearing God and eschewing evil, still remains and stands good against Satan, chap. 2, 3.

Satan gets leave to try him yet further, insinuating against him, that if he may have liberty to smite his body, he shall easily prevail upon him to sin; not being able at present to bring in any plea against his perfection and uprightness, against his fearing God and eschewing evil. But this has the same success with the former; for he could not bring Job to sin with his lips, ver. 10.

Now mind, Can any man, that has his heart made upright by the Lord, keep that integrity, and sin? Is not every sin a departing from the purity, from the integrity? Was not every transgression against the first covenant, out of the first covenant, even a departing from the limits of it? Is not every transgression of the second covenant a departing out of the limits of the second covenant? He that abides in Christ, does he sin? Can he sin? Does not he that sins depart out of his light, out of his life, out of his power, into the darkness, into the death, into the temptation of the enemy? Is it not promised, I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me: while the fear which God puts into the heart abides there, can that man sin? Does not the pure fear cleanse the heart, and keep it clean, that the conscience may be void of offense, both towards God and man? Is the conscience void of offense, where sin is committed either against God or man? When the blood flows in the pure light, does it not wash? Does it not wash clean? Does it not make whiter than the snow? When sin is entered into afterwards, and committed again, does it not defile? Oh! read in the true sense, in the true experience, with the true understanding, which God gives.

VII. Concerning Imputation of Righteousness

THE scripture says, that Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness; and that so it shall be also to all that believe as he did, even in the same power which he believed in. Rom. 4:23-24.

Now, thus we witness the thing: our minds being turned from sin, and turned to the pure gift of God, that works a change in us. Herein we feel faith spring up, which fastens our spirits to the power of life; and then we feel that (in the power of life) flow upon our spirits which washes away our sin; and all that is done in this holy and righteous faith is of the holy, righteous life and power, and accepted with the Lord; and that which condemns sin in us never condemns any work which is wrought in God, but justifies it. So that the root of sin, with all that flows from it, is condemned by the righteous principle of life; but the root of holiness, with all that flows from it, is justified. And this is our righteousness, even Christ the holy power of life, who condemns and casts out sin: and it is great joy to any of us to feel the root of sin struck at and condemned by his power, and him casting sin out of us, and the root

of righteousness growing up in us, and bearing us, and causing us to bring forth fruit to God. And here we sensibly find we have right to the Scriptures, to the promises, to all that Christ did and suffered for us, and witness the propitiation by and through him, and bless God for all the dispensations of life, wherein he has appeared to the children of men in any age, which were all glorious and excellent in their season; but the dispensation of the Spirit is the standing dispensation, which excels in glory, which Christ, in the days of his flesh, pointed his disciples to wait for, which his going away was to make way for. This dispensation was revealed and set up before the apostasy from the life and Spirit of the apostles, and is again revealed and set up in power and great glory, after the long night of apostasy; blessed be the name of the Lord forever! For the darkness is already passed away from many spirits, and the true light again shines. Glory in the highest to the God of life and glory forever and ever! Amen.

VIII. Some Queries concerning the Time and Work of Reformation

Query 1. WHAT did the time of Reformation and Substance (spoken of Heb. 9:10) signify and point at in relation to the mystery? Was it not for the bringing in of the gospel; the day of Christ's Spirit and power; the day of his inward renewing and reforming; the day of his taking his fan into his hand, to purge his floor; the day of his laying the axe to the root of the corrupt tree, that he may destroy the works of the devil in men's hearts, casting down and plucking up what his heavenly Father has not planted there? When he comes as a refiner's fire, and fuller's soap, to purify the sons of Levi, as gold and silver is purged, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; is not this the time of reformation?

Query 2. Who is the reformer? Is it not the Lord Jesus Christ? Does not he create anew? Does not he blot out the old image, and form into a new lump? For if any man be in Christ, there is a renewing there; a new building there; yes, old things are passed away there; there is nothing in him but what is new. He is faithful (in all his house) inwardly to judge, condemn, crucify, subdue, destroy whatsoever is contrary to the nature and Spirit of his Father, and to form and build up the spirits of his in that which is new and pure.

Query 3. How, or by what, does Christ reform? Is it not by his Spirit and power, by the light thereof, by the life thereof, by the virtue thereof? For nothing can change and reform the heart, but that which is more powerful than him who corrupts it.

Query 4. Where does Christ reform and new-create? Is it not in the new covenant; in the faith and obedience thereof? Does he not, by the laws thereof, break and disannul the laws of the old covenant, and make void the covenant of hell and death; and so make an everlasting covenant of life and peace; even a holy, pure, living agreement, between God his Father and the souls of his? Thus by his light he overcomes darkness; by his life he overcomes death; by his pure nature and Spirit he overcomes (chains down, subdues, and destroys that which is impure, breaking the bond of sin and iniquity, and letting the oppressed go free from under it. Thus he manifests himself to be the Savior by his holy anointing, breaking the yoke of the oppressor. Isai. 10:27.

Query 5. Whom does Christ reform? Are they not those who take his yoke upon them, and learn of

him? Are they not those who are turned to the light of his Spirit, inwardly made manifest; turned from the darkness, walking no more therein, but in his pure light? They that own his inward appearance in their hearts, and turn (from the enmity there) to him, receiving his light, his law, his life, his Spirit, them does he exercise daily, and is daily reforming their hearts and ways thereby. But if any man receives not his light, his life, his Spirit, within, such a one is none of his; and he may reform himself as much as he can, but he knows not yet the day of the true reformation.

Query 6. How are they to walk whom Christ has begun to reform? Is it not in that light, in that Spirit, in that covenant, in that grace, wherein and whereby he has in some measure reformed them? Is it not in the newness of the Spirit, and in the newness of the law thereof? Here Christ walked before the Father in all well-pleasing, ("Lo, I come; I delight to do your will, O my God; yes, your law is within my heart," said he, Psal. 40:7-8) and here all his are also to walk. 1 John 2:6. For indeed there is no pleasing the Father, or Christ our Lord and Master, out of the virtue, life, and newness of his own Spirit.

Query 7. What was the glory that was to follow the sufferings of Christ, spoken of 1 Pet. 1:11? Was it not the glory of his inward reformation in the hearts of the children of the new covenant? Does not Christ give of his grace in the gospel? And does not his grace make a glorious change? Does not he give of his Spirit to his children? And does not his Spirit change from sin, from shame, into holiness, into true beauty, into the heavenly glory, and so from glory to glory, translating more and more into the glory? Does not Christ appear gloriously in the hearts of his, and in the assemblies of his, who meet together in his name, and wait upon him in that which is pure and living of him? And is there not a covering, or defense of the wing of the Almighty, upon the glory? Isai. 4:5

Query 8. Was not this glory brought forth in the days of the apostles? Was not great grace then upon them all? (I mean such as received and held the truth in the love of it.) Did they not witness the peace which passes man's understanding? Had they not received the holy and spiritual understanding from him that is true; and were they not in him that is true? Did they not know victory and dominion over sin and death? Did not the little babes witness pardon of sin, and know him who preserves from sin? Had not the young men overcome the wicked one; and were not the elders strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might? Were they not come to the spiritual Zion, and heavenly Jerusalem; and did they not walk in the light of the Lamb, and of the holy city, before God the Judge of all? There is no man, in these our days, can so much as conceive the glory of that state, but he that has tasted of a measure thereof.

Query 9. Was not this glory eclipsed, and did not a great darkness come over it, hiding it from the sons of men, so that (for ages and generations) they knew not the true Spirit, the true light, the true life, the everlasting covenant, the holy gospel, the true church, the man-child, etc.; but these, with many other heavenly mysteries, have been hid from their eyes.

Query 10. What has got up since these have been hid? Have not the shadows of the night took place, and overspread the Christian state, instead of the light of the day? Has not antichrist got up, and a false church appeared; that which has been tender, and begotten of God, snibbed, bowed down, curbed, and persecuted, and false devotion and worship set up instead of the true?

Query 11. Must not antichrist be destroyed, the false church judged, the true church come out of the wilderness into which she fled, the man-child appear again, conquering and to conquer all which has

risen up from the spirit of darkness since the first breaking forth of the gospel? And is not the gospel to be preached again to them that dwell on the earth; even to every nation and kindred and tongue, and people? Rev. 14:6.

Now, who is wise to understand the appearance of the Lord, and the beginning of these things, which is in a way contrary to man's wisdom? and so he that will discern them, must come out from following of the man's own spirit, nature, and wisdom in himself, into the sense and leadings of him who gives the true eye-sight. The appearance of the Lord is inward and spiritual, and he must have an inward and spiritual eye who discerns it. It was said of old, by mockers and scoffers, Where is the promise of his coming? For all things continue as they were from the beginning. The same spirit will say so still; and yet, to that eye which the Lord has opened, he is already come inwardly, spiritually, in his own pure eternal life and power; and the precious effects of his coming are made manifest in many hearts; blessed be his name. Yet he is further to appear in glory and pure brightness; and so we wait further for his appearance, both in our own hearts, and in the hearts of the children of men. We have met with our beloved; our God, whom we have waited for, has appeared. The Sun of righteousness has arisen, with healing under his wings, and we have felt virtue and healing from him, and cannot but rejoice and testify of his salvation.

And what further manifestations of himself he has yet to give forth, we are sure to partake of, being formed by him in Spirit, and found in that wherein he appears, and from which his glory shines. Oh that all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in any measure of sincerity did know the way of the gospel, which is in the Spirit, light, life, and power, which is eternal, even in the grace and truth which is in him! And his kingdom, which is spiritual, and not of this world, cannot be shaken by this world (nor his Mount Zion removed); but is able to shake all nations and kingdoms which kiss not the Son, but oppose him. Blessed are they who are turned to the light of his Spirit, and who therein kiss and obey him.

IX. Some Queries concerning the Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit of the Father (it being one and the same Spirit), for those who take themselves to be Christians (and under the Gospel Dispensation) to consider and examine themselves by, that they may not be deceived, either concerning their present Estate here, or the eternal Estate of their Souls hereafter; seeing the Apostle so expressly says, "If any Man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8.

Query 1. DOST you know the Holy Spirit of the Father? You may have read something concerning it, and have apprehensions in your mind about it; but do you truly know what it is by its inward appearances and operations in your own heart?

Query 2. Have you received God's Holy Spirit into your heart? Have you let in Christ's Spirit, when he has knocked at the door of your heart, and received him? For he that is a true child, most naturally breathes and cries for the Father's Spirit; and the Father also most naturally gives his Spirit to them that truly and rightly ask it of him, Luke 11:13. and you must thankfully receive the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, when the Father gives him.

Query 3. Does the Spirit of Christ dwell in you? Has the stronger man cast the strong man out of you, and taken possession of your heart, and does he dwell therein? Then you may truly say, that you are built up by God a habitation for him in the Spirit. Then you are washed and cleansed indeed from your filthiness; and lusts or vain thoughts do not lodge in you. For the Holy Spirit of Christ will not dwell where such things lodge; but come out from among them, and be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty, in whom I will dwell and walk. 2 Cor. 6:15-17.

Query 4. Does God's Spirit lead you into all truth that you need know and walk in? Are you a true child, depending upon, and guided by, the Spirit of the Father? Can you not see your way, but as he makes it known to you? Are you a follower of the spotless Lamb, in the same spirit wherein he walked? If it be thus with you, then are you a child of God indeed.

Query 5. Do you live in the Spirit? Do you feel the Spirit of God to be a fountain of life, from which life springs up into you daily? Do you witness that scripture fulfilled in you, "He that believes on me," as the scripture has said, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"? Have you received the living water from Christ? And is that living water become a well of life in you?

Query 6. Do you walk in the Spirit, in the life thereof, in the newness thereof springing up in your heart? Do you know the difference between walking in the oldness of the letter, and in the newness of the Spirit?

Query 7. Did you ever learn of the Father, to know Christ? And did you ever learn of Christ, to know the Father? And has the Father indeed revealed the Son to you, and the Son indeed revealed the Father to you? Or are you yet only in the dead and dry notions, or barren comprehensions about these things?

Query 8. Do you know how the letter kills, and how the Spirit quickens and makes alive? And are you made alive by the Spirit, and born of the heavenly water and Spirit, and so become spiritual as the scripture testifies, "That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit"?

Query 9. Are you come under the ministration of the Spirit? Do you know what the ministration of the Spirit is? Or do you only know what the letter says concerning the ministration of the Spirit, but are altogether ignorant of the ministration itself?

Query 10. Do you know what the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus means? Have you ever received this law; the law of the new covenant; the holy law of life written in your heart by the finger of God's Spirit? For the same Spirit that wrote the law of the letter in tables of stone, writes the law of the Spirit in the fleshly tables of the heart.

Query 11. Do you not grieve the Holy Spirit, nor quench it, nor despise the prophesyings thereof in your own heart? For Christ is a king, a priest, a prophet; and he ministers in his sanctuary, in his temple (which the holy renewed heart is), in and by his Spirit.

Query 12. Do you know what the anointing is? Are you anointed therewith? And does your whole ability lie therein, insomuch as that you are daily sensible you can not do any thing of yourself, but still find God working in you, both to will and to do that which is right in his eyes, of his own good pleasure?

Query 13. Did your religion begin in the Spirit? In the living ministration of the new covenant? Did your knowledge begin so; that is, in feeling God opening your heart by his Spirit; and giving you the understanding whereby you might know him? Did your faith begin in his power, and does it stand in the same power to this day? Oh that men were sensible what is the right religion, and of the inward appearance of God's holy arm and power, which alone can redeem, and save the soul out of the hands of its enemies?

Query 14. Does your worship stand in the Spirit, and inward life of truth in your heart? Art you such a worshipper as the Father has sought out and made so? Or are you a worshipper of your own or other men's making? And do you keep within the limits of the living and spiritual worship, and not transgress the law thereof?

Oh, who would be mistaken and deceived about such weighty things as these, of so great necessity and concern! Who would miss of God's Spirit, and of the law and covenant of life in Christ Jesus, and be only in a dream concerning these things, without the true, demonstrative knowledge, possession, and enjoyment of them!

X. Of the true Way (the Way of Holiness, the Way of Life), and of the true Teaching and Knowledge

CHRIST is the way, the only way to the Father; there is not another. Now, every one that will truly know Christ, and come to Christ, must learn of the Father. It is written in the prophets, "All your children shall be taught of the Lord; every one therefore that has heard and learned of the Father, comes unto me," said Christ. Here are two things necessary for every one that would come to Christ. One is hearing of the Father: the other is learning what he teaches. For though a man do hear the living voice of the Father, yet if he do not learn and keep the instruction of life received from him, he may be drawn aside before he come to the Son. But he whose ears are opened to hear the voice, and who feels the instruction of life from the Father, to go to him in whom he has placed life; here the Spirit of the Father secretly draws in the inwards of a man's mind and spirit, from that which is really dead, to that which is truly living.

Now, when a man is come to the Son, in whom the Father has placed the fulness of life, then he shall witness him the way to the Father, and he will teach him daily of the Father. And here is the state of true subjection to the Son experienced, whom the soul must hear (and of whom he is to learn) in all things; who discovers the inward darkness in man's mind, and breaks down that in him which is contrary to God, having a daily cross ready for that which is to be crucified in him, whereby he shall die daily to himself. And as he dies to himself, Christ will reveal himself more and more in him, and he shall feel the pure seed of life springing more and more up in him, and living in him, and he in it; in and through which he shall come more and more into union and fellowship with the Father of spirits, and the whole living body of his church and people.

But now, to learn of the Father to come to the Son, and to learn of the Son to know the Father, and to walk in newness of Spirit before him and not in an old, dead knowledge and fleshly understanding), these are great mysteries, which none can learn by a literal conception and comprehension of things,

but as they are quickened, and their minds and understandings opened and kept open by the Lord. Therefore this is the great skill and true wisdom, to know the Shepherd and his voice; and his manner of appearing, and to what he appears; which is to his own sheep, to the true birth. And his way and manner of appearing to that birth is by visiting and reaching to it by his power opening it, thereby giving it to see, hear, and understand; but shutting up himself from the contrary nature, wisdom, and spirit in all men.

There is something which makes a fair show in the fleshly part, as if it were of God; but God knows what and who are his. Now, it is for the true children, that the milk of the word, and the bread of life is; and them the Lord is still gracious to, and hears all the desires and breathings of their hearts; them he preserves and visits in Egypt, and also brings out from there. Them he leads through the wilderness, dividing the Red Sea before them; before them also he divides Jordan (the river of judgment), causing them to pass through it also, that they may enter into the Holy Land. And their lot he defends in the Holy Land, in their subjection to the Spirit and law of life which rules there. But the contrary birth falls short by the way, and cannot enter into nor abide in that which is pure and living of God.

Now, in the lowly seed the whole mystery of life is learned, by those that come there and wait there, growing up into him who is the head; but no lesson of life, and of the truth as it is in Jesus, is learned out of it. Oh, how careful had men need be to know this seed in themselves, and to witness its daily springing up and growth in them!

XI. Concerning Separation from the Spirit and Ways of the World

THERE is a necessity of separation from the spirit, ways, and worships of the world, by those that will be the Lord's people. The Jews outward were to be a separated people from all other people (from their gods, from their worships), if they would enjoy the favor of the Lord, and the blessings of the good land. God had separated them from all other nations, and they were not to mingle with them; neither in their worship, nor marriages, etc. So the Jews inward, who are God's gathering of spiritual worshippers, out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, are to be a separated and holy people to the Lord. For when God cast off the Jews, he sought out worshippers in their stead, even for a spiritual nation and holy people of inward Jews, instead of that outward people, outward place of worship, and outward land, which he cast off. Now, those whom God seeks to be the new inward, spiritual worshippers, instead of the literal and outward, must come out of all other ways and gatherings, upon the many mountains, to the mountain of the Lord's house, and to the place of his gathering: the command is express, "Come out from among them, and be you separate; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you," etc. 2 Cor. 6. It is true, I seek you for worshippers, and I call you to the gospel feast of fat things, and I will receive you if you come; but you must first come out from among all the false ways and false worshippers, and depart from (and not so much as touch) that which is unclean (the unclean spirit, his unclean ways and worshippers), and then I will receive you, and own you as my sons and daughters, and be a Father to you; not else. Mark now; the Jews outward (in their day) must be separate from all the Heathen outward, if they would be judged and owned by God for true worshippers according to the law. The primitive Christians were to separate from both Heathen and Jews too (even their temple, priests, and ordinances, which were once of God), if they would be worshippers, true worshippers under the gospel, worshippers of God's seeking. And the

Christians, after the anti-christian corruption and darkness, must come out of Babylon; that is, out of all forms of religion, and buildings out of the life and power (for that is Babylon, the city of confusion, which is built, stands out of, and practices out of, the order and unity of the Spirit), if they will be found worshippers in the day of restoration; after the long darkness of the apostasy, they must not worship the beast (nor worship God as the beast teaches and requires; for in so worshipping, God is not worshipped, but the beast), nor bear his name, nor receive his mark, either on their forehead or right hand, nor be of the number of his name. Now, the command is as express to come out of Babylon, that is, to separate from all anti-christian ways and worships, as ever it was to separate from the Heathen and Jews; and there is no being a true worshipper in God's sight, but in the true way of separation from all false worshippers, who worship in forms and appearances of godliness, out of the life and power.

Now, oh, how precious it is to feel God seeking, God gathering, God separating, God teaching, leading, drawing into the truth, and true way of worship! For there are self-separations, which are out of the true Spirit, life, and power. Yes, God may begin the separation, and another wisdom may step in, and carry it on, out of the limits of the sweet, innocent Spirit, life, and power. Oh, blessed is he who is separated by the Lord from all that is not of him! But he that is but sensual, and has not the Spirit, but only by a literal knowledge separates himself, he differs from others but in the outward form and appearance of godliness; but is one in nature and ground with those whom he separates from. Thus the Papists, and all pretended Christians (of the same spirit) who feel not the true Spirit, power, and life, are but one in the ground, how great soever their difference outwardly seem. And those that separate further and further (even to the utmost extent outwardly, or in a way of appearance), being not separated by the Lord from that nature and spirit wherein the enmity lodges, they are still inhabitants of one and the same city (for the city of Babylon is very large), and daughters of one and the same mother, even of the wisdom which is from beneath; which wisdom, in its highest exaltation, is far beneath the nature and true excellency of the pure and heavenly wisdom, even in its lowest and most contemptible appearance. Oh! blessed is the religion, the worship, the separation, the fear of the Most High God, the faith, the knowledge, which begins in the Spirit and power (even in the evidence and demonstration of God's own Spirit), and which stands and abides therein! For herein are the children of light distinguished, and kept distinct (by God Almighty, who has made the difference), from all the children of darkness.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON

Prisoner for the testimony of truth at Reading Jail

1671. About the 12th month.

A TREATISE CONCERNING GOD'S TEACHINGS, AND CHRIST'S LAW

WITH SOME OTHER THINGS OF

WEIGHTY IMPORTANCE

PARTICULARLY MENTIONED AFTER THE PREFACE

WRITTEN BY

ISAAC PENINGTON

PRISONER AT READING JAIL FOR THE TESTIMONY OF TRUTH

"They also that erred in spirit shall know understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine." Isa. 29:24. Blessed be the Lord, it is so. This prophecy is sensibly and experimentally fulfilled, and fulfilling daily more and more

[ca. 1671]

PREFACE

CHRIST, who came from the Father, and knew the way of truth and life everlasting, and was to guide men to the Father, being the only way unto him, preached the kingdom, and bid men seek the kingdom; teaching and instructing them in many parables concerning it, and directing them where and how to find it.

The apostles likewise (who succeeded Christ in the same Spirit and power wherein he ministered) preached the same kingdom, declaring and describing what it was, and wherein it consisted; namely, not in word, but in power (even in the power which shakes all that is to be shaken, but cannot be shaken itself, nor the kingdom which is in it, 1 Cor. 4:20. and Heb. 12:28). Nor was the kingdom of God meat and drink (or any outward thing); but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom. 14:17.

And they preached not in vain; for the life was inwardly revealed in many, the power inwardly revealed, the kingdom inwardly revealed, and the righteousness, peace, and joy thereof felt. For such as truly believed and obeyed the gospel, received the kingdom which could never be shaken, and had an entrance ministered to them thereinto, according to their diligence and carefulness in the truth.

Now, afterwards a great darkness came over, and this glorious kingdom was again veiled, and the kingdom of darkness and deceit overspread the profession of Christianity; and in this time notions and outward knowledges took with men, instead of the life and truth itself, wherein the kingdom and

power stands.

But, blessed be the Lord, the light of life again shines out of and over the darkness, and the kingdom is again received and the entrance into it again known; and from what is seen and heard (and in measure enjoyed and possessed) is a faithful testimony given forth. And blessed are they who hear the joyful sound; for it is no less than the sound of life itself, the power itself, the gospel itself, the Spirit himself, manifesting himself in, and speaking through, vessels according to his pleasure.

Now, they that receive this light, which is testified of, and witnessed to, receive Christ; but they that despise and reject it, reject him; as will be made manifest in the day of the Lord, whatever men, in their wisdom and comprehensions, judge to the contrary, who know not, nor are able to judge of the appearances of the Lord, or of the glory of this dispensation.

For this dispensation is indeed most precious, glorious, and living, being a dispensation of the seed and power of life itself, whereby God translates out of darkness, and the regions thereof, into the kingdom of his dear Son, and into his glorious image. Which, reader, not that you may have only notions concerning, but may really come to partake of, is the end of my giving forth these things following; which sweetly, freshly, livingly, and powerfully sprang up in my heart for your sake, and are in great love presented to your view,

By a sufferer for the truth which lives in him, and in which he lives, through the tender mercy of the Lord, and to the glory of the riches of his grace,

ISAAC PENINGTON

A TREATISE CONCERNING

GOD'S TEACHINGS AND CHRIST'S LAW

1. Concerning God's Teachings

"It is written in the prophets" (said Christ) "they shall be all taught of God. Every one therefore that has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto me." John 6:45. "For the prophets indeed had said, All your children shall be taught of the Lord, and they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them."

NOW, whose children are they which shall all be taught of the Lord? And which are they which shall all know the Lord by the teachings of his Spirit, from the least to the greatest? Are they not the children of the free woman, the children of the Jerusalem which is from above, which is the mother of all that are truly living? Now, all her children the Father of life begets, and takes care to teach them the true, pure, heavenly, living knowledge; so that they indeed know the Lord, being taught by the anointing so to do; and they indeed know Christ, the Father revealing him to them: for none knows the Father but the Son, and none knows the Son but the Father, and he to whom the Father reveals him. "Flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father which is in heaven," said Christ to Peter. Matt. 16:17. And it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, said Paul. Gal. 1:15-16. And how did Paul preach Christ among the Gentiles? Did he not preach him as a mystery hid from ages and generations, which none but the

Father could reveal and make manifest? And when he is known and made manifest, is he not known within, revealed within, made manifest within? Col. 1:26-27. and 1 John 1:2. Mark: "The life was manifested." Thus they came to know Christ; and if they would bring others to the knowledge of Christ, they must bring them to the manifestation of the same life, and show unto them that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto them, ver. 2. Now, that they might do thus, they were to preach the light to them (even this message, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all, ver. 5), and to turn them to the light (Acts 26:18) in which alone men can see and receive the life which is eternal. Men may know or comprehend many things concerning the Messiah from the letter; but they can only know the Messiah himself in the light which shines into their hearts, and which he sent his apostles to direct and turn their minds to. For they directed them to the Word within, light within, life within, Spirit within; to feel after the manifestation of God within, which was communicated to the very Gentiles. Rom. 1:17. And so Paul directed the Gentiles to seek after and find God nigh, and not afar off. Acts 17:27. Oh, this is precious to find and feel God near, Christ near; in his light to see light, in his life to feel and enjoy life! For here (in the place of darkness, in the place of sin and death, in the place where dragons lay, Isa. 35:7) is the redeeming power to be felt, and the deliverance of the soul experienced by those that truly believe.

The Scribes and Pharisees had a knowledge that the Messiah was to come; but how came they by it? Why, they had read so in the letter of the Scriptures. The professors of this age have a knowledge that Christ is come; how came they by that? Why, they have read so in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. But who has believed the report of life now, and to whom is the arm of the Lord (which is now stretched forth) revealed? Who has heard and learned of the Father to know the Son, and so to come to him, even from the inward revelation of his Spirit, and from the inward living knowledge which is thereby? Every one therefore (says Christ), every one of these children, every one that is taught of God (because of what they have heard and learned of the Father), comes to the Son. Now, every one that is thus drawn, and thus comes, Christ receives, and gives to all such eternal life; and they know him who gives them eternal life, and who preserves and maintains life in them. Others have but a notional knowledge of him; but do not indeed know him that is true, nor are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ, who is the very God and life eternal. 1 John 5:20.

And so they that are taught of God learn of him to repent from dead works, and do repent them thereof; whereas others, through hardness of heart, do not so much as discern which are dead works, which not, in matters of worship. Others do not know the true difference between that which is dead, and that which is living; but death (unknown to them) lives and reigns in their very knowledge and apprehensions of things; even in their faith, in their duties, yes, in all they believe and perform to God. For as Paul was alive without the law once, even when he walked according to the letter of the law blameless; so all sorts are now dead, in the midst of all their knowledges and practices from the letter (how much alive soever they may seem to themselves therein) till they come to the ministration of the Spirit. "For the letter kills; but the Spirit quickens, or gives life." 2 Cor. 3:6. and ver. 3. This therefore is the work of a true minister, to beget into the Spirit, and into the life; but ah, how little do men know what dead works are, and what it is truly to witness repentance from them! Men out of God's Spirit, light, and power, are so far from repenting for them, that they do not so much as rightly distinguish and discern them; but take that for living which is dead; kindling a fire of themselves, and compassing themselves about with sparks, thinking the warmth thereof to be the true warmth. Now, if men are not come to the true repentance from dead works, much less are they come to the true faith towards God; and so are yet in their sins, yet out of Christ, having never learned of the Father to come to him; and so

are still in Egypt's spirit, in Egypt's wisdom, and in that hold their religion: and whenever God appears in his Spirit and power, he will not be that to them which they expect; but a dreadful stroke from him will come upon all their ways and worships, which are as abominable to God, as they are pleasing to them. But alas, to what end are words to that ear, to that spirit, which is like the deaf adder, which will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely! Could the letter-learned Scribes and Pharisees hear the voice of Christ in the days of his flesh? No; they could not, in that gainsaying spirit. Can the letter-learned professors, in the same spirit, hear the voice of Christ's Spirit now? No; they cannot. And they that cannot hear the voice of the second Adam, the voice of the quickening Spirit, the voice of him who gives life to the soul, how can they live? And if they first receive not life from Christ, how can they perform any living action to God? How can they worship in the Spirit and in the living truth, who are not gathered into the Spirit and into the living truth? Oh, that men could consider aright of these things, and wait on the Lord for the true understanding of them! For without the true knowledge of God and Christ (without that knowledge which is life eternal) men must needs perish. It cannot be otherwise; for the true knowledge only saves, and therefore they which have it not must needs perish.

II. Concerning the Law of Christ

"And the isles shall wait for his law," Isa. 42:4.

WHAT is that law which the isles were and are to wait for? Is it not the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ, even the grace in the inward parts, even the truth in the inward parts? The law outward was given by Moses to the outward Jews; but grace and truth comes by Jesus Christ. That is the law of the Jew inward, which the isles of the Gentiles were to wait for.

The apostle holds forth Christ to be the soul's master (he is the Shepherd, Lord, King, and Bishop of the soul), to whom every one must give an account. Now, what must men give an account to him of? Is it not of the grace and truth which comes by him? If any man has received that, obeyed that, believing the sound, report, and voice of that, and so loved and followed it, will it not be said unto him, "Well done, good and faithful servant"? But if any one has neglected and despised the grace (not improving the talent, but improving his own natural abilities, while God's talent lay wrapped up in a napkin, and hid in the earth), will not that person be judged a slothful servant as to improving the talent, whatever he has been as to improving his own natural parts and abilities?

Now mind: If Christ be an inward, a spiritual master, what is his law but the inward teachings of his Spirit? A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me, him shall you hear in all things; and he that will not hear him, how secure and confident soever he may seem to himself of his state at present; yet it shall come to pass, that he shall be cut off and destroyed from among God's people. Are not the words, the voice, the motions, the leadings, the drawings, the commands of his Spirit, the law to all that are spiritual? Does not he say to one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; to another, Do this, and he does it? Here is the glory of the great Lord and King, and of the great High-priest, over the household of God, in that he gives forth precepts according to his holy will and pleasure; and all his sheep know his voice, and follow him; and all his children and servants observe and obey him.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit, said the holy apostle. Here are the limits of the children of the new covenant; here is the law of life (the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus), the law of the new covenant, written in the heart, which none can read but with the new eye. The children of the flesh may read the letter, and comprehend concerning the letter, and gather rules and observations out of the letter; but the children of the new covenant alone can read the law of life in the heart. And this law is the path of life, the path of all that are renewed by God's Spirit, which the Jew inward is to read diligently, and to have his delight therein, and to meditate thereon day and night. And this law is light, true light, pure light, spiritual light, yes, the light which is eternal, and never varies; and the commandment which comes therefrom is a lamp, which they that receive know it to be no less than life everlasting; for indeed, the commandments of Christ's Spirit are felt to be so. Now, this commandment, this law, this light, shines in the darkness at first; but afterwards, out of the darkness more and more (as it is believed, received, obeyed, and walked in) unto the perfect day. See Prov. 4:18-19.

Question. But how may I wait for, come to know, and receive this law? I am not of the stock of the Jews natural, but of the isles of the Gentiles; how may I meet with and receive the law of life from Christ, or the grace and truth which comes by him?

Answer. The way of receiving it is to mind that which enlightens and renews the mind, drawing it out of the nature and spirit of this world, and out of the ways, worships, knowledge, and customs thereof, into that which seasons it otherwise, and opens it another way. Now, here the grace is met with, here the truth is met with, here the Spirit of life is met with; here the inward change is felt, and the new law written in the heart and spirit. And here the mind comes to prove and know what is that good, that acceptable, and perfect will of God: for God is the teacher in the new covenant, and his teachings are here, even in that which he renews. He gathers into his Spirit, and he teaches those that abide in his Spirit, and gives unto them eternal life, eternal virtue, eternal nourishment, in and from his Spirit. But they that may be great searchers into the letter, and comprehenders from the letter, and practicers according to their apprehensions of the letter (not being gathered into nor reading in the Spirit), they miss of eternal life, and of the redeeming arm and power, and are not saved from sin by the blood of Christ; but are yet in transgression, darkness, and death, even until now. The Lord, who knows all things, make manifest their estates and conditions unto them, that they perish not forever; but may learn of the Father to know the Son, and of the Son to know the Father, and come to witness true life manifested in their own hearts, that they may have fellowship with the Father and Son therein. For he that is not turned from darkness unto light (from the darkness within in his own heart, unto the light which God causes to shine there) does not yet know Christ livingly and savingly; but is only in the notions and comprehensions concerning him, which cannot save. For it is the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, inwardly revealed against the power of sin and death, which is alone able to save therefrom.

Now, consider with yourselves (all who would not be deceived in this matter) have you known this law? Have you received it in measure, and do you wait to know and receive it daily more and more? Then are you Christians indeed, and of the house of Jacob, which walk in the light of the Lord, and in the light of the holy city, whose light the Lamb is. But without this law, without this light, without the inward writing of God's Spirit in your hearts, you cannot be inward Jews, nor children of the new covenant.

These are weighty things, and to be considered weightily, and weighed in the balance of the sanctuary. Oh! wait to know what it is to go into the sanctuary, and to weigh things there in the balance thereof, which exactly and infallibly weighs and determines whatever is brought there! For of a truth you cannot understand any scripture aright which treats of any spiritual and heavenly mystery, but as you are taught of God, to bring it unto the balance of the sanctuary, and to weigh it there; where all your own apprehensions, meanings, and conceptions will fall, and the mind and intent of God's Spirit be alone owned and justified. Ah! what a vast difference there is between weighing men's apprehensions and conceivings upon scriptures in the balance of their own understandings, and weighing them in the true balance! In the former are all the erring judgments; but in the latter is the true, unerring judgment of God's own Spirit, in the light which is eternal; which judgment will stand forever.

III. A brief Relation concerning myself, in reference to what has befallen me in my Pursuit after Truth

I WAS acquainted with a spring of life from my childhood, which enlightened me in my tender years, and pointed my heart towards the Lord, begetting true sense in me, and faith and hope and love and humility and meekness etc., so that indeed I was a wonder to some that knew me, because of the savor and life of religion which dwelt in my heart, and appeared in my conduct.

But I never durst trust the spring of my life, and the springings up of life therefrom; but, in reading the Scriptures, gathered what knowledge I could therefrom, and set this over the spring and springings of life in me, and, indeed, judged that I ought so to do.

Notwithstanding which, the Lord was very tender and merciful to me, helping me to pray, and helping me to understand the Scriptures, and opening and warming my heart every day.

And truly my soul was very near the Lord, and my heart was made and preserved very low and humble before him, and very sensible of his rich love and mercy to me in the Lord Jesus Christ; as I did daily, from my heart, cry grace, grace, unto him, in every thing my soul received and partook of from him.

Indeed, I did not look to have been so broken, shattered, and distressed, as I afterwards was, and could by no means understand the meaning thereof, my heart truly and earnestly desiring after the Lord, and not having the sense of any guilt upon me. Many came to see me, some to inquire into and consider of my condition; others to bewail it, and (if possible) administer some relief, help, and comfort to me; and various were the judgments they had concerning me. Some would say it was deep melancholy; others would narrowly search, and inquire how, and in what manner, and in what way I had walked, and were jealous that I had sinned against the Lord, and provoked him some way or other, and that some iniquity lay as a load upon me: but after thorough converse with me, they would still express that they were of another mind; and that the hand of the Lord was in it, and it was an eminent case, and would end in good to my soul.

At that time, when I was broken and dashed to pieces in my religion, I was in a congregational way; but soon after parted with them, yet in great love, relating to them how the hand of the Lord was upon me, and how I was smitten in the inward part of my religion, and could not now hold up an outward form of that which I inwardly lacked, having lost my God, my Christ, my faith, my knowledge, my life,

my all. And so we parted very lovingly, I wishing them well, even the presence of that God whom I lacked; promising to return to them again, if ever I met with that which my soul lacked, and had clearness in the Lord so to do.

After I was parted from them, I never joined to any way or people; but lay mourning day and night, pleading with the Lord why he had forsaken me, and why I should be made so miserable through my love to him, and sincere desires after him. For truly I can say, I had not been capable of so much misery as my soul lay in for many years, had not my love been so deep and true towards the Lord my God, and my desires so great after the sensible enjoyment of his Spirit, according to the promise and way of the gospel. Yet this I can also say, in uprightness of heart, It was not gifts I desired to appear and shine before men in; but grace and holiness, and the spirit of the Lord dwelling in me, to act my heart by his grace, and to preserve me in holiness.

Now, indeed the Lord at length had compassion on me, and visited me; though in a time and way wherein I expected him not: nor was I willing (as to the natural part) to have that the way which God showed me to be the way; but the Lord opened my eye, and that which I knew to be of him in me closed with it, and owned it; and the pure seed was raised by his power, and my heart taught to know and own the seed, and to bow and worship before the Lord in the pure power, which was then in my heart. So that of a truth I sensibly knew and felt my Savior, and was taught by him to take up the cross, and to deny that understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, which had so long stood in my way; and then I learned that lesson (being really taught it of the Lord) what it is indeed to become a fool for Christ's sake. I cannot say but I had learned something of it formerly; but I never knew how to keep to what I had learned till that day.

And then God showed me (by degrees, as he nurtured me up in the heavenly sense and experience of his spirit) the workings of the good in me and the workings of the subtlety; and how himself had, in time past, taught me to pray, and to understand the Scriptures, and to believe in his Son, and know some things aright; but withal, how a knowledge and understanding of another nature had crept in, and gained ground upon me (which indeed I knew not how to distinguish thoroughly from the other, and watch against), and so the truth came not to live in me, nor I to live in that, according to the earnest desire and travail of my soul.

But now of a truth, by this blessed visitation of the everlasting gospel, the Lord has at length brought me back to the same spring I was acquainted with at first, and joined my heart in true sense and understanding to it; so that the life that I live is by the springing up of life in me; and I know the Lord my God, by being daily taught by him so to do; and I love him, by feeling my heart circumcised and constrained through the new nature thereunto. And truly it is natural to the good seed in me, and to my soul in and through the same, to trust my Father, and to suffer any thing that he requires of me, who freely gives me both to do and to suffer: for indeed I live not of myself, but by a continual gift and quickening of life in my heart.

And oh that others also could come to hear the testimony of truth and life from God's Holy Spirit, and be turned thereby to the pure principle and Spirit of life itself! (which many formerly had a true taste of, but are now turned aside to another nature and spirit, though they themselves know it not) that they might witness the gospel power, and know the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem, and suck at her breasts, and be dandled on her knee, who is the mother and bringer-up of all that are truly living.

IV. A Question about preaching the everlasting Gospel answered

Question. How is the everlasting gospel (wherein Christ is truly made known, and salvation really witnessed in the hearts of those that receive it) preached at this day? How has the Lord appointed it to be preached, and how is it preached, and how may men come to hear it, that their souls may live? Are not they blessed that hear the joyful sound thereof? Are not they wretched and miserable, and blind and naked, who mistake and miss concerning that sound of it, which it pleases the Spirit of the Lord to give forth in this day?

It is wonderful to consider how the truth, the gospel, the life, the power which saves, is one and the same in all ages and generations, and yet still hid from the wise, prudent, professing eye, in every age and generation.

Now let me speak a few words to this thing: not only from what I have felt in my heart, but have also read in the Scriptures of truth.

Answer. The gospel, after the apostasy, is thus to be preached: "Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven and earth," etc. Rev. 14:6-7. He that knows the preacher that preaches this; he that has heard this preached in his own heart; he that has met with that fear which God's Spirit teaches and gives; he that has known the hour of God's judgment, and had the axe laid to the root of the corrupt tree, and has been taught by the Son to worship the Father in spirit and truth; he has, without doubt, met with the gospel, the everlasting gospel; and if God require of such a one, and assist him by his Spirit and power to preach this to others, he is a preacher of the everlasting gospel, and an able minister of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. But all should take heed of preaching their own formings and conceivings upon the letter (as too many do in this day, who reproach, revile, and persecute the life and power), for that falls short of true preaching the letter.

Oh that these things were weighty upon men's spirits, that they might learn aright to search and understand the Scriptures, and know how the Father has revealed the Son in this day, and how to come to him, to receive life from him! For many (who seem knowing), through ignorance, mistake in this matter, and so run on in their own wills, wisdoms, and comprehensions of things, and miss of the drawings of the Father, and so come not aright to the Son; but only according to what they themselves imagine and apprehend from what they have gathered and conceived upon the Scriptures.

God, who commanded light to shine in this outward world, has judged it necessary to cause the light of his Spirit to shine inwardly in men's hearts; and this gives the knowledge of the Scriptures, and the true sense and discerning of inward and spiritual things; yes, here the Son is known, and his blood felt cleansing; which the Scriptures without do not make manifest; but this the Scriptures are a clear and faithful record of, and testimony to. Men had need take heed how they read, and how they understand, the Scriptures (in what light, in what spirit), for it is easy erring; but without the presence and guidance of God herein men cannot walk safely. And truly it is great presumption in any man to read the Scriptures boldly, without fear and reverence to him who is the author of them; or to put any of his meanings and conceivings upon God's words; which it is hard for him to forbear doing, who reads

them in the liberty of his own spirit, out of the light of God's Spirit, which is the limit and yoke of the true readers and understanders of the Scriptures.

V. Concerning Christ's Ministry, or Priesthood

CHRIST is made by God a minister, or high priest, over the spiritual Israel of God, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life," (as Heb. 7:16 and chap. 8:2); and he ministers with his Spirit and power unto and in all his. So that he that knows Christ's ministry, knows the power, the life, the Spirit in which he ministers; but he that is not acquainted with these, is yet to learn to know Christ aright, and to believe in him unto life and salvation, which are wrapped up, comprehended, revealed, and communicated in the power wherewith he ministers. For the very beginning of Christ's ministry is in the Spirit and power of God, whereby he redeems out of the spirit and power of Satan; and to this men are to be turned, if they will witness salvation by Jesus Christ, even to the light and power of God's Holy Spirit, which breaks the darkness and strength of the kingdom of Satan in the heart. For indeed all literal professions, beliefs, knowledges, and practices, out of the life and power, Satan can transform himself into, and uphold and maintain his kingdom under, in the hearts of men; but the inward light and power of life breaks it, where the minds of the people are, by the Spirit of the Lord, turned thereto, and subjected under its rule and government.

VI. Concerning the true Knowledge of Christ

IT was said, in the time of the prophets, under the ministration of the law, that "the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they" (that is, the outward Israel, Israel after the flesh) "should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts." Mal. 2:7. And does not Christ, our High Priest, and the Apostle of our profession, keep all the people's knowledge? And are they not all to seek the law of life, the law of the new covenant, at his mouth? Is not he the Messenger of the covenant, who brings tidings of the covenant of life and peace; and must not the soul that will live hear him? Isa. 55:1,2,3. Is not he the Sealed and Sent-One of the Father, to open the blind eye, and to bring the prisoner out of the pit? Is not he the Shepherd of the spiritual flock? And are not such as are called out of the world (and sanctified by him) his sheep? And are not all his sheep to hear his voice, and follow him? Is not he the Prophet, like Moses, appointed by God, for all the spiritual Israel to hear in all things? Is not his Spirit to teach and lead into all truth? Can any else lead into truth? Or can any come into truth unless they be led? And they that will not hear the voice of his Spirit in these latter days (seeing God, in these last days, speaks by his Son, and says to all the true disciples and followers of the Lamb, Hear you Him), are they not to be cut off from the comforts of his Spirit, from the pure refreshments of his Spirit, from the life of his Spirit, and from the living Israel, and so to be numbered among the dead and unredeemed?

Christ says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." It is he alone that is the living way, which leads to the Father. Now, how is Christ the way to the Father? How is he the truth? How is he the life? Is he so by any literal and outward knowledge of him; or by the inward, spiritual, and living knowledge of him? They that know his Spirit know the way; and they that walk in his Spirit walk in the way. This is most

certain: they that walk not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness and life of the Spirit, they walk in the new and living way. How is the letter old; and how is the Spirit new? How is Christ known after the flesh, and so to be known no more? And how is he known after the Spirit, and so to be known forever? Man is but flesh, and his knowledge and understanding of things, of his own fetching from the literal relations and descriptions of them, is but the knowledge of the fleshly part; but there is a new eye, a new understanding, a new heart and mind, to which the Father reveals him; and that knowledge which the new birth receives of the Father, that is spiritual, true, pure, heavenly, living knowledge. And so the children of the kingdom are to dwell in that light wherein the Father reveals the things of the kingdom; and this differences them from all the literal knowers of the things of God upon the face of the earth. Now, this is it which satisfies my heart concerning my knowledge of the things of God, even that I have so learned to know Christ, and to believe in him (and to repent from dead works, and to obey him, and suffer for him), as I could never have learned, unless the Father himself had taught me. And now, seeing and partaking of the difference, I cannot but testify against all dead teachings, unto the Spirit's teaching, which is living; knowing assuredly, that no other teaching or learning the things of God will amount to the true knowledge, or be owned in the day of the Lord, but that which is of and in the Spirit.

VII. A few Words more concerning the Right Way of Knowing, as it is witnessed unto in the Scriptures, and experienced in the Hearts of those that truly and livingly know the Lord

"WISDOM is justified of her children," said Christ. Mat. 11:19. Now, who is wisdom? What is wisdom? Is it not the heavenly mother of all the living? It is the Spirit which begets all, who are truly begotten to the Lord. Now where, and into what, does he beget them? In the earthly nature, in the earthly wisdom, in the earthly spirit; or out of it, in and into that which is heavenly?

Now, all that are of this heavenly begetting and birth, they know (own and justify) that wisdom, wherein they are begotten. They justify the nature of truth, the light of truth, the life of truth, the power of truth, the appearance of truth in their age and generation. The false birth will own and justify the words of truth which were formerly spoken, and the former appearances thereof (as the Scribes and Pharisees did Moses and the prophets, who denied Christ, who was truth, and spake truth beyond them); but the true birth knows and justifies the present words, and the present appearances of truth, which the false birth still slights and despises.

If any man therefore will judge aright concerning the things of God, he must be sure to be of the true birth (a child of the true wisdom), and that he keep to that nature, Spirit, and birth, to which God gives the discerning. For there is an eye of discerning, and a way of discerning, which is a gift; and he that will know aright, and judge aright, must keep to the gift of light, the gift of grace, the gift of the Spirit, the gift of the holy anointing; and be watchful and careful to judge in it, and take heed of judging out of it. For though a man be come to a spiritual state, and has received the gift of grace, knowledge, and discerning; yet if he be not watchful to keep to the gift, he may easily err, and judge amiss.

VIII. Concerning Christ's Righteousness, which is the Righteousness of all his Saints

CHRIST is the head, his saints the body; and do they not all partake of one nature, one Spirit, one virtue, one life, one righteousness? Does not Christ give them of his own righteousness, even of the righteousness which his Father gave him? And is not that righteousness which Christ gives them, their righteousness? What was Christ's righteousness? Was it not the righteousness of God revealed in him, communicated to him, and made his? And what is their righteousness? Is not the same righteousness revealed in them, communicated to them, and made theirs, in and by Christ? Are not they made partakers of the divine nature, in and through him, and made the righteousness of God in him? Christ trusted his Father, and obeyed his Father in all things. Now, was not that an effect of the righteous nature and Spirit of his Father in him? "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And, oh, how was his Father pleased therewith! Did not he say to him, as to Abraham in the like case? "Because you have done this thing, in blessing I will bless you; and in multiplying I will multiply your seed; and you shall see of the travail of your soul, and be satisfied:" for you shall not only gather the "dispersed of Israel," but "inherit the Gentiles" also; "and have the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession."

Consider now, seriously, in God's fear; Is Christ's obedience to the law of Moses the saints' evangelical righteousness? Or is his righteousness revealed in them, from faith to faith? Was his being circumcised outwardly, their circumcision? Or is his inward circumcising them, their circumcision? Which of these is the gospel circumcision; the circumcising of his flesh outwardly, or the circumcising of their hearts inwardly? Again, was his being outwardly baptized, their baptism? Or is the inward baptism of the Spirit, the gospel baptism? Does he not fulfill the righteousness of the law of the Spirit of life in them, who believe in his Spirit and power, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit? Was not Christ justified in the Spirit? And are not all his justified in the Spirit also? Whatsoever is of God, whatsoever is wrought in God, does not God justify? Is not the person here justified, the faith justified, the works justified with the justification of life, and of God's Holy Spirit, from which they proceed? And here Christ's words are verified, "He that does truth, comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifest, that they are wrought in God." John 3:21. And are not his deeds then justified? He that is united to the Spirit of God (and acquainted with the Spirit of God, and knows his voice), hears, and sees, and feels, and understands what God condemns, and also what he justifies; who never condemns any thing that arises from himself, and is wrought in himself; but only that which comes from the flesh, and is wrought in the flesh. And here he sees (in the true light) what faith is imputed for righteousness, and what faith is shut out; and what works are accounted righteous, and what works are shut out: and how Enoch walked with God in the righteous Spirit and life, and was therein justified; and how Noah built an ark in the faith, being moved with fear, and was therein with his family saved. So Abel sacrificed in the faith, "by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." Heb. 11:4. Mark; his sacrifice, his gift, came from a righteous Spirit, and so the righteous God testified of his gift; and such are all the sacrifices now, that are offered up in God's Spirit, and in the true faith. And so we also see how Abraham (the father of the faithful) was "justified by works," James 2:21. and how God was pleased with him, because he had done that thing of offering up his only son at God's command. Also Phinehas's zeal for the Lord, in executing judgment, was highly esteemed of the Lord, and "was counted to him for righteousness, unto all generations for evermore." Psal. 106:30-31.

But alas! how do men mistake about the righteousness of Christ, about the gospel righteousness; and,

in effect, make it but the righteousness of the law, but the righteousness of the old covenant, performed in the person of another for us, and imputed to us! Whereas it is the righteousness of another covenant, even of the new and living covenant, which the Lord Jesus Christ works, both in us and for us. Now, whoever receives this righteousness from him, and is clothed with it by him, he finds it to be the righteousness of the gospel, the new and living righteousness, the true and everlasting righteousness, both of the Father and Son, which the souls of those that truly believe partake of in them and with them.

Now, consider a scripture or two, to evidence this further.

The apostle says, 2 Cor. 3:17-18. "The Lord is that Spirit" (the Lord Jesus is the second Adam, the quickening Spirit) in whom the "veil is done away," ver. 16. And so the true Christian (in whom the "veil is done away," who is come into the true liberty of the Spirit) "with open face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, is changed into the same image."

Now mind: if man be changed into the heavenly image, if he partake of Christ's image, is he not made righteous, and become truly righteous therein? Was not the image of the first Adam holy and righteous? And is not the image of the second Adam holy and righteous also? And are not they that are changed from the image of sin and Satan, into Christ's image, holy and righteous in that image? Are they not changed from unrighteousness to righteousness? And is not this image, whereinto they are changed, and wherein they are new created by God, their righteousness? Whoever is ingrafted into Christ, is he not ingrafted into righteousness? — cut off from unrighteousness, and ingrafted into righteousness; even into the righteous nature and Spirit of the Lamb? And does he not partake of the righteousness of the Vine or Olive-tree, into which he is ingrafted? And does not that become his righteousness? If the root be holy, then are also the branches; and if the root be righteous, so are also the branches; and that is the righteousness and holiness of the branches, which they have from the root.

The other scripture is that of Eph. 4:22,23,24. which speaks of putting off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and of being renewed in the spirit of the mind, and putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Mark; here is the new creation. Now, consider well, what is the holiness and righteousness of the new creation? Is not that which is put off, old, corrupt, unholy, unrighteous? Is not that which is put on, new, holy, righteous; even the image before spoken of, Christ the heavenly image, the new man, which is created and formed in man? And then God owns such to be his people. Isai. 51:16.

No man can do that which is righteous, but he that first partakes of God's righteous nature and Spirit. The tree must first be good, before the fruit can be so. A man must first be renewed and made righteous, before he can bring forth righteousness. So that he that does bring forth righteousness, without doubt he is inwardly renewed, without doubt he is inwardly righteous. Did the Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law? Then, without doubt, they were partakers of another nature than the old corrupt nature, which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that does righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous." 1 John 3:7. This is the true and weighty judgment of God's Spirit; and he that judges otherwise is deceived, and errs in this particular; and shows that he does not yet know God's righteousness, and Christ's righteousness, which is one and the same. For, "If you know that he is righteous, you know that every one that does righteousness is born of him." 1 John 2:29. Mark; the new birth precedes the

doing of righteousness; and the doing of righteousness is a certain evidence of the new birth. He that does righteousness is born of God; this fruit can arise from no other but the pure, living, heavenly root.

IX. Of the Grace of the Gospel

THE prophets of old prophesied of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 1 Pet. 1:10-11. Now, what was the glory which should follow? Was it not the setting up Christ's inward and invisible kingdom in the hearts of men? Was it not God's abundant pouring out his Spirit, and filling vessels therewith; so that the Spirit of grace and of glory should rest upon believers, as it had done upon Christ? Was it not God's tabernacling in men, and becoming their God, and making them his people? Was it not the fulfilling the precious promises concerning the gospel state, whereby men should be made partakers of the divine nature (of the heavenly image), and be changed from glory to glory, by the renewing Spirit and power? Was it not to have fellowship with Christ, not only in his sufferings and death, but also in his resurrection and kingdom; where the bread and wine of the kingdom is eaten and drunk, and the feast of fat things partaken of? Is it not a glorious state to be translated out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of the dear Son? And to dwell with Christ in the kingdom; and sup there with him, and he with them? To have fellowship (pure fellowship, living fellowship) with the Father and the Son, that the blessedness and joy of the soul in the gospel state may be full?

The law was a ministration of shadows; for under it were the various and many shadows of the good things to come, which were to be possessed and enjoyed in the days of the gospel. In the law there was an outward people (the Jews outward), an outward covenant, an outward land of blessings, plenty, and rest; an outward Zion, outward Jerusalem, outward temple, outward ark, outward table, outward laver, outward candlesticks, outward lamps, outward oil, outward anointing, outward circumcision and sacrifices, outward new moons and sabbaths, outward kings, outward priests, and outward victories over outward enemies, etc.

But now, in the gospel, there is the substance of these things inwardly revealed, and inwardly possessed and enjoyed; even the Jew inward (the new man of the heart), an inward covenant of life and peace, an inward land of blessedness, of rest; an inward sabbath or day of gospel rest (which the true believer keeps in the faith, not bearing any burden, kindling any fire, nor doing any work of the flesh therein); an inward Zion, an inward Jerusalem or holy city; an inward temple (in which is the Holy of Holies), an inward ark, in which the law of life is treasured up; inward table, inward laver, inward candlestick, inward lamp, inward oil, inward anointing, inward circumcision and sacrifices, and solemn seasons; the inward King of glory, inward prophet and priest known, even Christ within, who gives victories and dominion over the inward enemies, and gives his to partake of his kingdom and priesthood. Rev. 1:6. Yes, and (by his Spirit poured out upon them) makes his seers and prophets also, as it is written, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy."

Now, was not this fulfilled after the sufferings of Christ in the flesh? And is it not daily more and more fulfilled, as the sufferings of Christ, which are yet behind, are filled up in his body the church? Did not the glory then succeed? Was not the gospel spirit and power then revealed and bestowed? And did it

not bring into the gospel state? Were not the precious promises fulfilled therein? 2 Pet. 1:3-4. Are they not all yes and amen in Christ? Is not the veil or covering taken away in him? Is not the glory revealed in him? Is not the Lord one, and his name one in him? Is there not glory then in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will among men, as well as good-will in God towards men? Where is the enmity and wars, and lusts and fightings? Where is the envy of Judah or Ephraim, or the vexing one another here? Are not these things drowned in the love and in the peace, in the life and in the power which is revealed in the gospel state, and springs up in the gospel spirit? They know not what spirit they are of, who would have fire come down from heaven upon the disobedient and gainsayers. To be sure, they are not of the gospel spirit, not of Christ's Spirit, who came not to destroy men's lives, but to seek and save that which was lost, and to overcome by the overflowings of his love and tender visits of his life. And how do his children make war in this day? Is it not with innocency, with meekness, with patience, with bowels of love, with long-suffering, with truth, with righteousness, like the followers of the Lamb, like the children of him who abounds therein? Indeed there is a sword given, there is a threshing instrument, there are darts and arrows to be shot into the hearts of the King's enemies; Psa. 45:3,4,5. but it is not to destroy the creature, but rather to smite and wound that spirit which captivates it, that the creature may witness deliverance and freedom therefrom: though it is true, that they who join with that spirit, must partake of its judgments and plagues, even to destruction, if they so continue.

Now, this glory is wrapped up in the grace which is ministered by the gospel; and where grace is sown, the glory is sown (there is a true seed of the glory); and where grace abounds, the glory abounds. It was said concerning the first gathering of Christians by the apostles, that "great grace was upon them all," Acts 4:33. and indeed, it was a precious and glorious state, which they were gathered into and brought forth in. Now, the grace is revealed again, the grace is poured forth again, the grace has appeared, teaching and bringing salvation again; does it not behoove every one to know it and partake of it? — not to be content with words concerning the grace, but to know the grace itself, receiving it from the hand of him that gives it, and hearing the voice, reproofs, and instructions of it? "Hear, and your souls shall live." Whom should they hear? Are they not to hear Christ, the great prophet? How shall they hear Christ? Is there any other way, than by hearing his grace teaching them? than by hearkening to the measure of the gift of grace, which is by Jesus Christ? "The law was given by Moses" (all his people, all his children, all his family were to come under the law, to be governed by the law). "Grace and truth comes by Jesus Christ," (all his children, all his people, all his family are to come under the grace, to be governed by the grace) who is faithful in all his house, dispensing of his grace and truth to all his, as Moses did of the law (committed to him) to all under him. So then, all that desire to be truly Christians, let them wait to know what the grace and truth which Christ gives is, and to partake of it and come under it; under its teachings, under its influences, under its protection, under its government (by being subject to it; and in every thing guided by it), that they may know what that scripture means, in the true and weighty experience: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. 6:14.

X. A Question answered concerning real Holiness

Question. ARE not persons to be really holy (really sanctified in Christ Jesus) who would be received by the Lord, and enjoy fellowship with him as sons and daughters, in the gospel of his Son?

Answer. Under the law, that people of the Jews were to be separated from the Heathen, to be outwardly circumcised and cleansed by the water and blood of purifying (which sanctified to the purifying of the flesh), and not to touch any dead or unclean thing; for any such thing polluted them, and those that were unclean must be kept without the camp, as unfit for the holy communion with God and his people, till cleansed.

Now, what did this signify? Did it not signify that pure and clean state inwardly, which God requires under the gospel? Did it not signify the inward circumcision of the heart and spirit before the Lord, and the cleansing of the soul, mind, and body, before its appearing to worship in the inward and spiritual temple? Heb. 10:22. Is there not a Jerusalem under the gospel, into which no uncircumcised or unclean thing is to enter, or appear before God there? Mark what the apostle says, Heb. 12. "You are not come to the mount that might be touched," to outward Mount Sinai, or Zion, to the appearance of God there; but you are come to the inward Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to fellowship with God and Christ there, ver. 18-22.

Now, what is the way to this holy fellowship and heavenly communion? Does not God himself prescribe it? 2 Cor. 6:16-17. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be separated," says the Lord, "and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you; I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." For God would have a people representatively holy in the time of the law (yet not destitute of inward holiness), and he will have a people really holy in the time of the gospel. "He that defiles the temple of God, him will God destroy:" but keep the temple clean, pure, holy, and then the Holy God will dwell and appear there, according to his promise; "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." And this is eternally true, and witnessed by certain experience among them that know the Lord; that if any thing that is unclean be touched, there is a defilement thereby, and there must be a cleansing felt, before an admittance into the presence of the Holy God, and enjoying fellowship with him again.

XI. Concerning the Law of Sin in the Fleshly Mind, and the Law of Life and Holiness in the Renewed Mind; and from where each gain their Strength

WHAT is the law of sin? Who writes it in the mind? And what is it when it is writ? "When lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin when it is finished, brings forth death" Jam. 1:15. So that the first beginning of sin is evil lust; and the whole corruption that is in the world, is through lust. 2 Pet. 1:4. Now, from where comes that lust? Is it not begotten in the mind and spirit by the tempter? And what is the law, both of the lusting, and of the sins committed through the lust? Is it not the lustful nature, the lustful will, the lustful wisdom, the lustful desires and passions, which the god of this world begets in the worldly part? So on the other hand, there is a holy law in the holy and renewed mind. Whence comes that law? Does it not come from God? Does it not come from the Holy One? Is it not he that blots out Satan's law, and then writes his own law in the hearts of his? Now, what is his law? Is it not of a contrary nature to Satan's law? What God writes in the hearts of his, teaching them holiness, requiring holiness, enlightening the mind unto holiness; manifesting the good, perfect, and acceptable will, is not that his law? Under the old covenant the law was at a distance, writ in tables of stone; but under the new covenant the law is nigh, written in the heart by the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. For he is King, the inward King, the spiritual King of his people, who comes to reform, and

amend by his covenant, what was amiss under the former. Now, because he found under the old covenant, that laws outwardly written would never bring men into, and keep men in, subjection to his Father; therefore he writes inwardly by his Spirit and power, and visits with the inward eternal day, even the day of his power; and so makes his people willing to receive the law of his Spirit of life, which makes "free from the law of sin and death." For this law being inward and spiritual, and more powerful than the other, overcomes the other law, even the "law of sin and death" (though it be inward and spiritual, and inwardly written also), and sets free from it. Rom. 6:18. and 8:2.

Now, these laws have each their strength from him that writes them. The law of sin and death has its strength from the god of this world, the prince of darkness, who rules in all that are disobedient to the Spirit and power of Christ. The law of holiness, the law of life, the law of faith in the power, the law of obedience to God's Holy Spirit, has its strength from the Holy One, from the Prince of life and peace; for Satan is near his subjects, and dwells in them, to act them, and to make his laws of sin and disobedience forcible in them. Every motion and temptation to sin he kindles, and adds vigor to, that he may set on flame the wicked spirits of men after sin, vanity, pride, lust, uncleanness, cruelty, and all manner of wickedness, that they may draw on iniquity as with cart-ropes, and drink it in as the ox does water. And the Lord also is near to the soul; the King of holiness, the King of righteousness and peace is near, to give strength to every holy desire in the heart, and to every motion of his Spirit towards that which is good and holy. Hence it is, that he that trusts God's Spirit, watching to and following the movings and drawings thereof, finds life flow in, virtue and strength flow in, to carry on effectually in that which the Spirit of the Lord moves to. So that come but truly to know a motion, to understand the drawings and leadings of God's Spirit, strength is never lacking to him who gives up in the faith to follow the Lord in that which he moves and draws to. And this is the great skill of Christianity, to come inwardly to know the Lord; to know the inward appearances of the Shepherd, his leadings out into the pastures, where eternal life is fed on; and again into the fold of rest, which is no less than the bosom of love, and life eternal. Now, the growth of the new man, the growth of the Christian state, is in the exercise under the law of life, under the law of the Spirit. For the Spirit exercises the mind by his law, and the mind is to give up to the exercise thereof, and to wait upon the Lord in it day and night; finding itself never without, but still under the law to Christ in every thing. And indeed, how can a man do any thing aright without the sense and knowledge of the law? How can a man fight aright with his spiritual enemies without understanding the law of fighting? For there is a lawful fighting and an unlawful fighting against the soul's enemies. The unlawful fighting is in the self-will, wisdom, and strength, according to one's own apprehensions and conceivings, which gains no real ground; and therefore they that so fight cannot overcome. The lawful fighting is in the faith, in the wisdom and guidance of the Lord, in his Spirit and power, and this is ever successful. So there is a lawful running and an unlawful running the race, which the apostle plainly implies, when he says, "So run that you may obtain." 1 Cor. 9:24. So likewise there is a law of prayer, a law of faith, a law of love, a law of new obedience, a law of liberty (for the liberty under the gospel is not boundless, but bounded by the Spirit), a royal law, which the King of glory writes, and keeps living in the heart; by which his will is understood, and the way of life known, which never can be understood by any but those in whom this law is written, even the law of the new covenant, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Read and consider this seriously: for indeed it contains the very mystery of Christianity and redemption. For redemption is not by a notional knowledge of Christ (it is not so witnessed by any), but by receiving and subjecting to the law of his Spirit. And mind and wait to know and understand whether this be not the law which David speaks of, when he says, Psal. 19:7, etc. "The law of the Lord is

perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord truth, altogether righteous." Certainly the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is all this, containing in it the commandment which is life everlasting, and the sure testimony, and all the holy statutes, judgments, and fear, which the soul need to learn; and is indeed perfect, and able to convert, and instruct perfectly the converted soul. And here the scripture is fulfilled under this holy law of the Spirit and power of life. "They shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord" (they shall not do so in this covenant, under this ministration, which is a ministration not of the letter, but of the Spirit); "for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," by the teachings of my own Spirit, by my writing my law in their hearts, by my holy unction, which shall teach my children, my anointed ones, all that they need to know. 1 John 2:27. Jer. 31. and Heb. 8.

Come, be not deceived about the new covenant; but wait to find the entrance thereinto, and to feel the virtue thereof, and to know and receive the law and power thereof, as becomes Christians.

XII. Concerning God's gathering us Home to himself, who are a people despised and rejected of Men, and in Scorn by them called Quakers

IT pleased the Lord, who is rich in mercy and goodness, to pity our many wanderings and sore distresses, and at length to gather us home to the light and Spirit of his Son, which was the gospel standard in the apostles' days.

Now, that by which God gathered us was the power of Christ, and the preaching of the everlasting gospel by the ministry which he has raised up in these latter days. For as the Lord raised up a ministry to preach it at first, when he had some of the Jews and many of the Gentiles to gather; so he has raised up a ministry to preach it again after the apostasy, that he may cause the sound thereof to go through all nations. And this ministry has been raised to go forth in the same virtue, power, and Spirit wherein the foregoing ministry was sent.

God promised of old, that he would seek after, search out, and gather home, his scattered sheep himself, and become their Shepherd. Ezek. 34. Now, this was fulfilled in a great measure in the days of Christ and his apostles, when Christ came himself, and also sent his apostles after him, to seek and gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and not only so, but also to preach the gospel to all nations, that he might be God's salvation to the ends of the earth, gathering and saving lost and scattered souls out of every quarter and corner thereof.

But afterwards (after the spreading of the gospel, and Christ's gathering of many thereby) there was a great apostasy, and scattering from this holy standard of life and salvation, and darkness overspread the nations again, and an anti-christian reign and kingdom got up, under a form and forms of godliness, without the life and power; in which forms people generally have been scattered from the life and power, which indeed is the gospel.

Now, in this cloudy and dark time, great has been the loss and distress of the poor hungry sheep; their shepherds and watchmen not being able to preach the gospel distinctly to them, and direct their minds

to the Spirit and power which saves: therefore God, in pity to this sad and lost condition of his sheep, sends his angel to preach his everlasting gospel to "them that dwell on the earth; to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people." Rev. 14:6.

Now, as the former publishing of the gospel began at the scattered Jews, who were God's people under the law; so this begins at the scattered Christians, who had some true desires, and had been seeking after the Lord (from mountain to hill, and hill to mountain), but could by no means find him; nor by any of the watchmen hear any certain news of their souls' beloved. But the Lord, in his tender love and rich mercy, in the appointed time, sends forth the Shepherd of Israel to seek and find them out. And, blessed be the Lord, he sought them effectually, and has found out many, and persuaded them to follow him; and has brought their weary souls home to their proper resting-place, where they dwell under the care of the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

But if any shall yet further inquire, How, and by whom, the gospel was preached unto us, my answer is, By the Shepherd himself. God himself gave forth the sound, and great has been the company of them that published it; and our ears and hearts were opened by the Lord to hear the sound, and know the Shepherd's voice.

And mind my words (which the Spirit of the Lord is now uttering forth through me), for they are words of truth, and certain understanding; they that do not hear and own the sound thereof now (from this ministry which the Lord has now chosen, and sent forth), would not have heard nor owned the sound thereof in Christ's and his apostles' days, had they lived therein; but would have reproached and opposed them, had they lived then in those days, as they do now in these days. For of a truth it is the voice and sound of one and the same Spirit and wisdom; and they that do despise the one, would have despised the other, had they lived in the day of the appearance and manifestation thereof.

And then, for the manner of its preaching, it was just such as is described, ver. 7. of Rev. 14. For we are commanded to "fear God, and give glory to him, because the hour of his judgment" (the great and terrible day of the Lord) "was come"; and therefore to leave off all false ways and worships, and learn to worship the living God, the Creator of all, in Spirit and in truth. And truly it was a terrible day to the man of sin in us; for the judgments of God were revealed against him, and we in fear lay under the judgment, that we might learn righteousness, and witness the redemption of Zion thereby.

Now, being thus turned to that light and Spirit and power which judges, it wrought effectually in us against the darkness and power of Satan; searching, trying, manifesting, judging the secrets of our hearts daily. It tried all our knowledge, all our faith, all our desires, all our thoughts, words, ways, and worships; so that all things were naked and open before him with whom we had to do; and what had gone before as glorious and taking in our eyes, was now manifested to be loathsome and abominable in the sight of God. For indeed, the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and every plant which the heavenly Father had not planted was he now plucking up, that they might no longer cumber the ground; but he might have room for his own seeds and plants of holiness and righteousness, which he was ready to sow in his own garden.

And so at length we came to witness (abiding the trial of this dreadful day, wherein our God appeared to us as a consuming fire) a new heaven and a new earth inwardly; and no more sea of wickedness, no more sea of inward trouble; but righteousness, peace, and joy inwardly; and our God becoming a rich portion to us, watching over us in most tender care and love, and delighting in us to do us good,

making known to us the riches of the gospel, even the feast of fat things; and giving us to partake of the well or fountain of living waters in our own hearts, which springs up freshly in us daily, unto life eternal. So that we were not only invited to the waters, but taught also to come thereto: and when we came, we were not sent away empty, but had the water of life given us; which became such a well, as out of it flow streams of living water. Ah, blessed be the Lord! Did we ever think, in our dry, dead, barren estate, to have seen such a day as this?

And all this we met with in the way of self-denial, and taking up the cross; in denying our own wisdom, our own knowledge, our own faith, our own righteousness, and all that we could call our own; and owning a little seed of light and life eternal, even the seed of the everlasting kingdom, which the Shepherd of Israel discovered to us, and helped us to search after, and taught us how to find; which was indeed in a way very despicable, even to the eye of our own wisdom. For thus it was: —

We had been long looking out abroad, searching very diligently the Scriptures, and other serious books, for great, full, certain, and undoubted wisdom and knowledge; but now we were directed to turn inwards (even there where we thought no good was to be found) to mind the appearance of God there, the Spirit of God testifying to us (according to the Scriptures of truth) that the kingdom was within; and there we were directed to search for the least of all seeds, and to mind the lowest appearance thereof; which was its turning against sin and darkness; and so by minding and observing that in us which turned against sin and darkness, we came by degrees to find we had met with the pure, living, eternal Spirit; and by observing the movings, stirrings, guidings, directions, and law thereof, we found, before we were aware, that we had met with the law of the new covenant, the law of the Spirit of life, which had life and virtue in it, to enable us to do the holy will; and then our hearts rejoiced, being made truly sensible that we had found that which we had mourned after, and longed for all our days. And then we began to see our way more clearly, and to wait on our God for his teachings, and to follow the Lamb, our leader, with joy and comfort. For indeed, this experience greatly settled our spirits; knowing assuredly, that as none but Christ could do those works outwardly which he did in the days of his flesh; so none beneath his Spirit could do these works inwardly, enlighten inwardly, enliven inwardly, bind up and heal inwardly, open the inward eye, the inward ear, the closed heart, and loosen the dumb tongue, so as the touch of his power, and virtue of his life and holy presence among us, has done very frequently and livingly.

And now, is this testimony nothing to you, O you professors, that we have found him, by God's holy guidance (or rather have been found by him), whom we could never find in your ways and gatherings? But still that which God had quickened in us was there unsatisfied, weary, panting, and gasping, for lack of, and after, the breath of life.

Oh, come and see if this be not he indeed! Wait to feel the closing of that eye which cannot see (which God has ordained shall never see), and for his opening the eye which is as yet blind in you (to which he gives the true sight), that you perish not from the way of life, through mistakes and deceits from the mists of darkness, which are yet over all who have not seen the light of God's day. To the law, and to the testimony (to the inward law, and inward testimony, if you be inward Jews; for the law inwardly written is light, even the light of the living, and the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy); for he that knows not these, nor walks according to these, nor speaks according to this Word, it is because there is as yet no morning in him.

Oh, come to the morning light of the everlasting day! Come to the Son's light, to the Son's Spirit! Wait

for the dawning of the day of righteousness, love, and peace, and for the arising of the day-star. COME DIE TO YOUR OWN WISDOM (it was the word livingly spoken to me, and entered my soul when it was spoken; never departing from me, though I was long in learning it), and know what it is to suffer with Christ, that you may also reign with him.

Ah! if that candle were lighted in you, which you so much reproach and despise the light of, you might see, that instead of suffering with Christ, that which is of Christ in you (the pure light, the pure life of his Spirit) suffers by you, and the worldly spirit lives (shall I add, and reigns?) in you, under all your professions, knowledge, faith, worships, duties, ordinances, as you call them, who lack the knowledge of the everlasting ordinance, even of the Spirit and power of our Lord Jesus Christ; which is the great ordinance and way of the gospel. And he that is subject to this ordinance shall be saved; but he that misses of this shall perish; let him search the Scriptures, and practice according to what he apprehends therefrom, as exactly as he can, without this Spirit and power.

XIII. A few Words concerning the Worship which our God has taught us

OUR worship is a deep exercise of our spirits before the Lord, which does not consist in an exercising the natural part or natural mind, either to hear or speak words, or in praying according to what we, of ourselves, can apprehend or comprehend concerning our needs; but we wait, in silence of the fleshly part, to hear with the new ear, what God shall please to speak inwardly in our own hearts; or outwardly through others, who speak with the new tongue, which he unlooses, and teaches to speak; and we pray in the Spirit, and with the new understanding, as God pleases to quicken, draw forth, and open our hearts towards himself.

Thus our minds being gathered into the measure, or gift of grace, which is by Jesus Christ; here we appear before our God, and here our God, and his Christ, is witnessed in the midst of us.

This is that gathering in the name, which the promise is to, where we meet together, waiting with one consent on the Father of life, bowing and confessing to him in the name of his Son; and that fleshly part, that fleshly understanding, that fleshly wisdom, that fleshly will, which will not bow, is chained down, and kept under by the power of life, which God stretches forth over it, and subdues it by. So then, there is the sweet communion enjoyed, the sweet love flowing, the sweet peace of spirit reaped, which the Father breathes upon, and gives to his children; the sweet joy and refreshment in the Lord our righteousness, who causes righteousness to drop down from heaven, and truth to spring up out of the earth. And so our Father is felt blessing us, blessing our land, blessing our habitations, delighting in us, and over us to do us good; and our land yields its increase to the Lord of life, who has redeemed it, and planted the precious plants and seeds of life in it.

THE CONCLUSION

Now, this ought to be the great care of every renewed mind, even to keep out that which is unclean. The enemy will be assaulting, tempting, casting into the mind that which is unclean; but the pure,

chaste mind will not entertain or touch it, but withdraw and retire from it into the place of safety, into the strong tower of defense, from all the assaults and annoyances of the enemy. Such the Lord receives, such the Lord delights in as his dear children, and in every respect carries himself as a Father to; and this is a precious state truly to enjoy.

Now, blessed be the Lord, who has revealed and bestowed on his sons and daughters, in these latter days, that light of his Holy Spirit, which searches the most inward parts, discovering every thing that is of a contrary nature to itself, turning and separating the mind therefrom, and bringing the mind, heart, soul, and spirit under that which is a cross and yoke to it, and has power from God to crucify and subdue it; that so life and immortality may be brought to light, and reign in the heart; and death and uncleanness be swallowed up in victory. For this is the intent of the gospel, and of Christ's appearance, even to destroy sin, and bring up the holy seed, and establish the law of the new covenant, the law of love, the law of life, righteousness, and holiness, in which the renewed should walk before the Lord all their days.

And God forbid, but that the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (which is the power of God unto salvation) should attain its end, and the will of God be fulfilled; which is the sanctification of his people in soul, body, and spirit; that they may be wholly leavened with the leaven of his kingdom, and become a new lump to him.

The Lord bring this to pass in the hearts of the children of men, bringing down all religions which have not the true virtue in them; and propagate and establish that religion more and more which stands in the evidence, demonstration, virtue, and power of his own Spirit; that men may be redeemed out of and preserved from deceit in matters of religion, wherein the eternal condition of their souls is so deeply concerned! Amen.

A QUESTION ANSWERED

CONCERNING READING THE SCRIPTURES ARIGHT

[no date]

Question. How may a man know whether he reads the Scriptures to his advantage and benefit? or whether he reads them to his disadvantage or hurt?

THAT the holy Scriptures, written by men inspired by God's Spirit, were of great use and benefit to those to whom they were written (they rightly understanding them, and becoming subject to the voice of God's Spirit in those that wrote or spoke them) is an undeniable truth.

And that they were not only written for them, but for others also, in future ages, who also may reap benefit in the reading of them; this is as manifest.

Yet that men may so read them, as not to understand them aright, but misapply them to their own hurt; that is true also, and has been often, and is still evidenced by lamentable experience.

The Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees, heard and read the law and prophets to their hurt; some in a

spirit of direct opposition to the truths and will of God, held out by the prophets; others in a spirit of misunderstanding.

Thus the Scribes and Pharisees, in Christ's time, so read the words of Moses and the prophets (who testified concerning the Son, and his coming), as that thereby they became strong, wise, and confident, in opposing him when he came. They thought they could prove by scriptures, that this was not, could not be, He: he was to be a glorious King, and to restore Israel. This was a mean man, a carpenter's son; and so taught, and so behaved himself, that if men believed in him, the Romans would thereby be provoked to destroy their place and nation. He was an eater, a drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners, a frequent breaker of the sabbath, a Galilean, etc. "And shall Christ come out of Galilee? Search and look; for out of Galilee arises no prophet." John 7:52. As if they had said, can this be the Messiah, of whom the Scriptures have so abundantly prophesied, who comes out of Galilee, out of which the Scriptures have not prophesied of so much as any prophet to arise? Thus they read the Scriptures to their hurt.

And so afterwards, in the apostles' days, men wrested the words of the apostles, as they did also the other scriptures, to their own destruction.

And since, in the apostasy from the apostles' spirit, life, and doctrine, and the coming up of many sects, heads, and horns; which of them have not so read the scriptures, as to confirm themselves even in those very doctrines and practices, which are directly contrary to the doctrines, practices, and spirit of the apostles?

Yes, since God's breaking the darkness of the night, and causing the light of his day again to arise, how do men read and understand scriptures? Even so as to oppose this light, life, spirit, and power, now it is again made manifest; thinking and judging its appearance now (according to their understanding of, and apprehensions on, the Scriptures) to be as contrary to its appearance in the apostles' days, as the Scribes and Pharisees judged Christ's appearance in their days, to be different from, and contrary to, what the prophets had prophesied concerning the Messiah.

Therefore it is a matter of very great weight, for a man to know when he reads the Scriptures aright, that his table (whereon he feeds, and by which food he hopes to live to God, and be accepted with him) become not his snare, and set him further off from God. For it is as true in this day, as it was in Christ's day; that publicans and harlots are nearer the kingdom, than those who are in the spirit, wisdom, and righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; who have a knowledge, a belief, a hope, a zeal, etc. from a misunderstanding of the Scriptures; for this is wrong in a mystery of deceit, which is worse in its nature, and more dangerous to the person in whom it is, and to the souls of others than the deceit which is openly manifest.

Well then; Is it not worth the diligent inquiry, and waiting upon God to know, What is the right reading of the Scriptures; and whether a man so read them, as is to the benefit and profit of his soul, or to his loss and detriment? To come then to the Answer, which is as follows.

Answer. He that reads the Scriptures in a true measure of life received from God, he reads them aright; and whenever he so reads, it is to his benefit. He that reads out of that, reads to his hurt; that being then up in him, which misunderstands, misapplies, and grows conceited, wise, and confident, according to the flesh; and so he is thereby liable to, and in great danger of, setting up his

interpretations, instead of the meaning of God's Spirit; and of condemning that which does not assent and agree therewith, though it be ever so necessary and precious a truth of God, and ever so fully demonstrated by his Spirit, to those who are in the true faith and understanding.

The true birth is meek, tender, gentle, fearing before the Lord, waiting upon him, often crying to him, that it may not be deceived, that a wrong thing get not up in it; that it receive not any thing for truth, but what he knows to be truth; and when the Lord pleases to give the true knowledge, that it hold that knowledge of his truth in righteousness, in his life, in his will, in his wisdom, etc. But the wrong birth is not so, nor is its course thus; but that is subtle in searching and forming of things, and holding them in the subtlety, and drawing the wrong part in others to own and acknowledge that which it represents and holds forth as truth.

There is a wisdom in man, which is against God; which wisdom opposes the wisdom of God two ways; either in a direct, opposite way, or in a secret, subtle, undermining way. Now, no man can come to God, or truly understand or receive the things of God, but as this wisdom comes to be confounded and destroyed in him, by the light and power of God. All its strong holds, all its subtle imaginations, all its reasonings and consultings must be dashed, and brought to nought, before the truth of God can have full place and power in the heart. Now, in the true discovery of this wisdom to man, and in his denial of it, watching against it, and turning to the other; he may wait upon God aright, receive the knowledge of the heavenly mysteries aright, read the Scriptures aright, come to the true sense, understanding, and experience of them; but at any time, so far as he is out of this, he is liable to the snare, to the misunderstanding of scriptures, and to the fleshly confidence that arises thereupon. So that, having taken up a misunderstanding of a scripture, or some scriptures; he will even boldly venture to speak evil of the heavenly and spiritual dignities, which are of God, and the holy truths which are held forth by his holy ministers; against the prophets in their day, against Christ and his apostles in their day, against the witnesses in the times of the apostasy, and against the angel (learn who that is) that is to preach the everlasting gospel again, after the apostasy. Ah! how does this wisdom destroy and entangle; and how has it destroyed and entangled many at this day, who think they are greatly for God in those things and practices, wherein they are directly against him; and that they only oppose error, and a wrong spirit, when they are opposing his truth and his Holy Spirit! And it is impossible it should be otherwise, while they judge and act from that which is wrong, and in that which is wrong. Now mark:

The Spirit, the truth, the life, the substance, is God's forever; the unclean spirit cannot enter into it, the unclean womb cannot conceive of it, nor bring it forth; but the letter, the shell, the outward figure, the outward relations and descriptions of things; the other spirit, wisdom, and nature in man may read, guess at, transform, receive, believe, and build up with according to the flesh. And here is the foundation and rise of antichrist and Babylon, among them who raise up a building, a knowledge, a faith, a hope, a church, a worship, duties, ordinances, justification, sanctification, etc. in imitation of Zion. But they are not the thing itself, but false representations of the thing; either such as were invented by man, or such as were once appointed, and made use of by the Spirit of the Lord. For there is little difference between inventing a new thing, and making use of an old thing, which once was of God, but is now understood, observed, and practiced out of the sense, light, and guidance of his spirit, in another spirit, and according to another wisdom. Now, this is not the right way of reformation; namely, to return to outward (literal) things, which were practiced by the Jews in their day, or by the former Christians in their day; but to return to the Spirit that they were in, and to feel (in the true life

and leadings thereof) what it teaches and requires to be observed and practiced now. For there are things, whose value is not in themselves, but in God's requiring of them; which the wrong spirit may get into, and the Lord may draw his people out of them (as he did out of the outward court, into the inward building or temple, by his light and Spirit within, when he gave the outward court to the Gentiles. Rev. 11:1-2). And he that is found in those things, after God has given them to the Gentiles, and drawn his people out of them, is not therein owned or accepted of God, though God may bear with him in the time of his ignorance; yet if he abide in them after the rising of light, and its testimony, the Lord will not so bear with him; but will condemn him, and deal with him as a transgressor of that covenant, wherein life and peace with him is witnessed.

Therefore, in all things that concern God, whether in reading the Scriptures, praying, or observing any thing you call duties and ordinances, oh that you would approve yourselves Christians indeed, waiting to know your guide and leader, and the true limits which are set by God; that you may serve him in the true faith, Spirit, and understanding, even in that which God knows to be so, and not in that which you may falsely account so! For mark; if you be Christians, are you not in Christ, and is not Christ in you? And are you not to feel his life, and the guidance of his Spirit, so as you may live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, read in the Spirit, pray always in the Spirit, believe in the Spirit, worship in the Spirit, and in the holy understanding of his truth, which is of him?

He that would be right in religion, must have a right beginning. How is that? He must begin in the Spirit: his knowledge, his faith, his hope, his peace, his joy, his righteousness, his holiness, his worship, etc. must begin there. He must come out of his own spirit, his own wisdom, the counsels and thoughts of his own heart; and wait on him, who begins the work of regeneration and life in the heart.

And he must afterwards diligently watch against that spirit and wisdom, from which the Lord has led him, that it at no time again enter him; for it will be striving to lead him out of the way, with likenesses, and false images of things, with knowledge falsely so called, with a faith which is not truly of God, nor of the same nature with that which he first felt; with false hopes, false fears, false joys, a false righteousness and holiness, which are not Christ's nor according to the Scriptures; but only such as he apprehends to be so. For a man, who once tasted the truth, and in some measure judged aright, may afterwards err in his palate and judgment, and then take the wrong for the true, not keeping to that, nor being now in that, which formerly gave him the true relish.

Now, he that would meet with the true religion, the religion of the gospel, must meet with the power, receive the power, believe, dwell, and act in the power. For Christ was made a king, priest, and prophet, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life:" and his covenant is not like the old, in word or letter; but in the same power and life wherein the priest was made, and ministers.

So the knowledge here, the faith here, the hope here, etc. are not literal, but living. He that receives this knowledge, receives living knowledge. This faith gives victory over unbelief, and over that spirit whose strength lies in unbelief. This hope purifies the heart even as he is pure. And he that receives the righteousness of this covenant, receives a living garment, which has power in it over death and unrighteousness. The beginning of this religion, of this power and holy inward covenant, is sweet; but the pure progress and going on of it much more pleasant, as the Lord gives to feel the growth and sweet living freshness of it; notwithstanding the temptations, fears, troubles, trials, oppositions, and great dangers, both within and without, which the life (which was at first turned to) being still kept to,

by the power which is from it, and through the faith which is in it, in its own seasons and way of its own wisdom overcomes, giving the soul that is diligent and faithful, to witness, that all its ways are pleasantness, and its paths peace; yes, the very yoke is easy, and the burden light, when the mind and will is changed by the power, and helped and assisted by the Lord in its subjection to the power.

So the Lord God of tender mercies (who pities the miserable and erring out of the way, especially those in whom he has begot desires after himself) remove the stumbling-blocks, and lead the wandering Jews (who are entangled in their own thoughts and reasonings about the letter) into that which is of himself in them, which is Spirit and life, and was before the letter, and excels the letter (with its dispensation) in glory; and is to remain (after the letter) the rest, joy, life, peace, and portion of the soul forever and ever. So honor the letter, in believing its testimony concerning Christ, who is the Shepherd (to whom the Sheep are to be gathered), the way, the truth, the life itself, to whom the soul is to come, and on whom the soul is to wait for life; and having received life from him, to dwell, abide, and grow up into him, who is the life; and not go backward into any thing that is literal, or without life, nor to glory in the knowledge, or literal descriptions of things; but forward into the spiritual, heavenly dispensation of life and power. The law was letter, the gospel is life and power; the law was a shadow of good things to come; but the gospel is the substance, the life, the virtue, the Spirit of what the law shadowed out. From hence the Christian is to spring; the Jerusalem from above is to be its mother, the Holy Spirit its begetter. And because here the state of true sonship is witnessed, therefore God pours out the Spirit of his Son upon these; and then the Spirit being received, which is above the letter, a life is to be felt and lived in beyond words; even that which the good words lead to, and end in.

And here the truth, sweetness, and fulness of words is known, felt, and witnessed, even in that which comprehends them, and gives them their due weight and measure. Nor can any possibly understand the words of the Spirit, but he that is in the Spirit; and then he knows the place of the words which came from the Spirit, and of the Spirit from whom the words came. And this is precious; but not to be witnessed by the wise disputer, but by the serious traveler, who first is broken and dashed to pieces in his own wisdom, and then afterwards healed, led, and guided by the eternal Spirit of wisdom, which is the sure and unerring guide.

The Spirit of God knows the things of God, and the states of persons, and what is proper or improper for them: he knew what was proper for the Jews under the law and prophets, what was proper for them in Egypt, what in the wilderness, what in Canaan, and what in their several dispersions and captivities; for the disciples in the days of Christ's appearance in flesh, for the churches in the days of the apostles, for the witnesses and mourners in the times of the apostasy, and for those who by his power are raised up, and delivered out of the apostasy.

And the Spirit of the Lord does not only know the state thus in general, but likewise every soul's particular state, and how to apply things to its state. There are some newly quickened, newly come out of the darkness. There are several states and degrees of growth; there is a tempted state, a wandering state, a backsliding state, a shaken state, an established state, etc. Now, there is something proper to every one according to his state, which the Spirit of the Lord knows; and those who are called out by him, to minister in his name and power, know also, as his Spirit pleases to teach them, and make manifest to them. All truths are not proper to every state, nor all remedies to every disease. Christ had many things to teach and say to his disciples, which they were not able to bear; and a man in reading the Scriptures, though he should understand the truth of what he reads, yet he is apt to misapply

things, as to himself or others, unless the Lord guide and help him. He is apt to apply that to him which belongs not to him, and thrust that from him which belongs to him.

Thus may a man easily err, and wander from error to error, and toil and wear out himself in his several apprehensions, ways, and practices (thinking he does as he ought, and as God requires of him, according to the Scriptures), and yet his mind be from that, and his understanding out of that, which opens the Scriptures aright, and gives the right use of them.

Therefore wait on the Lord to feel quickenings from him, through a measure of his life revealed, and the mind gathered into, and purged thereby; and then wait for the Spirit's appearing to you in this measure; further quickening, purifying, guiding you, and manifesting his truth therein to you, according as he sees your need, estate, and condition to require.

And thus you will be like a child, living not upon a wisdom of your own, but upon your Father's wisdom, and not gathering a knowledge according to your own will, and into your own comprehension; but receiving it as a gift daily from the hands of the Father, and so you shall always have it fresh and living, and safe for your use; whereas that, while you keep in your comprehension, and can run to when you wish, and make use of when you wish, putrefies, and yields but corrupt nourishment, feeding not the living, but the dead, in you; and so your very knowledge corrupts your mind, and brings it into death; and you have only such a knowledge as may be held in the dead part, and so live and walk as man may live and walk, without the pure life and presence of God.

So this is the answer which was in my heart (and indeed sprang up in me, as the question was laid before me in spirit). In the true measure of life, which is from God, and one with him, the Scriptures are rightly read and understood, in the will of God, by him that does it in the holy understanding which comes from him: not in a man's own will or understanding; for he cannot understand what scriptures he will, nor when he will, nor as he will; but he must wait on him who has the key, who understands what is fit and proper for him, to know, or not to know; and so opens or shuts in his eternal pleasure, and according to his eternal wisdom; and what he opens to you, that is proper for you to know; and what he shuts from you, that is proper for you (as yet) not to know; but to wait the times and seasons of things, which are in the Father's hand. And so, what the Lord reveals not to you, that is yet a secret with him, as to you; but what he reveals to you, that is yours in his fear and counsel to feed on and make use of.

So here, in the gathering of life, in the holy building, there is a holy order and wisdom from the Most High, wherein every one waits on the Master, on the Lord, on the Shepherd, on the Father of Spirits, and receives from his hand, what is proper to his state. And so all hold the head, and live by the life, virtue, and teaching that comes from the head. And there is one God who is over all, and one Christ in whom all are, and one Spirit of life in which all are baptized and joined together. And every one as he springs from this life, and feels the union, virtue, and fellowship thereof, so abiding here, he is in his place and service, beloved of the Lord and Father of all, and felt by the life in all, in the unity of the body; and so cherished and helped forward in the love and Spirit, wherein the body is knit to the head; yes, whatever his state be (whether a state of mourning or temptation or deep distress, or a state of joy, rejoicing, and peace), yet abiding and waiting on the Lord, he is felt, received, owned, and dearly beloved in the Lord.

A few Words to such as complain for lack of Power

BE sure you receive Christ; for he is the same that ever he was. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power" (not only to stand against sin, but) "to become the sons of God;" he did so formerly, and he does so still. And they that are true Jews, born after the Spirit, truly circumcised, and are indeed come to Mount Zion, and the heavenly Jerusalem inwardly, feed on God's holy mountain, and dwell in his holy city, in the building that is from above, for the birth which is from above. There is no complaining in the streets of this city; but what God requires is performed, and what God promises to his is enjoyed there, according to the several states and conditions of each, and according to the ability which is given in the new covenant, where God fulfills the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, in the hearts of his daily. Everlasting praises and honor to his name!

Oh, the precious name of Jesus, in which the spirits of the redeemed meet! in which name is power; and he who is the arm and power of God is in the midst of them.

They who receive him who is the power, who is a spiritual vine and olive-tree to all his, who yields daily of the living sap and virtue to them (wherein there is power); how can they lack power? Or how can they but praise the Lord, who daily ministers unto them of the power of the endless life? When the holy life and power springs, and is felt, praises to the Lord cannot but spring with it.

So that it concerns all people seriously to consider, whether the reason why they have not power, be not because they do not receive Christ, who has all power in heaven and earth given to him. For many talk of Christ, but few come to him in the Father's drawings; so will not receive him; like the Jews who waited for his appearance, and yet rejected him when he came.

ISAAC PENINGTON

SOMETHING RELATING TO CHURCH GOVERNMENT

WHEREIN THE

**NECESSITY, USEFULNESS, AND BLESSED EFFECTS OF THE TRUE CHURCH-
GOVERNMENT ARE HERE AND THERE HINTED AT; AND THIS CLEARLY
MANIFESTED**

THAT

**THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF CHRIST'S SPIRIT IN HIS CHURCH IS NO
USURPED ANTICHRISTIAN AUTHORITY, NOR CONTRARY TO THE TRUE
LIGHT AND LIBERTY OF ANY PARTICULAR MEMBER, BUT A CHERISHER
AND PRESERVER OF IT**

AS ALSO

REMARKS

**UPON SOME PASSAGES IN A LATE BOOK, ENTITLED, "ANTICHRIST'S
TRANSFORMATIONS WITHIN" DISCOVERED BY THE LIGHT WITHIN**

WHEREIN THE

**ANTICHRISTIAN TRANSFORMER IS MADE MANIFEST, AND THE LIGHT
WITHIN CLEARED FROM HIS FALSE IMPUTATIONS AND PRETENCES TO IT**

**Written in obedience to Him that is true: who has given a certain testimony against him that is
false, to very many in this his day; and, among others, to me also; whom he has pleased to gather
and own among his children and servants in truth**

ISAAC PENINGTON

[ca. 1675, published posthumously]

**"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." 1 Cor.
14:33**

**"For what have I to do, to judge them also that are without? Do not you judge them that are
within?" 1 Cor. 5:12**

"The government shall be upon his shoulder, etc. Of the increase of his government and peace, no end," etc. Isa. 9:6-7

"Woe unto the world, because of offenses; for it must needs be, that offenses come; but woe to that man, by whom the offense comes!" Mat. 18:7

"For there must be also heresies among you; that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." 1 Cor. 11:19

"Also of yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20:30

"For not he that commends himself is approved; but whom the Lord commends." 2 Cor. 10:18

PREFACE

IT has pleased God, in these our days, to cause his true light to shine forth out of darkness. Oh, everlastingly blessed be his name! He has laid the foundation of life in many hearts, and gathered his once desolate people into families and churches; and has been with them, and is with them, dwelling among them, preserving them, building up Zion more and more, and causing his glory more and more to appear therein. The living God has made us a living people, and honors us with his living presence, and with the daily manifestations of his pure power. Oh! glory, glory is sounded to him, in his own springing life, in the hearts of his children, day by day.

But the enemy of God and his appearance, has wrought against his power and work many ways, and has endeavored to stop the gathering to the light and the building up, not only by outward force, but also by all the devices and mysterious workings he could invent. But blessed be the Lord, who has appeared against them all, and preserved his remnant from them all; though some that have not watched and lain low, but being soaring high, in that part where the snare is laid and takes, have stumbled and fallen. Yet truth stands, and the gathering in the truth stands; and the life which God has raised, and to which he has given dominion, reigns; and much is subdued, and the Lord is going on to subdue more and more under it daily, in the hearts of such as sensibly and livingly, and not notionally and in a dead, formal way, wait upon him and worship him.

Now, the sorest and most mischievous way of opposing truth, is by pretending to it. Who could more advantageously or readily betray Christ, than an apostle of Christ? And who can be fitter to undermine the light, than he who in words cries it up, and yet is departed from it, and secretly fights against it, and would bring forth, propagate, and set up a hideous, monstrous, comprehensive kind of knowledge (which is contrary to it, and cannot consist with it in the name of it?

Ah! that this person, who now appears against the truth, and the church and ministry which is in and of the truth, were but what he pretends to be! For then I should gladly have received his testimony, and not have been thus necessitated to appear against his spirit, and the dark work and testimonies thereof. He says, there are two Christs, both the true Christ and antichrist. I confess his work comes from one of them, even antichrist, who would destroy Christ's work, kingdom, and building, and the ministry which he makes use of, both to plant, water, and build up; but not from that Christ, who has gathered a church to himself, and is with the church which he has gathered, and blesses the church

which he has gathered, and owns them in their assemblings, and in their ministering: which owning and testimony will stand; when the disowning, and false testimonies of all these false, apostate spirits, will fall, and end in their own sorrow and misery.

What I have here written, I have written in a holy constraint, in the opening and feeling life of truth, with true love to souls; yes, even of this very person, who is erred so exceedingly from the holy light and Spirit, and its holy testimony, and would eagerly exalt his critical conceits and notions, above the plain testimony and evidence of truth, in the hearts of God's chosen ones.

The Lord bring down the kingdom of darkness, and exalt his own kingdom in the hearts of the children of men more and more; and add to his church, and keep them in that which will never allow them to depart from it; or to testify against the life and power and presence of the Lord, manifested, dwelling, and ruling in it! Amen.

REMARKS

UPON SOME PASSAGES IN A LATE BOOK, ENTITLED "Antichrist's Transformations Within," etc.

THE first thing that I shall observe is, That he does deny that man has any rule, power, dominion, government, or authority, either given or committed to him from the Lord, as pertaining to the conscience in things relating to the worship of God.

Remark. God sent Christ into the world, and he gave him power and authority in his name to do whatever he required of him. And Christ sends his servants and ministers into the world, as sheep among wolves, and he gives them power and authority to do whatever he requires of them, and which he expects from them, and would have done by them. And their work relates to the conscience, and to the worship of God; and their power and authority extends, there, where their work lies. They are ambassadors of Christ, and they have power and authority in Christ's stead to beseech men to be reconciled to God. For as Christ came in his Father's name, to fulfill the work which the Father gave him to do, so they come in Christ's name, to fulfill the work which he gives them to do. They have power to feed the flock; they have power to watch over them; they have power to build up in that which is good; and they have power and authority to testify against and hammer down that which is evil; they have power to reprove; they have power and authority to visit with a spirit of meekness, and power to come with God's rod, yes, with his sword, and to smite that with it which rises up against the truth, against the life, against the Spirit, against the holy way and work of the Lord, and holy order and government of this truth and Spirit,

That Christ has sent forth his servants, his ministers, his ambassadors, about things relating to the conscience, is so manifest that it cannot be denied. But that he has sent them forth with power and authority in things pertaining to the conscience, relating to the worship of God, that this man denies; but all that have received the truth, hold the truth, and keep the truth, cannot but acknowledge it.

Now, the reason he gives why he denies "man any rule, power, dominion, government, or authority,

either given or committed to him from the Lord, as pertaining to the conscience in things relating to the worship of God, is because it belongs to Christ, the light, the invisible power which dwells in men and women," etc.

Remark. All power in heaven and earth was given to Christ, and belongs to him; that is freely granted. But the question is, whether he has not given of this power to his children, and his servants and ministers, as his Father gave of it unto him. Does not he give power to as many as believe in his name to become sons of God? Did not he make his apostles able ministers of the new covenant, in the Spirit and power which he gave them? "All power is given me in heaven and in earth," said Christ. Mat. 28:18. "Go you therefore and teach all nations," etc.; ver. 19. but wait at Jerusalem for the power first. Acts. 1:4. So when the power came upon them, it led them forth in their work, and they had power to gather, and power to build up, and power to govern and watch over the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. Acts 20:28. And Paul speaks of the power the Lord had given him to use sharpness, even against those in that church of Corinth, who would not be subject to him in that which he had received from the Lord. 2 Cor. 13:10. But this power was to edification, but not to destruction. For though he had power from Christ the Lord, and did, by that Spirit, and in that power, deliver Hymeneus and Alexander unto Satan; yet it was not that they should be destroyed by the devil, but that, by feeling themselves out of the truth, and under the dominion of a wrong spirit, they might come to true sense and understanding, and learn not to blaspheme the truth, nor the dignities whom God has made honorable in the truth. 1 Tim. 1:20. And not the apostle only, but the church of Corinth, had a share in the same power; and therefore the apostle, knowing what was given and committed to them, exhorts them, that in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when they were gathered together, and his Spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one to Satan: but this was not for destruction, to destroy the soul; but to bring it back into a state of edification and salvation, which now, by departing from the truth, it was gone from. It was indeed for the destruction of the flesh, but not of the spirit; but that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. 5:4-5.

Secondly, The next thing I shall observe is this: — he says, "There is no glory to be given to man, although he be born of the light."

Remark. That glory and honor is to be given to man, which God gives to man, who has said, "Them that honor me, I will honor; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." 1 Sam. 2:30. He that brings his deeds to the light, they being justified and approved there, he has honor in the light. His deeds being made manifest that they are wrought in God, that is honor enough for him. John 3:21. The children of light seek for glory and honor and immortality and eternal life; and that glory and honor they have, and eternal life from God. Rom. 2:7. They seek not the honor that is from men, but the honor that comes from God only, John 5:44. the honor in the truth, in the life, in the power, which God gives them in the hearts of all that are truly sensible and living. For honoring the Lord and his truth, how can I but honor those that are honorable in his eye, and who are glorious in his truth! For indeed, the children of light, the tender, the humble, the contrite and broken-hearted ones, are glorious in his eye, and the Lord does exalt them in due time; for after the true humility, and in the true humility, they come to partake of the true honor. 1 Pet. 5:5-6. And so every true Jew, every true servant, every faithful steward, every true minister, that is faithful in the use of his gift and talent, has praise of God; Rom. 2:29. and they that are of God honor those whom God honors, glorifying the Lord for them, and honoring them in the Lord. 2 Cor. 8:18. Oh, how could this man say, there is no glory to be given to man, though he be born of the light, whenas "the king's daughter is all glorious within," and man in

that birth is nothing but glorious in the eye of the Lord! Man, having sinned, fell short of the glory of God; but coming out of sin, comes into the glory again, and is daily more and more changed into the glorious image of the Son, from glory to glory, etc. 2 Cor. 3:18. The aim of God is to bring many sons to glory; Heb. 2:10. and as they come out of darkness and sin into light and holiness, they come into the glory, and are in the glory. Is it not their glory in the Lord and in his light, to be owned and acknowledged by them that are one with them in the same light? They who love God, and honor God, cannot but love them, and honor them, who are begotten by him, and who are in an especial manner made use of by him in his service, for the good of souls, and for the preservation and building up of the church. The apostle speaks of double honor to be given to the elders that rule well, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine, and would (from the Spirit of God) have them counted worthy of it. 1 Tim. 5:17. How far is this man from the apostle's mind, who would have no glory given to any man, no, not to the children of light, nor ministers in the light, who, in the apostles' days, were the glory of Christ! 2 Cor. 8:23. Yes, the just that live by faith in Christ, and are gathered by him out of Satan's kingdom into his spiritual kingdom, and walk in the light, as God is in the light, there light does shine in them, and they do shine as the sun in the firmament; and they that are honored by the Lord to turn many to righteousness, do shine as stars: and though one star differs from another in glory, yet all that come into the true nature and heavenly image of the Son do come into a measure of the true glory, and have some of the glory given them which God gave to Christ; and in that are glorious, partaking of his Spirit, kingdom, power, and holy dominion over sin and Satan, all which is truly glorious. John 17:22.

Thirdly, The third thing I shall observe is this: he says, "All is to be given to Christ, the light in man, unto whom alone it does belong, who is the true Minister, and has power in himself to teach all the sons and daughters of men," etc.

Remark. That Christ is the true Minister, that is not denied; but does not Christ, who is the true Minister in the power of the endless life, send forth disciples and ambassadors in the same power, and make them, through his Spirit and power, able ministers of the New Testament? And they that hear them, do they not hear Christ? And they that despise or deny them, do they not despise or deny Christ? And does not Christ say to the seventy disciples, "He that hears you, hears me; and he that despises you, despises me; and he that despises me, despises him that sent me"? Luke 10:16. It is antichrist that so vainly pretends to set up Christ, or his light, or Spirit, or power, as to deny those that are sent of him, and minister in his name. As man is in the fall, he is corrupt, and his works are out of God, and he is there to be denied, ceased from, and not accounted of; but in the restoration, in union and fellowship with the Lord, he is a worker together with God, and is there to be owned, and has a share in ministering out of the heavenly treasure that dwells in him. So Christ was the great Minister, who had the fulness; and they that have gifts from him for the work of the ministry, and who minister in and from the gift, and in that are able and faithful, are esteemed and accounted as ministers by him. So says the apostle, "As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen." 1 Pet. 4:10-11. And Paul says, he was made a minister of the gospel according to the gift of the grace of God given unto him, by the effectual working of his power. Ephes. 3:7. Now, the gift is given, not to those that are wise after the flesh (unless that wisdom be first broken); but to such as are mean, poor, weak, low, or some way or other contemptible in the eye of man's wisdom, and easy to be disregarded and despised by men. Yet it is hard to despise the man whom God sends, without despising his gift in him; and the gift

cannot be despised or rejected, without despising or rejecting him that gave it; as the apostle told the church of the Thessalonians, he that despised or rejected, despised or rejected not man, but God (who gives his Holy Spirit to them whom he sends forth to minister in his name). 1 Thess. 4:8. He had been beseeching and exhorting the brethren by the Lord Jesus Christ, that as they had received of them how they ought to walk, and to please God, so they would abound more and more. "For you know," said he, "what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus Christ." Mark: the apostle did not only turn them to the Word of life and power in themselves; but did give them commandments from the Word of life in him, and they received of them whom Christ sent forth, how they ought to walk, etc. ver. 1-2. And life has not lost any of its authority; but the power may teach and command others through any vessel when it pleases; and they that are the true sheep, know the voice of the true Shepherd, speaking either in their own hearts, or through any other instrument unto them. And the voice of wisdom in any, is in every age still heard and justified of her children; and he that is of God hears his voice, in those whom he sends in this age, as well as in former ages; and he that is not of God hears not his voice; and hereby the Spirit of truth and spirit of error is known in this, as well as in former ages. 1 John 4:6.

Fourthly, The fourth passage I shall take notice of is in these words: "Wherefore," said he, "whosoever does exalt Christ the light, who is the true Minister, before themselves, by Christ the light within shall those be exalted."

Remark. This is very different from what went before: for before he denied all glory and exaltation at all to man, although he be born of the light; here he speaks of exalting Christ, the true minister, before themselves; which doubtless every true minister, and every child of light, cannot but do; and herein he confesses they shall be exalted by Christ the light. Then glory is given to them; and he that sees them thus exalted by the light, cannot but esteem them, as so honored and exalted by Christ, and give them that glory which Christ has given them. And happy would it be with this man, could he see the true church, which God has brought out of the wilderness, and beautified and gloriously built up to a great height; and the elders and ministers whom he preserves, and is with, and makes use of in his service, and give them in his heart the honor and glory which God has glorified them with. But that he cannot do, till he come out of Babylon, and out of that dark and confused spirit wherein he wrote these things, into that light and holy Spirit of truth, which discovers what they are (to those that are in the truth), and condemns the ground and root out of which they sprang.

Fifthly, The next thing to be observed by me is this: — He lays it down as his judgment, faith, and belief, that whatever is written to the churches, ought to be written from God's infallible Spirit, and the Word of eternal life; wherein I am one with him: for what good can any thing do the living, but what comes from life, and from God's infallible Spirit, which alone is able rightly to exhort, advise, admonish, warn, and build up the spiritual? But his inference thereupon is that which is before me to take notice of. "Wherefore," says he, "your paper to the churches is not to be owned by the churches, inasmuch as it was written from a sight, or a sense, and from the sensible part, and not in and from the Spirit of revelation."

Remark. God has, in his holy church and living people, opened the eye that was once blind, and daily anoints that eye, giving a true sight, and in the springings of life gives a true sense; and that which gives this is the Spirit of revelation; and what is written in this sight and sense, is written from the Spirit of revelation. And the called people of the Lord wait upon the Lord, that they may be kept in this

sight, sense, and Spirit, in what they do at all times; but more especially when they consider of things relating to the churches, even to the welfare, holy order, and peace thereof, that God's Spirit may have its scope everywhere, and nothing else have place in the churches of Christ. And though every one be not an eye and ear-witness of what is to be considered of for the good of the churches; yet every one waits to feel things in the opening and springing life, and in that to speak, consider, or write. I have often seen the carriage of things after this manner, to the joy of my heart, and causing of my soul livingly to bless the Lord for it; and therefore may I, yes, ought I, now thus to speak this testimony, which the Lord has livingly given me, being at this time required of me. Oh that men knew the seriousness and solemnity of our spirits before the Lord, in our considering things relating to his church, and how we retire out of man's wisdom (affectionate part, and comprehending part, as he speaks) to feel the springing life, and God's holy guidance there; and how the Lord does satisfy and bless us with it! So that we can say, in truth and uprightness of heart, not we (as men) of ourselves do things on truth's account; but he on whose shoulders God has laid the government rules and reigns among us; and things are ordered by his counsel and wisdom to his praise. And the peace and comfort of God's Spirit remains with us, in the midst of all the reproaches and oppositions we meet with from that evil spirit, which envies and opposes us many ways. This one word more is with me, as to this particular: God has given believers, his church, senses exercised to discern both good and evil; and those senses are not without the true life and Spirit, and every motion and action of them is in that life, and in that Spirit.

And whereas he further says: — "Whatsoever is written, declared, or given forth, in the sight, or in the sense, or from the sensible part, it is not to be owned; for the sensible part is that which has been in the transgression with the woman," etc.

Remark. Herein he is greatly mistaken: for Friends in truth do not speak, or write, or admonish, or reprove, or give warning from that part; but from the sight and sense which God gives to his own birth; and it is the Spirit of God that gives both the sight and sense, and speaks through them; and those whose ears are circumcised and opened know the voice, and give glory to God, and are obedient to his Spirit, when it gives advice and warning through any; which those that are in the comprehending part, and consider and judge in that, cannot have the sense of.

Sixthly, He says, "Antichrist will bring a veil over the understanding of men and women, and yet they, for the present, cannot perceive it."

Remark. This is very true. I would he and others, who are veiled by antichrist, did see it; for then he would not esteem those veiled whom the Lord has unveiled, nor attribute these sayings of his, and this his book, to the light within, which those whom the Lord has unveiled, and keeps unveiled, in his pure Spirit and quickening life, know to have come from the darkness within, and not from the true light; but the true eye, in the truly living sees through it, and has no union with it; but returns it back there, from which it came. Oh, how deeply does antichrist blind and deceive men; that that which is their own state, they cannot see to be so! but apply it to others, whose state it is not, and so justify themselves in that wherein God condemns them, and condemn others in that wherein God justifies them. This is sad work and will have a sad issue.

Seventhly, He says, "There is an invisible woman in every visible man, and there is an invisible man in every visible woman; and the man Christ Jesus, who is the light of the world, he is in them both," etc.

Remark. Is not he now in the notional and comprehending part, muddling himself and others (whose ears are open to him) about a woman in a man, and a man in a woman, and Christ in both? Whereas truth is a plain thing; which they that come to feel and abide in, feel and witness redemption, and preservation out of the comprehending part, and the dead, notional knowledge thereof.

Eighthly, He says, He does not own the judgment and opinion of those ministers, nor yet their superiority, who say, he that is not justified by the witness of God in Friends, is condemned by it in himself.

Remark. I shall not now argue that there are true ministers, and that there is a true superiority (some being greater and some less in the covenant and life of truth), which every one that hears and learns of the Father, and so is taught of God, will own: but to the thing itself. The witness of God is but one in all, and it condemns nothing but what is not of God; and what his witness in another condemns in me, his witness in me (whenever it arises and speaks in me concerning that thing) cannot but condemn also.

It is true, as he says, that "justification is by Christ alone, who is the head in every member," etc.

Remark. But Christ is in other members also, as well as in one; and his life has power to judge and condemn; and it judges and condemns nowhere, but that which is to be judged and condemned. So that wherever Christ's life in any judges and condemns any thing, that is judged and condemned by Christ. And the saints have power and authority in Christ, not only to judge and condemn the world, but also to judge and condemn fallen angels and spirits. To what end are they bid to try the spirit, if after they have tried them, they may not judge and condemn what they find life and truth judging and condemning?

Ninthly, He excepts against that passage in Friends' paper (as he recites it), "that none are to minister, but those that are reconciled to the church, and have the approbation of the elders."

Remark. What is the end of ministering, but to gather out of the world into the church, or to build up the church? And are they fit to do either, who are not reconciled to the church? Or whom the Spirit, life, and power in the church and elders has not unity with?

He further says, "That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and not to the church" (says he); he remembers no such scripture.

Remark. God added to the church such as should be saved; and were they not reconciled to it before they were added? And Christ said concerning that brother that would not hear the church, that he should be looked upon as a heathen or a publican; and are such as will not be reconciled to the church, nor hear it, allowed by God to minister, either to gather into the church, or to build up in it? Ah! surely it cannot be. There can be no true ministering out of the life and Spirit of the body, or church that is in God. And all such as have thus gone out from God in whom the church is, have ministered against the life, Spirit, and power, but not in it; but in antichrist's spirit and power, and against the truth.

Tenthly, He says, "Christ, the light within, will not give his power and authority out of his own hand to any man or men; for unto him alone is all judgment in heaven and in earth committed in matters of conscience."

Remark. Is Christ's power given out of his hands, when his life and Spirit in one judges concerning that which is evil and out of the truth in another? Does not the spiritual man judge all things? Does not Christ teach and enable him so to do? Is there not such a gift of his to discern spirits? Cannot the ear that is circumcised, and kept open by the Lord, try speeches and actions, and discern when they are out of the life, and when in the life? And does he give the power and authority out of his own hands, in enabling them so to do? What dark expressions are these, and dead too; not so much as literally true?

Eleventhly, He says, "Christ, the light within, is able to break, and he is also able to bind up that which he has broken, and to heal that which he has wounded," etc.

Remark. And has not Christ put a spiritual rod and sword into the hands of his church and ministry, with which to smite and wound, as his Spirit guides and leads them? Have they not power both to bind and loose as Christ says? And is not this a wounding and healing virtue and power? After Christ had said, "Tell the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto you as a heathen man or a publican;" does he not immediately add, "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven"? Matt. 18:17-18. Is not this power and authority necessary to the true church? What! a church, and not have power over her own members; but every one left to the dictates of what they shall call the light within, and not be subject to the judgment of the true light, Spirit, and power of Christ, the head in the living body? What a church was this? A mere Babel, and heap of confusion, a body that would never be at unity in itself. But God is the God of the order of his own Spirit, life, and power; and not of such confusion. This doctrine may go for truth in Babylon, but can never be owned in God's Jerusalem, where his Spirit did build up, and defends the buildings, and judges out all such sandy and windy doctrines, which are loose and airy, and have not a ground or bottom in the truth.

Twelfthly, He says, "There is fallibility attends all those, who are regenerated, and born of the Spirit of God, who is light, and that it is possible for them to err from the light again," etc.

Remark. He does herein lay the state of the truly regenerate and born of God lower than the scripture lays it. The scripture says, "Whosoever is born of God, does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John 3:9. And again, "We know that whosoever is born of God sins not; but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not," chap. 5:18.

There is a gathering into the seed, and an abiding in the seed; and there the soul is in the strong tower, and munition of rocks, where the enemy cannot reach. Adam in the fall was in a fallible state. Is the renewed, the redeemed state, as fallible? What state is that wherein truth is so natural, and the soul so one with it, that it can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth, as Paul speaks? What state is that, wherein men overcoming, shall become pillars in the house of God, and shall go no more out? Rev. 3:12. But let men be ever so fallible, the infallible Spirit and power is given to the church of God, to guide them in true understanding and judgment, especially in all things that relate to and concern them as a body; and they that are of the truth, and in the truth, love the judgment of Christ, the head, in her; but they that are of another spirit, and would have liberty out of the truth, to the transforming nature and spirit, cannot abide it. What were my life in me, if it did not judge in me? And what were the church's life, if it did not judge in her, and condemn all that rises up from a contrary spirit and nature? What means that promise, Isa. 54:17. "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that rises against you in judgment, shall you condemn"?

Yet he confesses, "That God is infallible, and that no fallibility attends him;" but denies "the very regenerate and born of the Spirit to be infallible; and that it is possible for them to err from the light again; the enemy, which is the power of darkness, presenting to them the fruit of the tree of knowledge," etc.

Remark. If God be infallible, as he confesses (though it is to be questioned, whether from any true knowledge of his nature, or only from the comprehension), and God beget children, into what does he beget them? Whether into a fallible nature and spirit, or into his own nature and Spirit, the least degree whereof is infallible? When men are truly turned to God, there are great and precious promises made to them, which, through faith, obedience, and diligence, they come to enjoy, whereby they are made "partakers of the divine nature." 2 Pet. 1:4. And when they partake of the "divine nature," do they partake of a nature that is fallible, or infallible? "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." 1 Cor. 6:17. And is that one Spirit a fallible, or infallible spirit? There is one baptism, wherewith the truly living are baptized; and does that baptism wash away that which is fallible, or no? The church of Christ, the body of Christ, the spouse of Christ, the chaste virgin that is married to Christ, is one with Christ; is it one with him in fallibility, or in infallibility? Bear with me, for I am constrained to speak these things for truth's sake, for the church's sake; yes, for Christ's sake, and for the sakes of them who cry up the light within in words, and yet are deceived about it, and know it not; but are erred from it, and have set up the darkness of antichrist in their minds, instead of it, which with them goes for the true light; and in this they judge that which is true, as if it were false, and justify that which is false, as if it were true, both in themselves and others; both which are an abomination to the Lord.

He says, "There is a fallibility attends all those that are regenerate, and born of the Spirit of God."

Remark. What all? Those that come to the highest pitch, and greatest growth, can they not pass fallibility, and arrive at infallibility in a measure, and abide in it? To be regenerated and born of God is a high state; it is not for every notionist and comprehender to be talking what is experienced there. There is a regenerating, and a being regenerated. There is a following Christ in the regeneration, and there is a conformity to him in his death, and in his life too. It is not good for him to be speaking much concerning that state, but rather to wait to be led into it, and to arrive at it in the true travel. But how he that is regenerated is one with Christ (and is in measure as he is) is hard to be known, and harder to be uttered. But he that is in this state has witnessed the holy calling, and faithfulness to him that called, and the election, and is one of the chosen, or elect of God; and Christ says, such are beyond fallibility; for speaking of false Christs, he says, "If it were possible, they should deceive the very elect," Mat. 24:24. plainly signifying that it is impossible.

Now, their possibility of erring he lays upon the enemy's presenting to them the fruit of the tree of knowledge while they are in Eden, p. 6.

Remark. The enemy's presenting temptations does not imply a possibility of letting in the temptation, and so of erring, in all to whom he does present things. For he presented things to Christ, and yet it was impossible for that Spirit and nature that Christ was of, to let in his temptations.

But then, immediately in the next words he shows, How this possibility of falling is upon the enemy's presenting to them the fruit of the tree of knowledge; namely thus, "Their minds taking delight in it, and they feeding upon it, the enemy has power to draw their minds out of Eden again."

Remark. The regenerate and born of God are partakers of the divine nature, and wait on God for living food, and receive it of him, and live by it, and cannot abide dead, dry, notional food, nor feed upon it. Blessed be the Lord, there is that birth known, which can feed on nothing but life itself. And let the power of darkness present the fruit of the dead tree ever so often, the living babe will not meddle with it, but hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and desires the sincere milk of the pure, living word, that it may grow thereby. And if this holy nature be put into the babe, how much stronger is it in those that are grown in truth, and who come to be naturalized into it, the contrary nature being crucified, and slain in them by the cross of Christ, and the new and holy nature ruling in them?

Thirteenthly, He says, "Wherefore I do believe that I ought not to subject myself to what the church imposes."

Remark. The church of God under the law, walking in that outward covenant, was a glorious camp or body; and had outward power, according to the outward law, appertaining to it. And the church of God under the gospel, walking with God according to the covenant of the gospel, is a glorious, spiritual body, and has inward power belonging to it; and though not the church merely as men, yet that Spirit and power in the church, ought to be obeyed by every member thereof, in things pertaining to God. So it was in the apostles' days; they that were not disorderly and unruly were obedient to the Spirit and power of God in the apostles and churches then, 2 Cor. 7:15. and chap. 2:9. who had power to judge those that were within. 1 Cor. 5:12. And those that are indeed of God will be obedient and subject to his Spirit and power in his church now. And there is nothing else desired, but obedience to the Lord, as he moves, guides, leads, and orders, both in the particular and in the general.

His reasons why he does not believe that he ought to subject himself to what the church imposes, are these: — "For then," says he, "I must believe that it is God in them, which does impose those yokes of bondage upon their brethren."

Remark. The church is called into the liberty of the gospel, and her children are born of the word immortal, and of the truth which makes free; and it is not the church's nature, either to receive or impose yokes of bondage, but to stand fast, and to exhort all her members to stand fast, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free. But where there is any thing unruly, or contrary to the power, that is to be yoked down by the power.

And the particular waiting upon God in his Holy Spirit, light, and power; the Spirit, light, and power will discover what is disorderly, and unruly, and not of God in the particular, and lay a yoke upon it. The church also waiting upon God in their meetings together in his name, the Lord will discover what is hurtful to the body, and contrary to the life of the body, and lay yokes upon it; and he that refuses this yoke keeps alive that which is impure and fleshly, and keeps down the just in himself.

But, indeed, he that does not believe God in his church, and that his Spirit, life, and power sits as king there; he is not in a capacity to obey aright, because he does not discern nor acknowledge that in the church, which alone is to be obeyed.

Another reason he gives is, Because (he says) he must also then believe that the church is infallible, and cannot err.

Remark. The Spirit of God is infallible; the power whereby the church was gathered and built up is infallible. Christ is infallible, and has given to his church of his infallible Spirit; without which they

cannot be preserved, or act aright? and is the church in God fallible? And this Spirit will not fail them in their waiting upon him; and the church which is one with Christ, married to Christ, joined to Christ, partakes of his holy, living, and infallible nature.

Judge in the truth how it would suit: a holy head, an unholy body; a living head, a dead body; an infallible head, an elect and chosen head, but a body very liable to be deceived and err. Has not the church that Spirit, that life, that power, of the Lord Jesus Christ, her head, with her, that is able to keep her from erring? And is it not her earnest travail and desire to keep to it herself, and to have all her members kept to it? And will not that power keep and preserve all that keep to it?

He adds further to the foregoing words, "Which thing I cannot believe, for then I must believe these particulars following."

First, "I must believe that they are as infallible as God is; and that it is as impossible for them to err, as it is for God to err."

Answer. No. A man may believe that God has given to his church a glorious proportion of his Spirit, to dwell in them, and guide them, as his sons, spouse and wife; and that they are married to him that is infallible, and partake of a blessed proportion of his nature; and yet not believe that they are as infallible as God is. The Lord is absolutely infallible of himself; what infallibility the church has, is by gift, by union, and communion with the Lord, her Husband and Maker.

But does he believe, or will he go about to maintain, that the church has nothing of the infallible Spirit of her husband? Or that she is to act in a fallible spirit? Or that she is to act nothing at all? But only direct men to the light and Spirit within, and let her members alone, though she infallibly (by the infallible Spirit and power) know that they are deceived and err, and see (with the anointed eye) that they are going from, and acting contrary to, the light in their own particulars? If she should do so, she would show little care over her children, and small regard or faithfulness to him, who has entrusted her with his own Spirit and power, for edification and salvation, and not for destruction.

Secondly, "That no man or woman shall ever attain to any higher measure of the grace of God than they; and that they are come to the highest revelation that can be attainable by the Spirit of God."

Answer. The highest measure of life and of the Spirit is not necessary for the government of the church; but a true measure. And a true measure the Lord has ordained for his church; and Christ, the Head, is not absent from his church; but present with it, to supply with what wisdom and power he sees needful. And where is the attainment and growth in grace? Is it in the church, or out of the church? Does not the Lord add to the church such as shall be saved? And is not their growth there? And if any member be blessed, and grow ever so abundantly in grace, it is the growth of the church, and the church is glad of it. Now, if it be a true growth, they would have unity with the church, and mind the peace of the church, and be subject to the Spirit and pure power of life in the church; else their growth is in another spirit, which the true church can never own.

Thirdly, "And that there is no more to be made known by the Spirit of God, in the sons and daughters of men, but what already is made known to them."

Answer. The particular's owning a measure of life, of truth, of the Spirit and power, does not argue there is no more to be made known or revealed in the particular. And the church's owning a fuller

measure dwelling in the body than in any one particular (for the greatest fulness in any particular does but go to make up the largeness or fulness in the body), does not argue that the church shall not grow, or be enlarged and filled as it grows. But if he intend the growth of any departing from the church, or out of the Spirit of life of the church, who has her life from the Head, and is in unity with the Head, that growth we cannot but deny, finding it by constant trial and experience to be a growth in notion and comprehension, out of the feeling life and power.

Now, this kind of growth I do not desire ever to know; the Lord also preserve others out of it, and open their ears to hear the voice of Christ, and of his church, that they may be preserved out of it! For had this been hearkened and kept to, things had been better with many, as to their inward state, and true peace with the Lord, than they have been.

Fourthly, "Or if there be any thing more to be revealed by the Spirit of God, that God will make it known to them, and to none else."

Answer. The true church does not limit God where he shall reveal, or not reveal; but owns God in whatever it reveals in any man upon the face of the earth. For being in unity with God's Spirit, and born of the immortal life, they are in the feeling sense and knowledge of what came from the life in ages past, or in this present age, and are in unity with it; yet they know the Lord reveals the mystery of his truth and kingdom in the churches, and the growth is in the churches.

Now, if any, in Lucifer's nature, will hearken to that spirit which despises God's church, and rend from it, and think to grow above it, and expect this growth in their high notions and comprehensions about things, in that exalted mind, should be owned by the church, they will be mistaken: for the true Spirit, which knows all things, and guides the church, will not guide the church to own any such spirit or growth; but to judge and condemn it in its greatest spreading and exaltation.

There were those in the apostle's days who would seem to be grown high, and to be spiritual, far above the apostles, and such as lay low in the truth, and obeyed the holy commandments, and yet were far short of their life, as may be seen abundantly in his epistles to the church of Corinth. But what says the apostle concerning such? "If any man think himself a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." 1 Cor. 14:37. And did not he give commandments about those that were unruly, and would not be subject to the order, power, and government of God's Spirit in the church? And did not the apostle say of unruly persons, and vain talkers and deceivers, that their mouths must be stopped? Tit. 1:10-11. What! had the church or ministers, in the first promulgation of the gospel, power to stop mouths? Yes; in the Spirit that was in them, and with them, they knew which were the vain talkers, the unruly, and deceivers; and what mouths were to be stopped, and what power would stop them.

Fifthly, he says, "Friends, I would have you seriously take into your consideration some of your doctrines and principles which are commonly preached among us, how they can stand with God's sovereignty, dominion, and glory, that either the seed or God should arise in man."

Remark. Christ preached a seed, even the kingdom, like a grain of mustard seed, and this seed sown in man. Now, if it was sown in man, in his earthly heart, nature, and spirit, then the earth was over it, and did cover it, and it was to spring up or arise over and above the earth, and the pure power, wisdom, and glory of the Father to appear to be manifested in it.

Is this such a strange doctrine to him? Where are his spiritual senses? How was he convinced? Was it without the feeling of the seed? If he truly felt it, where did he feel it? Did he not feel it in the earth? Was there not much over it?

I am sure, we who were truly convinced, felt it so; felt the pure seed under suffering, the pure life under, the pure measure of truth under, and much of the earth over it, the Lamb slain inwardly by sin and transgression; and blessed be the Lord, we felt also the earth judged, and removed out of its place; the earth plowed up, and the seed springing over all that is earthly, and growing up in that which God made new, over that which was old.

And did not God arise outwardly, in the manifestation of his power outwardly, among the outward Jews? And does not he arise inwardly, in the manifestation of his power inwardly, among the inward Jews? Are the enemies ever scattered inwardly till God's arising inwardly? What kind of conviction or growth has that man been acquainted with, who never experienced these things?

Now, having proposed this, he asks some questions, which, as the Lord shall open my heart, I may return answers to; not after a notional way, but as the Lord has given me that knowledge, feeling, and experience of the thing.

His first question is, "Whether the Light or Spirit, Seed, and God, be not all one and the same thing?"

Answer. God is the fulness, the seed is a measure and manifestation of him, the infinite fulness. And as he is light and Spirit, so the seed that comes from him, or that the good husbandman sows, is light and Spirit also.

His second question is, "How came this seed of God to be under, or beneath, in man?"

Answer. Any man that knows the truth in the holy experience, and has been tempted, and let in sin upon him, may know what comes then under, and how it comes under. The Spirit by sin is grieved; yes, the Holy Spirit may be quenched, and man may crucify to himself the Lord of glory.

His third and fourth questions are, "What shall raise it up?" And, "By what?"

Answer to both. The power of God, the Spirit of God, the life of God, entering into its own in man, entering into the witness, raises it up, brings that under which resisted, oppressed, and kept it down. The power of the Almighty, by his out-stretched arm, crushes Pharaoh inwardly, and brings his spiritual seed out of spiritual Egypt, Sodom, and Babylon; in all which the Lord, in all ages, has inwardly and spiritually been crucified by them that have resisted his Holy Spirit in the pure manifestations thereof; for what is done to it is done to him. "Saul, Saul, why persecute you me?"

Lastly, "Whether the appearance of God in man, to man by his Spirit, be not for the quickening and raising of man, both soul and body, out of a state of bondage and captivity?"

Answer. Yes, it is; but how does God raise up man? Is it not by joining him to his seed, and causing him to bow to his seed, and suffer with his seed, and deny that which is contrary to his seed; so that the seed, which has been grieved and burdened with sin and iniquity, may rise up over it, and crush the head of the serpent, in the authority, power, and dominion of the Father's life? Who of the redeemed ones, that have witnessed true redemption, have not witnessed God bringing that up which was down, low, deep in the heart, and bringing that down which was high and exalted over it?

But for the raising of God, that is but his misrepresentation of this sound doctrine, and holy experience: for Christ himself, who was God, and the resurrection and the life; yet the Godhead was not raised in him, but the resurrection and the life raised that body. And that of him which he sows in us, and which differs in the soul, through the soul's sin, he raises up in his own holy dominion, in them that come to suffer with it, and to bear the cross with that which crucifies sin.

This is sound doctrine, and sound experience, universally experienced by all that know the inward truth, and have subjected to it. They have felt what truth was, and where it was; and what it is, and where it is; and what they are in it, and by it; blessings and praises over all unto him, who, by the working of his most glorious power, has brought this about in a remnant whom the Lord has visited and shown mercy to.

Let him wait for true understanding from him who is able to give it, and answer me this one question then, Does not the devil, the enemy of mankind, hunt after the precious life, even in those that come to witness redemption in measure from him? And if, at any time, they hearken to his temptations, and let him in, does not the life receive a wound? Is not the Spirit grieved? Is not the tender, righteous, living plant hurt?

Oh, the tender mercy of God to permit his truth, his seed, his Son, not only to suffer for man without the gates of Jerusalem, but also to suffer in man, even in the streets of Sodom, where our Lord was, in ages past, crucified, and is spiritually crucified to this day! Rev. 11:8.

He says, "The kingdom of heaven is within all men and women, and heaven is above hell, and the light is above darkness," p. 7.

Remark. If he mean that their nature is so, I grant it; but if he mean that heaven, or the light which is heavenly, is uppermost in men who are under the kingdom and power of darkness, he is utterly mistaken; for in the kingdom where Satan and antichrist reign, antichrist is there exalted (in that heart) above all that is called God; even above the light, Spirit, and power which ought to be worshipped and obeyed there, but is not; and there is need of the arm and power of God to be awakened, and to put on strength there, to cut Rahab, wound the dragon, and bring him under, and to bring up the seed into its heavenly authority, dominion, and power (which is due unto it) in that heart.

He says, "The seed is to redeem, and not to be redeemed."

Remark. This is true, relating to the seed, as it is in itself: but as God has bestowed it on man, given it as a gift in man, and it condescends to his condition, descending into the lower parts of the earth, and suffering with man, that it might bring man into its death and sufferings, and so raise him in and with itself; so the mighty power of life, from which it came, is to be revealed in it, and bring it out of Egypt, and the darkness wherein it finds man, and in the tender love of God to man, bears a share with him. It is not only the Jew outwardly that pierced Christ, but the soul inwardly by transgression pierces his life and Spirit; and as it comes to true sense and faith, looks upon him whom it has pierced by sin, and mourns bitterly over him, and turns from and hates that sin whereby it pierced him.

He says, "The seed in both man and woman is both God and Christ, and is above the seed of the serpent in all, and he is in himself," etc. p. 7.

Remark. Who denies that God and Christ, and the holy seed, which are one in nature, though not in

measure and fulness, as he is in himself, is above the seed of the serpent?

He adds further, "Neither has man's mind been so blinded, that he could not see his sins by the light," p, 8 l. 38 (as corrected by the errata).

Remark. There is an eye that the god of this world blinds, that it may not see the glorious shinings of the light. 2 Cor. 4:3-4. And the eye that is blind cannot see, till God opens it. The outward eye cannot see the shining of the outward sun, but as it is opened; nor can the inward eye see inward things, but as the Lord opens it. Paul was sent to the Gentiles to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light. Acts 26:18. So that man's eye is blinded, that though the light shine in the darkness, yet he cannot see, nor walk in the way of the light, but as God anoints and opens his eye; "anoint your eyes with eye-salve, that you may see." Rev. 3:18.

But I beseech him, in the tender bowels of love, to consider where his standing is, and what it is in him, that brings forth these things; for I am sure it is not the true light, wherewith God has shined in the hearts of his people, and does shine at this day. He mistakes the true light in others, and calls it darkness; and also mistakes the darkness in himself, and calls it light: and where, after this rate, may he wander in his uncertain notions and comprehensions? and while he is thus talking of God, and heaven, and the light within, let him take heed lest he be found among them who blaspheme God, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

What I have hereto took notice of, may sufficiently manifest, even to himself, could he retire low enough, where the true understanding and knowledge is given, how he has erred from the true light, and but pretended to it; and not been led by it, in what he has now writ.

As for the other part of his book, though I could say much to it, if the Lord did require me; yet finding it chiefly to be matter of notion and criticism, my heart is not engaged to meddle with it; for it is not in me, to bring people into such critical disputes, about an invisible man, or invisible woman, or who was the first invisible man, which one while he seems to call God or Christ; another while the son of perdition, or power of darkness, he calls the first invisible man, as page 21. for which I am satisfied, he can produce no scripture; which he requires of Friends, for what they assert.

I must confess, I see no profit in his meddling with such things, but rather a drawing the minds of the people into forbidden knowledge, and airy comprehension about the heavenly things, and feeding that part in themselves which should not thus be allowed to fly aloft, but be kept under.

And happy were it for him, if he could feel the truth, seed, and life (which is grieved in him), rise above them, trample them down, and reign over them: but he must experience great humility, and a long travel, before he can come to witness this.

As for his denying himself to be of us; indeed he has sufficiently manifested by this book, and by his strange notions and comprehensions therein, that he is not of us; but a stranger to that life, spirit, and power, which has gathered, guides, and preserves us out of such paths as these.

And oh that he did not hug so many notions (and those very strange ones too, contrary to the truth and holy experience, in the hearts of God's redeemed ones, and the Holy Scriptures, as has been already showed), and get such comprehensions into his brain, concerning the saving power; but wait to descend, and come down there, where he may feel it in his heart, and that will preserve him for the

future from such contradictions and confusions, which the other part of his book is also too full of; which, if the Lord please, he may draw forth some other to lay open, for the vindication of truth and its true testimony, from his spirit and false testimony, uttered in very strange and extravagant expressions; not at all suitable to the nature of truth, but rather to the nature of that dark spirit from which it came; which the Lord of his tender mercy manifest to him, and redeem him from, into a tender, living, humble sense of the meek and lowly principle of life in the heart.

POSTSCRIPT

SINCE the writing of the former, and my not intending to meddle with the rest, there has something lain upon me, as to some few passages therein also, to write a few words by way of testimony, to one or two particulars therein: but that which mainly lay upon me was something in relation to his Postscript; he looking upon it as so unanswerable, and yet so plain and clear an answer arising to it in my heart.

First, As to his main controversy with Friends, about the "Christ that died at Jerusalem" (he affirming, "That neither justification nor condemnation is by him;" and reproaching Friends, "as having gone back to the professors' Christ and Savior, who died without the gates of Jerusalem," as page 17, 21, 26), this is in my heart to say: —

Remark. Is Christ divided? Is there one Christ that died without the gates of Jerusalem, and another that did not die? Or is it not the same Lord Jesus Christ, who died without the gates of Jerusalem, according to the flesh, and yet was then alive in the Spirit? Do we affirm that the Godhead died? (No, we do not so much as affirm, that his soul died, as he does, page 19.) But according to the flesh he died; that is, he who was the resurrection and the life laid down his life, and took it up again, according to the commandment of his Father.

Thus we have been taught of God to believe, and thus to hold it forth. And we have no other justifier, condemner, Savior, or intercessor than he that laid down the life of the body, offering it up a sacrifice to his Father, without the gates of Jerusalem. "Who is he that justifies?" Is it not God, in and through him? And, "Who is he that condemns? Is it not Christ that died?" And where did he die? Was it not without the gates of Jerusalem? "Yes rather, that is risen again," etc. Rom. 8:33-34.

Secondly, The next thing that lies upon me to take notice of, is writing against sense, and disowning the exhortation to come to a sense, and to wait in a sense, and abide in a sense, etc. as p. 25.

Remark. Though I have given a touch at this already, in the foregoing part, yet there is something more lies upon me. The inward man, the new man, the spiritual man, has inward and spiritual senses. Christ's sheep have spiritual ears to hear his voice with; and a spiritual eye is given to the spiritual man, to see him who otherwise is invisible.

There is also a spiritual taste to savor and distinguish between that which is living, and that which is dead; between that which is corrupt and unwholesome, and that which is wholesome food: and by the exercise of these senses, the children of God become more and more skillful in discerning between good and evil. Heb. 5:14. And in this living sense, the elect cry unto God against their enemies, and are heard and preserved by him, and shall, in due time, be fully delivered. Luke 18:7-8.

The truly living are truly sensible. Indeed, if he could take away the sense of life, and the judgment of

life from God's people, it were an easy matter to deceive them with such kind of notions and comprehensions as he has brought forth in his book. But the Lord has given a living sense or senses to his, and pure, living judgment therein; which their minds being kept to, it is impossible for this spirit, or any such like, with all its enchantments, to prevail upon them, because the sheep's ear knows the sound and voice of life, from the sound and voice of death, let antichrist transform in any of his ministers ever so mysteriously.

He says, "God is not a sense, nor is his Spirit a sense."

Remark. It is not for him, in his notional way, to say what God is; he that made the eye, shall not he see? He that made the ear, shall not he hear? Does he beget his children into a living sense, and bestow living senses upon them? And has not he the thing in himself much more?

But let me ask him this question; did God, the holy begetter of life, ever beget him into a living sense? If not, he was never of us; if the Lord did, let him wait to be begotten so again, and he shall soon be one of us again, and judge in the true Spirit, life, and power, what he has here writ and published abroad in the wrong; and he shall no longer believe, that this his writing was written from the testimony of Jesus in him (as he expresses, p. 21), but shall experience the life of Jesus condemning it in his own heart, as I am sure it has done and does in mine, and cannot but do in all that have been gathered to, and abide in, that which keeps livingly sensible.

Thirdly, The third thing, and that which most lies upon me, is that charge of his upon Friends, That they do show more homage, reverence, and obedience to the form outwardly, than to the power of God inwardly; and that they worship the form beyond the power, because they keep their hats on when they wait and worship in silence; but in public prayer, both men and women either stand up, or else kneel down, and the men all put off their hats: herein (he says) they worship, reverence, and adore the form outwardly; and the words, more than the word of life in their hearts, etc. This practice he would have them vindicate, if they can: indeed he has sufficiently condemned it, and more than God has allowed him to do, or will justify him in.

Remark. The thing is nakedly and plainly thus; the great God, by the arm of his power, has gathered a people to himself, and taught them to worship him in his own Spirit and truth; yes, he has taught us to be continually retired, and upon our watch, and in his fear; eying and regarding him in all we do.

Besides this, he has appointed us solemn times of meeting together to worship him; in which times we do, in a more solemn, and after a more especial manner, retire to feel his presence with us, and holy Spirit and power working in our hearts, and ministering to us. And, blessed be the Lord, he is still found, according to his promise, in the midst of us; and does give us pure breathings after him, and pure sense of him, and pure praises to him; even praises from and in that which is pure.

Yet, while we are sitting thus waiting, or when breathings or praises arise, we are not taught or required of the Lord to pull off our hats, or kneel on our knees.

But when the Lord moves and calls any forth (for the assembly, or in the name and on the behalf of the assembly) to offer prayer or praises to God; then, to signify our unity in the Spirit, and our joint reverence to our God, we are moved either to kneel, or stand, as the Lord shall incline our hearts, and to uncover our heads before him. And in this we do not adore the form, as our God knows and bears witness, but him who has taught us the form, and who teaches us to continue therein, and justifies us

in the use and practice thereof.

And what spirit is this that condemns us after this vaunting manner, as if he had brought forth such a manifest evidence of our adoring the form as could not be answered?

The last thing which lies on me to take notice of is those words about the close of his postscript: "I have yet another book, that is written in and from the Spirit of God; the tendency of which book is, for the overthrowing of all antichrist's ministers in this nation," etc.

Remark. This testimony lies on my heart concerning him, that he is not in a condition, or capacity to write or speak in or from God's Spirit. He may pretend to have written this, or to write another book, from God's Spirit, but he does but take the name of the Lord in vain in so doing, and the Spirit of the Lord will, without doubt, through some of those that are in him that is true, give a sure and certain sound, and testimony, against his false pretenses.

Oh that he could indeed think or write or speak against antichrist's ministers, and against the spirit of antichrist! which if ever he be able from God to do, he must first see how antichrist has prevailed over him, and darkened him, and how he dwells and reigns in his heart, as if he were God; yes, he must deny his present light and spirit, and call it no more Christ; but feel that which is now little and low in him rise (through his sense of it, and subjection to it) over that which is now so high, and so exalted above the measure of truth in his own heart; which, if it were so, or might once be so, how glad would my soul be for his sake, which is now grieved to see him so lifted up, and so mistaken, and so deeply to err, both concerning himself, and God's people, church, and ministers, and concerning God's light and Spirit; denying, debasing, and casting down that, to exalt himself; that so he might set up the wrong instead of the right, and be justified and owned by the one, seeing he cannot by the other!

The Lord, if it be his will, in tender mercy to him, bring him down from his high seat, and exalt that holy blood of the covenant, which is now trampled under foot by him, that his soul may be saved, and not perish forever (in the day that never shall have end) from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Amen.

SOME MISREPRESENTATIONS OF ME
CONCERNING CHURCH-GOVERNMENT
CLEARED
AND THE
POWER AND AUTHORITY OF GOD'S SPIRIT
IN GOVERNING HIS CHURCH
TESTIFIED TO

By one whom it has pleased the Lord to make a member of the Church, which he has gathered, and preserves by his own Almighty Arm; who accounts it his duty and honor in the Lord, to be subject to the government and ordering of his Spirit and Power in his Church

ISAAC PENINGTON

"That you submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helps with us, and labors." 1 Cor. 16:16

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you." Heb. 13:17

"Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; yes, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble." 1 Pet. 5:5

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit, and submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Ephs. 5:18,21

PREFACE

UPON occasion of the suffering of our dear friends and brethren in New England, cruel imprisonments, many hard usages, and at last (some of them) death itself, for their obedience and faithful testimony to the Lord, and his precious truth; and because of the undue covering thereof, by the grounds and causes produced to justify their proceedings; I was engaged to show the nakedness and unreasonableness thereof, in a book, entitled, "An Examination of the Grounds and Causes, which are said to induce the Court of Boston in New England, to make that Order or Law of Banishment upon pain of death against the QUAKERS," etc. Whereunto something was added (being very proper to the subject in hand) about the authority and government which Christ excluded out of his church, which also occasioned something concerning the true church-government.

Now, this latter part (about church-government) has been so misrepresented, as if, because the wrong church-government was excluded, the exclusion of all church-government was intended by me, there being no notice taken of my owning the true church-government, but only some passages of my disowning the false produced, as if they intended to overturn and deny all church-government, which never was intended by me: for in that very book which is thus made use of, I did positively affirm the necessity and use of the true church-government, which may more fully appear in that which hereafter follows.

SOME MISREPRESENTATIONS OF ME

CONCERNING

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

OR the manifesting that I am misrepresented, and the clearing of my innocency from those misrepresentations, this is on my heart: —

First, to set down those words which John Pennyman has cited out of that part of my book which speaks of the authority and government which Christ excluded out of his church.

Secondly, To add something, in way of confirmation of that truth and tender sense, which was then upon my heart.

Thirdly, To propose some questions, as I shall find them arise in my heart, further to open and manifest the intent of my heart in this thing.

Fourthly, To annex something, which is mentioned and immediately added in the very same part of the book, concerning true church-government; which plainly manifests that I was not against the true church-government, nor did mention or intend any of those things to hinder, deny, or oppose the true church-government, of which I do there infer an absolute necessity.

Fifthly, It is on my heart to add a few considerations further, concerning the necessity, usefulness, and benefit of the true church-government.

The first words John Pennyman cites out of this part of my book, concerning the authority and government which Christ excluded out of his church, from Mat. 20:25 to 29 are these:

"HERE Christ cuts off that power and authority, which grows up in the corrupt nature of man, which was ever and anon springing up even in the disciples; here he wholly excludes it out of his church, and says expressly, he would have no such thing amongst them, no such kind of greatness, no such kind of authority.

Confirm. It is the full belief of my heart, that Christ has cut off that power and authority which grows up in the corrupt nature of man, and wholly excluded it out of his church, even very expressly in this fore-cited scripture; plainly signifying therein, that he would have no such kind of greatness, no such kind of authority among his gathered and chosen people.

Question. But does this signify or imply, that he would have no authority at all? Does this exclude the authority and government of his Spirit and power in his church? Does not he, notwithstanding this, say, "Go tell the church"? And enjoin the members of the church to hear the church, upon the penalty of being accounted heathens and publicans? And did not the Holy Ghost make and appoint overseers over the church? Acts 20:28. And what is an overseer? or in what were they to oversee? Were they not to oversee in the true light, to which every child of light is to be subject? And they that did resist the light, Spirit, and power of the Holy Ghost in any of the overseers, were they not unruly, and departers from the light in themselves; though they might pretend they were still for the light, and that it was the overseers that were departed and erred from it?

The next words he cites are these:

"Two things are here excluded by Christ, from which all the mischief arises in the church, all the tyranny and oppression of men's consciences, and of their persons, estates, and liberties for conscience' sake. First, Greatness: Secondly, The exercising dominion and authority by those that would be great therein."

Confirm. It is my belief, that all the mischief in the church, — tyranny, and oppression of men's consciences, and of their persons, estates, and liberties for conscience' sake, — does arise from a wrong greatness, and from the exercising of a wrong dominion and authority, by those that would be great therein; and that these two things are here excluded by Christ, in the fore-mentioned scripture.

Question. But is there not a true greatness? Those that lie low before the Lord, and have humbled themselves under his mighty hand, — does not the Lord exalt them in due time, filling them with his Spirit, life, virtue, and power? And is not that great in them? And are they not highly favored, and exalted in the eye of the Lord therein? (Oh! none knows how great those are in the eye of the Lord, who are poor and low, and nothing in their own eyes.) And is there not a true authority and dominion of God's Spirit in the church in general, as well as in the particular, over the spirit and power of darkness? Because of which Spirit, because of which power, because of which holy authority and dominion, the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against it.

His next citation is this (which, though something long, I am willing to recite punctually, that my innocency may the more appear):

"THIS spirit must be kept out from amongst you, — this aspiring spirit, this lofty, ruling spirit, which loves to be great, which loves to have dominion, which would exalt itself because of the gifts it has received, and would bring others into subjection; this spirit must be subdued amongst Christ's disciples, or it will ruin all. The Lord gives grace and knowledge for another end, than for men to take upon them to be great, and rule over others because of it. And he, that because of this thinks himself fit to rule over other men's consciences, and to make them bow to what he knows, or takes to be truth, — he loses his own life thereby; and so far as he prevails upon others, he does but destroy their life too. Therefore the disciples, or church of Christ, are to watch over every such spirit, to beat it down, to testify against it, to turn from it, to lay it flat, to put it in its proper place, that is, beneath all, and so not to allow it to arise."

Before I come to the confirmation of this, I judge it fitting to set down the foregoing clause or paragraph omitted by him, which will very much help to clear the naked drift and true intent of these

words. The foregoing paragraph runs thus:

"Such a kind of greatness as is in the world is the destruction of the life of Christ; and such a kind of dominion and authority as is among the nations is a direct overturning of the kingdom of Christ. It sets up another power than Christ's, another greatness than Christ's, another kind of authority than Christ's; and so eats out the virtue and life of his kingdom, and makes it just like one of the kingdoms of this world."

This (which immediately went before) being thus added, may sufficiently open the thing of itself. Yet for further satisfaction, I shall add a confirmation to the truth of that which he has cited; and that in several particulars, because of the length of the citation.

Confirm. First, An aspiring spirit, a lofty, ruling spirit, which loves to be great, which loves to have dominion, which would exalt itself, etc. must be kept out from among the disciples and church of Christ. There must not be such a spirit, or loving to be great, or such a ruling among them, as is in the world. No; life alone, the Spirit alone, the humble seed alone, the truth alone, the grace alone, must rule among them; and God forbid the authority and government thereof should be stopped in any. It cannot be well with the church that it should be so, that God's Spirit should be grieved or quenched or stopped in its holy way of governing and ordering the church of its own building.

Second, That which would exalt itself because of the gifts it has received, and would bring others into subjection; this spirit must be subdued among Christ's disciples, or it will ruin all. God alone, Christ alone, the Spirit alone, the truth alone, the seed alone, is to be exalted in the church; not flesh, not self, not the aspiring, lofty, ruling spirit.

Third, The Lord gives grace and knowledge for another end, than for men to take upon them to be great, and rule over others because of it. Man, without grace and true knowledge, is high and exalted, and would be ruling over and subjecting others; but true grace and knowledge brings man down, and keeps him low, even out of every desire of aspiring and ruling over others, in earnest breathings and endeavors that both the grace and spirit may teach and rule both over himself and others.

Fourth, Because God has given a man knowledge, he must not take upon him to rule over others with his knowledge. Christ did not rule over his disciples with his knowledge, nor require them to believe what he knew to be truth. Nor may any man at this day, though ever so full of God's holy Spirit and power, take upon him (above what his Lord and Master did) to rule over other men's consciences. If he do, he will do it out of the leadings of life, and of God's holy Spirit; and so will wound and hurt his own life thereby; and so far as herein he prevails on others, he will hurt their life too.

Fifth, Therefore this spirit (which Christ never was of himself, nor encouraged in his disciples) the church is to watch over, beat down, testify against, turn from, lay flat, and keep beneath all, and so not allow it to arise.

Question. But does all this hinder, deny, or oppose Christ's Spirit, Christ's power, Christ's truth and grace from arising in the church, in a way of spiritual and holy government? Because man is not to aspire, nor take upon him to reign or rule, because of grace, gifts, or knowledge received; shall not therefore the head govern the body? Shall not life, and truth, and the wisdom of God, spring in the church, to order and govern the church? But must every man be left to the dictates of what he calls light in him, and not to be reprov'd or testified against, though the Spirit of God manifest it (to them

that are indeed in the light, life, Spirit, and power) that it is not light, as persons may pretend and imagine; but real darkness, gross darkness, darkness that may be felt, even by the least babes that are in the true, living sense?

The next citation:

"IF this rule of Christ had been kept to, antichrist's power could never have got up, nor the poor innocent lambs so often have been worried by the wolves."

Confirm. It is most certainly true, if the wrong authority and government had been kept down; if the aspiring, lofty spirit, which exalts itself, and loves to have the preeminence over that which it should be subject to both in itself and others, had been judged, beat down, denied, turned from, etc., how could the spirit of antichrist, which is the spirit that would be exalting itself above all that is indeed of God, have got up? This is the wolf that worries the lambs; and if this power and spirit be kept out of the church, how can there be any wolf found there, to worry the innocent lambs and sheep of Christ?

Question. But did ever antichrist's power get up by the exercise of the power of Christ in his church? Does not that power turn against antichrist, and keep out antichrist? Did that power ever worry the lambs? No, rather does it not cherish, feed, build up, and preserve the lambs? And is it possible but antichrist's power should get up, unless this power be watched to, and observed, in its ordering and governing the church, and discovering the subtle working of the wolfish spirit of antichrist; which appears in the sheep's clothing, and may pretend to the light within, that it might draw men from that which is indeed the light within, into that which is indeed darkness in the sight of the Lord, and in the sight of all that are kept truly living and sensible by him?

The next citation:

"THE great work of the minister of Christ, is to keep the conscience open to Christ, and to preserve men from receiving any truths as from them, further than the Spirit opens, or to imitate any of their practices, further than the Spirit leads, guides, and persuades them; for persons are exceeding prone to receive things as truths, from those they have a high opinion of, and to imitate their practices, and so hurt their own growth, and endanger their souls."

Confirm. When the minister of Christ comes with the gospel of Christ, he finds men in darkness, with their consciences defiled, with the door of the heart shut against Christ. Now, his great work is to turn them to the light, Spirit, and power, whereby their hearts may be opened, their consciences washed, and there may be a ready entrance for Christ's Spirit and power into them. Then the conscience being opened to Christ, their great endeavor, labor, and work is to keep it open, and that that may not be let in again by them, which will shut it against Christ. For as there is one Spirit opens to Christ, so there is another will shut, even after the heart and conscience is opened, if a man hearken to it.

And the way of receiving truth, is in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit in one's own particular; and this is forever the aim and care of the ministers of Christ to keep men to, and not to allure men to receive truth as from them, but from Christ; or to imitate any of their practices, further than the Spirit leads, guides, and persuades them. For the ministers of Christ are sensible how exceeding prone persons are to receive things as truths, from those they have a high opinion of; and to imitate their practices, and so hurt their own growth, and endanger their souls. Now, it lies on my heart to testify, upon this occasion, that I have found the ministers of Christ, whom I have conversed

with in this age, walk so towards me and others, still turning me to that light, Spirit, and truth in my own particular, wherein the knowledge of truth was to be given me by the Lord, and not imposing upon me that which they knew to be truth, before the Lord had prepared and fitted my heart for the knowledge thereof. And this is still the course and practice of the ministers of Christ to this day.

Question. But must not the minister of Christ, who is ordained of God to watch for the soul, watch against that, which (if hearkened to by any particular) will shut the conscience against Christ, and open it to another spirit, who is often working in a mystery to deceive it? And if they see the working of this other spirit in any, ought they not, in faithfulness to Christ, and the souls of such, to warn them of it! And if any, having let in the wrong spirit, turn from and deny the practices which the Lord once taught them (and wherein the testimony of truth stands), into practices which are of the world, and answer the world's spirit, and tend to weaken the faithful testimonies of others in the true light and Spirit; ought the minister of Christ to leave these persons to their openness to a wrong spirit, and wrong practices, wherein they deny the Lord that bought them and enlightened them, and are shut up against the visitations and testimonies of God's true Spirit and power in his children, who keep their habitations in that light which these are departed from, though they make ever so great pretenses to it?

The next citation:

"AH, poor hearts! how simply do they come there, where they once tasted refreshment, to find wholesome advice, not suspecting what is got up there since; and so give dominion to a wrong thing, and take directions from a wrong spirit, and betray their own simplicity? Therefore the main thing is to keep the conscience pure to the Lord, and not to take things for truths because others see them to be truths, but to wait till the Spirit makes them manifest to me; nor to run into worships, duties, performances, or practices, because others are led there, but to wait till the Spirit lead me there. He that makes haste to be rich (even in religion, running into knowledge, and into worships and performances before he feel a true and clear evidence) shall not be innocent, nor the Lord will not hold him guiltless, when he comes to visit for spiritual adultery and idolatry."

Confirm. This has been experienced in this our day, more than once; when some, having departed from the power whereby the innocent lambs had tasted sweet nourishment and refreshment through them, and have come afterwards for that which is wholesome, not suspecting what was got up in them since, and so gave dominion to a wrong thing, and took directions from a wrong spirit, and betrayed their own simplicity.

Question. But had these resorted to the church, and waited for judgment from the church, to whom God has given eyes to see, in such cases as may pass the eye-sight of the particular, and a mouth to speak; might not the church have been instrumental to have opened the true eye in them also, and so have preserved them from being ensnared, by any that ran out from the truth in their own particulars, and lost their habitation therein? And mark; when the church was in its great glory, clothed with the sun, and the moon under its feet, and crowned with a crown of twelve stars, yet the dragon, even then, might prevail upon some stars, and with his tail sweep them down from their place; but the church he could not prevail upon. The gates of hell, the power of the dragon, the mouth of the dragon, no, the tail of the dragon (which what if I should say is the false prophet within) cannot.

Further Confirm. Indeed, the main thing is to keep the conscience pure to the Lord. To bring men to that which purifies the conscience, and to keep them to it, this is the great work. Men must not take

things for truths, because others see them to be truths (that is not God's way, nor did his ministers ever so teach), but to wait till God's Spirit makes them manifest to the particular. Nor must men run into worships, duties, performances, or practices, because others are led there, but wait till the Spirit lead every one in his own particular there.

Question. Where is the faithful minister that teaches otherwise, or practices otherwise at this day? I am sure I never met with any thing of this nature from any of them, but only one that ran out in his own particular, who first endeavored to draw me from esteeming or taking directions from others, and then would have given me directions himself, and would speak and undertake to prophesy great things of me, that he might have raised up that part in me, which could have answered him. And though he himself be dead, yet his spirit is alive in others at this day, which the Lord discover and preserve his people from!

Further Confirm. It is not good to make haste to be rich (no not in religion). He that rightly believes, and abides in the true and living faith, makes not haste to run into knowledge, worships, and performances, before he feel his guide; but rather chooses to be as a weaned child, lying low before the Lord, in brokenness of spirit, and not meddling with things too high for him; and so he is kept in innocency, poverty, and humility before the Lord, and preserved out of the bed of the stranger (the strange spirit and power), and so not judged or condemned by the Lord, for either spiritual adultery or idolatry.

Question. But he that lets in a wrong spirit, that mistakes about the light in him, and judges that which is indeed darkness to be it, and errs from the true church, and denies the authority of God's Spirit and power in it, and is not preserved thereby, but entangled and bewitched with this wrong spirit, and in it testifies against the true church and true Spirit, and the ministry and ministers of Christ; is not he joined to the spirit of whoredom in his own particular? And has not he set up an idol in his own heart, instead of the true light there? And does not he worship and obey that idol, that wrong spirit, that wrong power? And will not the Lord visit and judge him for his spiritual adultery and idolatry from the true?

The next citation:

"IN the apostles' days, Christians were too apt to strive after a wrong unity and uniformity in outward practices and observations, and to judge one another unrighteously in these things. And mark; it is not the different practice from one another that breaks the peace and unity, but the judging one another because of differing practices. He that keeps not a day may unite in the same Spirit, in the same life, in the same love, with him that keeps a day; and he who keeps a day may unite in heart and soul with the same Spirit and life in him who keeps not a day; but he that judges the other because of either of these errs from the Spirit, from the love, from the life, and so breaks the bond of unity. And he that draws another to any practice, before the life in his own particular lead him, does as much as in him lies to destroy the soul of that person. This was the apostle's rule, for every one to perform singly to the Lord what he did, and not for one to meddle with the light or conscience of another, etc.; but every one to keep close to their own measure, etc.; and here is the true unity in the Spirit, in the inward life, and not in an outward uniformity; that was not necessary in the apostles' days, nor is it necessary now; and that eye which so dotes upon it overlooks the one thing which is necessary."

Confirm. This is so manifest from that scripture quoted by me, which is here omitted, that he that shall

read that scripture, which is Rom. 14. may easily observe the apostle affirming and teaching these things.

That even in the apostles' days, Christians were too apt to strive after a wrong unity and uniformity in outward practices and observations, and to judge one another unrighteously in these things, is manifest from the several instructions and exhortations given to this church, in this chap. as ver. 2,3,4. "One believes that he may eat all things; another who is weak eats herbs. Let not him that eats, despise him that eats not; and let not him that eats not, judge him that eats; for God has received him. Who are you that judges another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls; yes, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand."

Yes, in matters of worship (as keeping and observing a day to God, or not keeping it), it is not the different practice from one another that breaks the peace, but the judging of one another, because of differing practices. So the apostle plainly holds forth, ver. 5-6. "One man esteems one day above another; another esteems every day. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regards the day, regards it unto the Lord; and he that regards not the day, to the Lord he does not regard it. He that eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he that eats not, to the Lord he eats not, and gives God thanks."

And he that draws another to any practice, before the life in his own particular lead him, does as much as in him lies to destroy the soul of that person. So the apostle signifies, ver. 15. (which was quoted in my book) in that he says, "Destroy not him with your meat," for whom Christ died. So that not an outward uniformity in all things, but a unity in the one Spirit and life, is the necessary thing. And there may be unity, and love, and life, and peace, without a uniformity in practice, further than the Spirit of God teaches and leads his unto.

Question. But if the Lord has taught a man, opened the same eye in him that he opened in others, and brought him into unity and uniformity with the church, in the practices which the Lord has taught it; and he afterwards let in another spirit, and fall from these practices, and judge the very church itself for continuing in them; may not the church testify to this person, that he is erred from his guide, has lost the right judge in himself, and so judges amiss, both concerning himself, and concerning the church of God? This has been the state of some who went out from among us formerly, and may also be the state of some who go out from us now. For as there is one that gathers to the true church; so there is another that endeavors to draw and scatter from it, and then to cause men to turn head against it, as if it were not of God, but apostatized from the Spirit and principle of truth, which indeed is their own state and condition in God's sight; but not the church's, which was gathered and is preserved by him, glory to the Lord, over all the accusations of the accuser, through what mouth soever he utter them forth.

The next citation:

"OH! how sweet and pleasant is it to the truly spiritual eye, to see several sorts of believers, several forms of Christians in the school of Christ, every one learning their own lesson, performing their own peculiar service, and knowing, owning, and loving one another in their several places, and different performances to their Master, to whom they are to give an account, and not to quarrel one with another about their different practices! This is the true ground of love and unity, not that such a man walks and does just as I do, but because I feel the same Spirit of life in him, and that he walks in his

rank, in his own order, in his proper way and place of subjection to that. And this is far more pleasing to me, than if he walked just in the track wherein I walk; no (so far as I am spiritual), I cannot so much as desire that he should do so, until he be particularly led thereto, by the same Spirit that led me."

Confirm. The spiritual eye beholds things aright, beholds things in the Lord, and tastes sweetness in, and is pleased with, that which is spiritual. If every one did eye the Lord, subject to the Lord, answer the light and Spirit of the Lord in their own hearts, though the forms in the school of Christ be higher or lower, the lessons different, and the practices answerable, yet every one minding his own place and lesson, and performing his own peculiar service, the spiritual eye would be delighted therewith. And those that are of the true seed and birth do know, own, and love one another in their several places, and different performances to their Master, to whom they are to give an account; and do not quarrel with one another about their different performances. Oh, how sweetly is this practiced and experienced among us at this day!

And unity in the life is the ground of true brotherly love and fellowship. Not that another man walks just as I do; but though he be weaker or stronger, yet he walks by the same principle of light, and is felt in the same Spirit of life, which guides both the weak and the strong, in their several ranks, order, proper way, and place of subjection, to that one Spirit of life and truth, which all are to be subject to.

No, he that is truly spiritual and strong in the light and Spirit of the Lord, cannot desire that the weak should walk just as he does; but only as they are strengthened, taught, and led thereunto, by the same Spirit that strengthened, taught, and led him.

Question. This is true concerning every one that is in the faith, that is in the true light, that is in the true Spirit; and keeps his rank, order, place, and subjection, though in a weak and low degree; but will this hold good concerning any that have erred from the faith, have made shipwreck thereof, and have turned from the true light and Spirit in themselves, and left their rank, order, and testimony against the world, and are again become one with the world, even in those very practices which the spirit of the world delights in, and which the Spirit of the Lord has testified and still testifies against, in all that are faithful, and keep to their first love and light? Is the church to bear with these in their practices, or own such spirits, or believe that they now walk according to the light which first convinced them? Is not the Spirit of judgment with the church? Has not God given her discerning? Has she not power and authority from God to try spirits? yes, and to judge false spirits, that have lost their habitation in the light, though they may still pretend to dwell there; can she not try those which say they are Jews and are not, but have lost the light, Spirit, and power which circumcises, and keeps circumcised, and are run back into the uncircumcised paths of the world again, which came from and answer the uncircumcised spirit and nature, both in themselves and others?

The next citation:

"AND he that knows what it is to receive any truths from the Spirit, and to be led into any practices by the Spirit, and how prone the fleshly part is to make haste, and how dangerous that haste is, will not be forward to press his knowledge or practices upon others, but rather wait patiently till the Lord fit them for the receiving thereof, and fear lest they should receive and practice too soon, even in that part which cannot serve the Lord."

Confirm. I will send the comforter, the Spirit of truth, says Christ to his disciples, and he shall lead you

into all truth. Now, the disciple of Christ is led into truth, in the cross to that part wherein others may receive the notion of things; yes, perhaps of truth itself. And the disciple must also abide in the cross, after that the Lord has given him the true knowledge, or he cannot be rightly led into the practice of what he knows. So that the disciple comes very hardly, both by his knowledge, and by his ability to practice what the Spirit of God teaches him and requires of him. There is a fleshly part indeed, prone to make haste; but that haste is dangerous, and that fleshly part, in all its hasty desires and motions, is to be denied and kept down. And he that is diligent in denying and keeping down that fleshly part in himself (with the forwardness and hastiness thereof) cannot easily be forward to press his knowledge and practices upon others; but will be patiently waiting on the Lord, for their kindly and seasonable understanding of the truth, and growth in it; and fear, lest they should run before their guide, and be practicing too soon, even in that part which cannot serve the Lord; for the Lord must be served and worshipped in his Spirit and truth; and there are all to be directed and brought, and there is every mind to be said and kept, or it cannot worship and serve aright.

Question. But what if a man entertain a wrong spirit, and let go the truths he had received, and turn from the practices which God's Spirit taught him, into the spirit and practices of the world, which God's Spirit has testified and will forever testify against? Is not the church to deny this spirit, and these practices, and the person that has hearkened to this spirit, and is found in these practices; that he may turn from this spirit and practices, to the true Spirit, and to the true testimony and practices which it once taught him, and still teaches all that hearken to its voice and holy motions, and listen not to the voice and instigations of a stranger?

The next citation:

"THE great error of the state of the apostasy has been to set up an outward order and uniformity, and to make men's consciences bend thereto, either by arguments of wisdom, or by force; but the property of the true church-government is to leave the conscience to its full liberty in the Lord, to preserve it single and entire for the Lord to exercise, and to seek unity in the light and in the Spirit, walking sweetly and harmoniously together in the midst of differing practices."

Confirm. That there have been ages of apostasy from the true Spirit and power of the apostles, is very manifest, both by the doctrines, discipline, and cruel practices of those that would have themselves accounted the true church and true believers and Christians. And they that have set up an outward order and conformity, and have used both arguments of wisdom, and also force, to make men's consciences to bend thereto, — this is as manifest as the former. Now, that this has been an error, and a great error, is very manifest also; because it is contrary to the nature of conscience, which is to be led by God's Spirit, not bent by man's wisdom and constraint, and contrary to Christ's and his apostles' doctrine and practice, who would have every man fully persuaded of what he performs to God, from whom he must receive the reward and approbation, or the dislike and punishment, for his answering or disobeying the light which God sets up, or causes to shine, in his own conscience.

And the property of the true church-government, and the practice and path of the true church in these our days is to leave the conscience to its full liberty in the Lord; to preserve it single and entire for the Lord, and to seek unity in the light and in the Spirit, walking sweetly and harmoniously together in the midst of differing practices. No, it is not the desire of the church at this day, that any should come up into the practice, or holy order of the gospel, according to what the Lord has taught others, but only as the Lord teaches and leads them.

Question. Concerning what conscience is this to be understood? Is it to be understood of the tender and weak conscience; or of the hard and seared conscience? For the conscience which God once made tender may afterwards come to be seared and hardened. And is the church of Christ, which is guided by the Spirit and wisdom of God, taught and required by him so to act towards the hard and seared conscience, as it is towards the tender and weak conscience? Is the hard and seared conscience, which has forsaken the true light, Spirit, and power, and turned against the truth, and is in a wrong, stiff, willful, hardened liberty and subtlety, to be left to its liberty, and to that spirit which draws it out and hardens it in a wrong liberty? Can there be any unity, in the light and in the Spirit, had with those who are erred from the light and from the Spirit, and are deceived in their own hearts concerning it, and do but only pretend to it? Can they walk sweetly and harmoniously together in differing practices, who differ also in the ground, and are not one in the foundation, even in the true light and Spirit of the Lord? Ought not the church to judge this spirit, with its liberty and evil conscience (for that spirit will make the consciences of all that let it in, evil), as well as, to the utmost, to cherish the liberty of the tender consciences in and to the Lord? Read and consider these scriptures following, Tit. 1:15. 1 Tim. 1:19. and 4:2.

The next citation:

"AND this I can truly say concerning myself, I never found my spirit forward to draw any, either to any thing I believed to be true, or to any practice or way of worship I observed or walked in; but desired that the power and leadings of life might go before them, and I was afraid lest men should receive things from my hand, and not from the Lord's." He has written in the margin of the book he sent me, "Oh, what a tender spirit was here!" intimating as if it were not so with me now.

Confirm. Blessed be the Lord, it was so with me formerly, and is so with me daily more and more; for as I wait on the Lord in his truth, which makes tender; so upon this occasion, being forced to it, I cannot but confess, that I witness the Lord daily more and more uniting my spirit to him in his truth; and as truth increases, so the tenderness which comes from it still increases in me, and I do not (no, I may say cannot, the contrary is so written on my heart) so much as desire to drive any to what practice or way of worship I believe to be true, and am taught of God to observe; but this is the longing of my soul, that the power and leadings of life may go before them; and I daily behave myself as one that is afraid, lest men should receive things from my hand, and not from the Lord's.

Question. Yet, where I find persons manifestly warp and turn aside from the truth, and let in a wrong thing, and testify against the truth and way of the Lord, and their hearts hardened by the subtlety of him who has deceived them; may I not singly and faithfully testify it to them, and breathe to the Lord for them, that they may return to the true Spirit, and to the holy testimony and practices thereof, and not condemn such, as departers from the light and truth, who abide in it, nor justify themselves as abiding in it, when they are really departed from it?

His last citation of words of mine is out of another book, entitled, "An Answer to the common Objection," etc. p. 8. The words are these:

"THAT power therefore in the church which spares the hypocrites (who can easily comply with an outward conformity in worship, without feeling an inward life and virtue), but lights heavy on that which is tender and shy in matters of worship, that is not the true church power, but at best but a counterfeit of the true."

Confirm. The power which Christ has given his church is not to spare hypocrites, who may easily comply with an outward uniformity in worship, without feeling an inward life and virtue. And such are not spared, but smote at, by the Spirit and power of God among us very often. And oh that there were no hypocrites and formal spirits among us; but that all that profess the truth were in the truth, and subject to it, and did live the life of it! Nor does the true church power light heavy on that which is tender and shy in matters of worship; but the ministry of the true church is to the conscience, as in God's sight, and is very tender of it, as before him, to whom it is to give an account of the spiritual power it has received from him, and of the exercise of it. That power therefore which spares the hypocrites, and lights heavy on that which is tender and shy in matters of worship, to be sure is not the true church power, but at best but a counterfeit of the true.

Question. But that power in the church which does not spare hypocrites, but is very gentle and tender to all tender consciences, is not that the true church power? And who is the hypocrite? Is not he that pretends to the light, when he is departed from it, a hypocrite? And he which sets up that which he calls light in himself, and denies that which is indeed true light, and which issues forth from God's Holy Spirit in his church, is not he a hypocrite? And has not the church power to judge all his false pretenses, and to try his spirit by the true light and Spirit of the Lord Jesus, which is still present with the true church? If the Spirit of Christ be indeed present with his church, surely it cannot but have power and authority to try, judge, and condemn every thing that is of a contrary spirit and nature, in all false pretenders whatsoever; who by their pretenses to the true light, cannot shelter that which is indeed contrary to it from the holy and righteous judgment of the Spirit and power of God in his church.

Thus I have gone over these several citations of John Pennyman's, and punctually set them down as he had cited them, and spoken more words to the confirmation of them, to manifest to others, as I find it plainly with me before the Lord, that I am fully the same at this day, in the sense and belief of my heart, as I was then; believing the same truth, and as ready to hold it forth, if the Lord at any time shall call me unto it, as I was then. But I was not then against true church-government; nor did intend this to encourage any man to shelter himself, by a pretense to the light in himself, against true church-government; assuredly knowing that the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets; and that he that is truly subject to the light and Spirit of God in his own heart, will be taught thereby to be subject to it also in others. For the life, Spirit, and power of God does not rise in vain in any; and he that has the true ear open, will hear its voice in whomsoever it speaks; and he that does not hear its voice, when it speaks through any to him, does not hear with the circumcised ear, nor understand with the circumcised heart. So that John Pennyman, in citing these my words, as if in so writing I was against the true church-government, or for setting up the judgment of any particular man (upon any pretense whatsoever) above the sense, understanding, and judgment of the true church, does me great wrong, even before the Lord, who knows that it was otherwise with me in that day; and he greatly wrongs my words, which did not signify any such thing: for in the very same book, and in some of the pages which he quotes, there is expressed a sense of, and a testimony to, the true church-government, which I am assured the Spirit of the Lord will give forth, and lead his into, as the necessities and occasions of the church require. For as the Lord is not lacking to the particular, so will he not be lacking to the general: but he is faithful, who has promised to be with his church and people, who wait upon him, and look up to him for the light and judgment of his Spirit in things wherein he engages them, and which require their single discerning and judgment in.

To manifest, therefore, from this very book, what my belief was, and how hearty I was to church-government, and sensible of the necessity and usefulness of it, I shall recite some passages out of it.

First, I shall mention the title of that part of my book, which had John Pennyman expressed fully, as it is in the title page, he had done me some right, and manifested something of my sense concerning true church-government. The title, in the title page, is thus: "Whereunto something is added about the authority and government which Christ excluded out of his church, which occasions something concerning the true church-government."

This might have poised people's spirits in the reading of his Citations, from judging me to direct men to the setting up of any thing in their minds and consciences which they may call light, in opposition to the light and Spirit of God in his church, or to set up a private judgment in themselves, above the light and judgment of God's Spirit in the church. For as the church is to be tender of every member, so every member is to be tender and regardful towards the church, and of the power and authority which God has given it.

The next Passage that is on me to mention, is p. 76

"THERE is nothing to hurt in the mountain of God's holiness; but there is a righteous scepter, a sweet scepter, a spiritual scepter, which reaches the spirit in the power of life, but touches not the outward man." To which I may add, The power of the church is not to hurt the outward man; no, nor the soul neither: but is for the destruction of the flesh, that the soul may be saved. And when the church has testified against their practices, or denied their spirit, it leaves them to the Lord; yet still praying to him that repentance may be given them, and mercy shown them by him, whose mercy endures forever."

Another Passage in p. 77

"LET the life in every one rise over it," (speaking of the proud, aspiring spirit) "and trample upon it: and afterwards, that in you may arise which is fit to teach, yes, and to rule in the Lord," etc.

P. 78. The example of Christ is urged, who did not exercise a wrong authority over his disciples, though he was their Lord and Master, which signified both greatness above them, and authority over them, see line 15. "Yet Christ took not upon him this kind of greatness, nor did exercise this kind of authority; but he was a servant," etc., and did minister.

So that there was one kind of greatness and authority which Christ did not exercise, and which his church also is not to meddle with: but there was another kind of authority which he had, and which he, who has all power in heaven and earth, gives to his church, to partake with him in, and to act in his name.

But why should I mention any such small touches at the thing, when it is directly spoken to in a Question propounded, and the Answer thereto, p. 79, 80, etc.? I shall therefore set down the Question, and part of the Answer thereto; the whole being too long to be here inserted.

Question. "But is there to be no greatness, no authority, among the disciples of Jesus, or in the church of Christ? Is every one to do what he will, to be subject to his own fancies and imaginations, to the inventions of his own corrupt heart? What a confused building will this be? Surely this will not long

remain a Zion, but soon become a Babylon, even a heap of disorder and confusion."

Answer. There is to be no such kind of greatness, no such kind of authority; yet there is both a greatness and authority suitable to the state of disciples; suitable to that kind of kingdom whereof they are. There are laws, there are governments, there are governors, there is a ruling, and there is a subjection; but all in the Spirit, all suitable to that which is to be governed; but no government of, or according to, the flesh. As Christ's kingdom is not of this world, so the government of his church and people is not according to the world: but as that which gathers is his Spirit, and that which is gathered is spiritual, so that which is governed is the spirits of his people, and they are to be governed by his Spirit, and spiritually, and not after a fleshly manner. Thus Christ himself, though he ministered to his disciples, yet he also was their Lord and Master, and in the Spirit and life of the Father ruled over them; and thus the apostles, and other ministers of Christ, had likewise in the Spirit the care of the churches, and authority in the Lord by his Spirit to govern the spirits of his people: not to govern after a fleshly manner, by their own wills, nor to prescribe to them in a lordly way, either what they should believe or practice; but in the light and in the power of the Spirit, to make their way into every one's conscience in the sight of God, ministering to every one in the Spirit according to their capacity and growth, and waiting patiently for God to convey the food and nourishment, and to build their spirits up in the faith thereby.

The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets. Here is the government; here is the law of rule and subjection in the life. Every one feeling a measure of the Spirit in himself, is thereby taught to own and subject to a greater measure of the same Spirit in another. He that has no measure of the Spirit of God, he is not of God, he is none of Christ's: and he that has received a measure of the Spirit, in the same Spirit feels another's measure, and owns it in its place and service, and knows its moving, and cannot quench it, but gives way to it with joy and delight. When the Spirit moves in any one to speak, the same Spirit moves in the other to be subject and give way: and so every one keeping to his own measure in the Spirit, here can be no disorder, but true subjection of every spirit: and where this is lacking, it cannot be supplied by any outward rule or order set up in the church by common consent; for that is fleshly, and lets in the flesh, and destroys the true order, rule, and subjection.

And then to limit the government aright, [these](#) two precious cautions or directions are added, p. 85. which I am sure will answer the truth and witness of God in every conscience.

First. Care must be had that nothing govern in the church of Christ, but the Spirit of Christ.

Secondly, That the conscience be kept tender, that nothing be received but according to the light in the conscience.

There is likewise an Objection answered about Uniformity, p. 87-88. which not being very large, and tending further to open the sense of my heart in this thing, I shall also here annex.

Objection. But is not uniformity lovely; and does not the apostle exhort Christians to be of one mind; and were it not a sweet thing if we were all of one heart, and one way?

Answer. Yes, uniformity is very lovely, and to be desired and waited for, as the Spirit of the Lord, which is one, leads and draws into one. But for the fleshly part (the wise, reasoning part of man) by fleshly ways and means to strive to bring about a fleshly uniformity, which ensnares and overbears the tender conscience, this is not lovely, nor spiritual, nor Christian. And the apostle who exhorts Christians to be

of one mind, yet does not bid them force one another into one mind, but walk together sweetly so far as they had attained; and wherein they were otherwise minded, God in his due time would reveal more to them, Phil. 3:15-16. He that has, to him shall be given. And the intent and work of the ministry (with the several ministrations of it) is to bring into the unity (Ephes. 4:13) as persons are able to follow, and not to force all men into one practice or way; that is the way to destroy the faith, and the true unity, and at best can introduce but a fleshly appearance of unity in such a form of worship and godliness as eats out the power. And for being of one heart, and one way, blessed be the Lord, this is in measure known and witnessed. The way is one; Christ, the truth of God; and he that is in the faith, and in the obedience to that light which shines from his Spirit into the heart of every believer, has a taste of the one heart and of the one way; and knows that no variety of practices (which is of God) can make a breach in the true unity. This is the one way, for every one to be subject to that light of Christ's Spirit which he has received from Christ; and every one keeping here, there is also one heart kept in the midst of all the variety and diversity of practices. And the unity being thus kept, all will come into one outwardly also at length, as the light grows in every one, and as every one grows into the light; but this must be patiently waited for from the hand of God (who has the right way of effecting it, and who alone can do it), and not harshly and cruelly attempted by the rough hand of man.

Now, I desire all that would not injure and wrong another (in taking part of one's sense and mind, and concealing the other) to observe how serious my heart is in the sight of the Lord concerning church-government, and unity and uniformity among the people of the Lord, in the Spirit and power of the Lord, as the Lord shall please rightly and orderly to bring it forth, and not otherwise. And my words so plainly signifying, and holding forth this, oh! how will J. Pennyman answer it to the great God, for thus misrepresenting me, and striving to make my words signify that which they never did, and as a proof how contrary our doctrine was then, to what it has been of late years? whereas, in that very book he cites, my words are full concerning church-government, the authority of the church, and the duty of subjection to it in the life, as was before recited.

I have been in a great travail of Spirit for J. Pennyman, the Lord having showed me his spirit and state (as he has also done to many others, who abide in that pure, holy light which he has forsaken, and is departed from); and this has been the cry of my heart to the God and Father of my life for him, in great brokenness and tears, many times; Father, forgive him, for he knows not what he does. He knows not what Spirit and power he acts against, nor what spirit and power it is that leads him. Oh that he might see it, and turn from it, and live! And oh, that all that err, and are mistaken in judgment, might have a sense of that which is truth indeed, and of that which is darkness indeed, in their own hearts; and might not put darkness for light, and light for darkness, as too many now do, to the great hurt of their own souls, and the hardening of others against God's precious way and truth, which will be bitterness in the latter end unto all such!

THREE OR FOUR CONSIDERATIONS ADDED

CONCERNING CHURCH-GOVERNMENT

First, THAT it is the holy will and pleasure of the great God, that his church should be governed by his Holy Spirit and power revealed in it. God is the God of order, and not of confusion, and he would have

every thing in the right and holy order everywhere, especially in his church. He has given a measure of his good Spirit to every man, and he would have every man governed thereby: and he has given more of his good Spirit and holy power to his church than to any particular, and he would have his church governed thereby. Read the epistles of Christ to the churches in the second and third chapters of the Revelations, and see how government and care over their members is expected from them. A church is a gathering in the name, power, and authority of the Most High; and Christ, to whom God gave all power in heaven and earth, is in them, and with them. God knows they can do nothing without his power; and he is faithful who has appointed them to meet together in his name, and he will not fail them. How has this been experienced in former days! And how is this experienced in this our day, blessed be the name of our God! The life that springs in the church, the light that shines in the church, the power and presence of the Lord that is revealed in his church, oh, how glorious is it! God has not gathered nor preserved a people through so many trials, nor so exercised and built them up in his pure fear, Holy Spirit, and living truth, to leave them so suddenly, and cast them off, as some men vainly imagine; but as the Lord has thrown down that which shall never be built up more, so the Lord has built up that which shall never be thrown down more, and brought many of his people to a settled state, in the unchangeable truth and power.

Secondly, It is the great work of Satan, and the great interest of Satan, to oppose the holy order and government of the Spirit of Christ in his church. It is that power which threw down his kingdom, and that power will keep his kingdom down; yes, the more that authority and power is established in the church, the more he is seen through, and his strength and subtlety avail nothing before the wisdom and power of God revealed in his church. And this we have observed, and may observe, in this our day, the judgment of the church, the life in the church, the light that has staid with the church or holy gathering, while particulars sometimes have been mistaken, and erred about the light in themselves, have been a stay to those that have hearkened to her voice, and a means to help to recover those, who, through the strength of the temptation, and their too confident leaning to that which they took for the light within, and not consulting with those whom God had ordained to be a help to the weak, and had a clearer eyesight and understanding in the truth than themselves, — I say, the light that has staid with the church has been a help to recover such who have mistaken in judgment, and erred from the light in their own particulars.

Thirdly, There is great benefit and safety to every particular in the holy order and government which God has ordained in his church. God knows it is not fit for believers or his gathered ones to be alone, and therefore he has appointed, that by the same power and Spirit which gathered them, they should be added to the church which he has already gathered. And then they are in the place where God takes care of them; where the Lord God appears; where the Lord God dwells. For as he dwelt outwardly in the national church of the Jews, so he dwells inwardly in the spiritual church, and gathering of believers. There life is in its unity and strength; there light shines as in its proper place; there the Shepherd is who keeps the sheep from erring; there the leading power, the preserving power, the ordering power, is daily waited for, and experienced in its brightness and clearness. "Woe is to him that is alone;" but blessings are upon him who is in unity with God's holy gathered people, and is in the sense of, and under the guidance of, that Spirit which is continually present with them. And as we have witnessed blessings in our first gathering, as we were gathered and joined to the light, Spirit, and power of the holy God in our own particulars, so we have witnessed blessings in our unity with the life in the body. Oh, how every motion of life is felt there! How the wisdom and power of God is revealed there! What help is administered to every member there! How the knitting in the life, and the flowing

of the life and holy power from vessel to vessel, is daily experienced there! So that every one is quickened with the pure life; every one seasoned with the pure salt; every virgin anointed with the holy ointment; every one leavened with the leaven which unleavens to sin and Satan, and leavens to God. Indeed, my soul daily blesses the Lord, not only that he has visited me, but brought me into the holy, living society; and that daily the Lord vouchsafes to give me to partake of their life and Spirit, in which life and Spirit I have unity with them, and love them, and honor them, and not out of it. Oh! praises and everlasting honor and renown to the Lord my God, who has remembered me with the favor he bears to his people, and has so visited me with his salvation, that he has given me to see the good of his chosen, and caused my poor, desolate, mourning soul to rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and to glory in him with his inheritance. Glorious things were spoken of the church under the law; a glorious power and presence was with that outward people, under that outward covenant; but this was but a shadow of the glory that was to be revealed in the church of the new covenant, and of the presence and power of the living God, that was to be manifested and dwell there. And indeed it is manifested, indeed it does dwell there, and those that are the begotten and born and preserved by God's Holy Spirit, and power of the immortal Word of life, daily witness it.

Fourthly, The glory and beauty of the New Testament church does, in no small degree, consist in the holy order and government of them, as a spiritual, living body, by the blessed Spirit and power of the Lord.

There were four things wherein the glory of the church of the Jews under the first covenant did much consist.

The first was, in the salvation wherewith God visited them, and which he bestowed upon them. "Happy are you, O Israel: who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and who is the sword of your excellency. And your enemies shall be found liars unto you, and you shall tread upon their high places." Deut. 33:29.

Secondly, In the gifts God bestowed upon them; for God did adorn and beautify that people with the good things which he bestowed upon them. Ezek. 16:14.

Thirdly, In the presence of the Lord their God in the midst of them, the ark of whose presence was with them, and whose dwelling-place was among them, and who was nigh unto them to be inquired of by them, and to answer and supply them with all that they lacked and called upon him for. Deut. 4:7.

Fourthly, In the holy statutes and righteous judgments which God gave them to be ordered and governed by, as his chosen people, ver. 5, 6, 8.

Now, all these are much more fulfilled in the New Testament church; for,

First, There is the salvation witnessed, which this outward salvation of this outward people was but a figure of. There the everlasting arm of God's power is revealed in an inward and spiritual way and manner, to destroy the enemies of a man's own house, to redeem from Satan, to cut Rahab, to wound the dragon inwardly, and to defend his gathered people from the inroads of his strength, and from the subtlety of his temptations.

Secondly, The Lord does give great gifts to his churches; he blesses them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ. Mark the diversity of gifts, and diversity of manifestations, which God gave

to his churches in the apostles' days. 1 Cor. 12:4, etc.

Thirdly, There was God's presence revealed; there Christ was in the midst, whenever they were gathered together in his name. Every church (as well as that of the Ephesians) was built up together a habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. 2:22. Yes, Christ was head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that fills all in all, chap. 1:22-23. Yes, they were and are the temple of the living God, in which God would dwell and walk, and be their God, and they his people. 2 Cor. 6:16.

Fourthly, The holy order of his own Spirit and life God will not fail to reveal unto them, that they may walk in the Spirit of the gospel, in the power of the gospel, in the order of the gospel, and the holy government of God's Spirit and power may shine in the midst of them, and that God may bless them as a habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. Jer. 31:23.

The church is a body; every particular soul that is renewed, quickened, and kept alive, is a member. Now, every member needs the presence and power of that Spirit which quickened it, to nourish, keep alive, and order it. And the church has much more need of the Spirit to be present with it, to guide and order it, and keep it in the holy order, power, and government of life. And this order and holy government in the Spirit and power of the Lord was brought forth in the apostles' days: for the apostles did rejoice in it concerning that church of Colosse, who joyed beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ. Coloss. 2:5. For the apostles and ministers of Christ did set things in order in that day, Tit. 1:5. 1 Cor. 11:34. and it was their joy to see that order observed, and their grief when any were unruly, and would not be subject to the holy order and government of the church. 1 Thess. 5:14. Tit. 1:10. And the church of Corinth, though it fell short in no gift, yet falling short in order, it did not arrive at the glory of some other churches.

The spiritual Solomon, who is full of the wisdom of God, oh, the blessed order and holy government that he brings forth among his church and people! How does God establish Jerusalem, and make her a praise in the earth, but by the holy order and blessed government of his Spirit, governing her as a church, as a spiritual body, by his own pure wisdom, which no other government or order can come near? And truly my heart has been often affected and filled with ravishing joy, when I have beheld the heavenly and blessed order and government which the Lord God of wisdom has already brought forth among us, and guided us in, to the comfort and refreshment of many, and to the injury and hurt of none, neither without nor within. And indeed we do not desire any greatness or authority of man; but only of the Lord our God in the midst of us, that all men may be but his servants and ministers in the church, and to the church, for the good of the church. No, no; this is the day of the Lord, of the setting up and exalting of his power in the church, which the church waits for, and knows the appearance of, and cannot bear the exaltation of man (of man's spirit, wisdom, power, and authority) instead of the Lord's. Yet nothing that comes from the Lord, from his pure life and Spirit in any, must be rejected: and if the Lord please to make use of those whom he did make use of to gather home to himself, — I say, if he has given them gifts, and please to make use of them also in building up, and manifesting the holy order of his Holy Spirit and power, the Lord must not be resisted or withstood therein; but whatever comes from him must be received with thankfulness, through what instrument soever he please to convey it.

Objection. But have I not been taught to be subject to the light in my own heart, and to make that my judge? And is not this another, or new, or different doctrine from that, now to tell me I must subject to

the light of God's Spirit in his church? Suppose that which the church requires, or orders, or holds forth, be different from my light, or be not yet revealed to me by the light wherewith God has enlightened me, must I deny the light wherewith God has enlightened me, and subject to the church's light? Or must I practice as the church orders, before I have light and faith in my own particular?

Answer. I shall answer this question according to the naked and plain sense of truth in my heart.

First, God gives power to his church to perform all that he requires of her as a church. Now, the church is a spiritual body, and is to take care of her members, to look after them that they mind the truth, and walk according to truth, and to admonish and reprove them when they do otherwise. And every member of the church ought to hear the church, in whatever she speaks unto it from God.

Secondly, every member has need of the light, Spirit, and power which God gives his church, and reveals in his church, for the good of the body, and the benefit and advantage of each member therein.

Thirdly, The light, Spirit, and power in the church is never contrary to the light, Spirit, and power in any member; but always one with it, and a cherisher and preserver of what God begets, and which answers his witness in any. The new Jerusalem, the church of God's building in his own Spirit and power, is a city at unity within itself. The greatest degree of light owns, and is at unity with, the least, and the least degree of light has a sense of that which is in degree and measure above it.

Fourthly, The light in the weakest, which they are at first to be turned, and afterwards to be kept to, though there is a sufficiency in it for the particular, yet they are not so understanding and sensible of it as those whose senses have been long exercised in the living truth, and are grown in the holy experience. Therefore as the elders are to be tender of the younger, so the younger are to reverence the elders in the Lord, and not to slight their testimony, experience, or judgment in the truth. When we were first convinced of the truth, were we not in a great degree ignorant and doubtful concerning the risings and motions of it in the heart, which the eye being yet weak, could not clearly distinguish? And oh! how helpful to us was the tender care and advice of such whom God had made acquainted with those things, and were able to give us true judgment from him, in such cases as our weak minds were apt to be entangled about, and could not see through!

Fifthly, Great sobriety is needful in such cases, wherein men are too prone to be judging others, especially the church of God. Every man is to take heed of thinking of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. Rom. 12:3. And the young men (who have not the experience of the aged, and are most apt to confidence and excursions) are in a special manner to be exhorted to be sober-minded. Tit. 2:6. Men may easily judge that others err, and that they themselves keep to the light and measure of truth in their own particulars; but it is hard to do it. But they that indeed do it, abide in the humility, and innocency, and lamb-like spirit, which would give no offense in any thing, neither to Jew nor Gentile, nor to the church of God. If it will go so hard with him that offends one of Christ's little ones, how will it go with him that offends his church, wherein his power and glory rises, and is established? The church is not apt to be such an erring body from the light, Spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, as many (who mistake concerning the light in their own particulars) are too apt to suppose.

Lastly, Ever since the fall of man, man has been secretly, or more manifestly, directed by a light, or the principle within to direct or guide his ways. To Adam the holy seed was promised, which was not only

to appear outwardly in a body of flesh, but also within in man's heart, to bruise the serpent's head there. And the holy patriarchs had not the letter outwardly, but God's Spirit inwardly, to be their guide and teacher, which did also strive with the wicked old world before the flood. The Jews also were directed to the Word nigh in the mouth and heart: and by this Word God showed also to the Gentiles what was good, and what the Lord required of them; and by this Word such of the Gentiles as hearkened to it felt something of the new creation, and of the new nature, by which nature they did in measure answer the holy law of God, and do the things contained in the law, which by the old, corrupt nature no man can do. Also Christ preached the kingdom, or seed of the kingdom within. And the apostles preached the same Word of faith within, which Moses had testified of.

Yet in none of these dispensations was any testimony from God to be despised; but his voice to be heard in the prophets, in Christ, and in the apostles. And though men are blessedly and gloriously turned, and to be turned to the light within, in these our days; yet they are not thereby taught to neglect or despise the voice of God, in any whom he sends and speaks by, and pretend it is contrary to their light; but to lie low before the Lord, that in the true humility and holy fear, they may know the voice of the Shepherd, both in their own hearts, and in whomsoever he pleases to speak. For the great Almighty God is not limited, but he may speak in and through whom he pleases. He may speak to me from the anointing in my own heart, and the holy anointing may please to speak to me through others; and so far as I am of God, and sensible of his appearance, I cannot despise the voice of the anointing in my own heart, or through others. Yes, truth teaches that modesty, temperance, humility, tenderness, and sobriety, that I dare not despise the voice that pretends to the anointing in any, until I have made trial of it. Yes, John Pennymen's voice and testimony I durst not condemn, until the Lord my God, in the unerring light and pure springing life, manifested unto me that it was not of him, but of the transforming enemy, who had bewitched and deceived him by his strong delusions (he forsaking the rock, which would have been his strength), to receive and believe a lie instead of the truth.

Oh, blessed be the Lord for the building up such a church, and speaking to us through his church! And happy are they that hear her voice, and so keep to their own, as to know the voice of their own in the church, and are not through temptation prejudiced against it. For it is the Lord's gathering, and the Lord is with it; and the people who have been gathered by the Lord, and are daily taught by him, keep with him. And though some may depart from us, and, through error of judgment, testify against us, yet truth abides, and the Lord's people abide with the truth, and his building goes on, and the holy government of his Son increases in it, and the Lord appears more and more inwardly in his glory, as the hearts of his people are made capable to receive it from him. And in all the goings out of any, and apostasies that have been in any, through hearkening to a wrong spirit, they that have heard and revered the voice and testimony of the church, and God's chosen and blessed ministry, which he has raised among us, have still been preserved; and they that have gone therefrom been betrayed. And it is my faith, this church of God's gathering shall still be preserved, and grow in the holy dominion and authority of God's blessed Spirit; and that all her enemies shall be found liars unto her, and she shall tread upon their high places, and shall grow and prosper the more by all opposition; the everlasting arm and wisdom of the Almighty being with her, to preserve, prosper, and bless her, so be it. Amen.

THE SEED OF GOD AND OF HIS KINGDOM

TREATED AND TESTIFIED OF

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES OF TRUTH

AND ACCORDING TO

TRUE EXPERIENCE FELT IN THE HEART

FROM THE GOD OF TRUTH

BY ISAAC PENINGTON

**"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs,"
etc. Matt. 13:31-32.**

**"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which lives
and abides forever." 1 Pet. 1:23.**

**"Whosoever is born of God, does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin,
because he is born of God." 1 John 3:9.**

PREFACE

I WOULD eagerly have (and my soul exceedingly breathes to the Lord for it) disputing about religion come to an end, and the right understanding, practicing, and experiencing the true religion begun and go on in men's hearts. The gospel religion, in the apostles' days, did begin in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit inwardly; and it cannot rightly begin any otherwise now. Nor can it rightly go on any other way, but according to its beginning: for they that begin in the Spirit, cannot possibly rightly go on, or be made perfect, by the flesh. Did the apostles in vain wait for the Spirit and power from on high? Can the gospel ministry, or gospel work in any heart, be carried on without it? Or did they in vain turn men from Satan's power to God? Can the least true change be wrought in the heart, without the operation of God's Holy Spirit and power there? And to be turned to wait for, and taught to know, the risings of the pure power of the Lord inwardly (which is so necessary to begin, preserve, and carry on the work), oh, what a precious ministration of life, and of the gospel, is this from the Lord! The thing that we lacked, and mourned after all our days, in our several strains and ways of profession, without the knowledge of this, is now met with; blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who cast up and prepared the way (according to his promise) before the face of all people. Whoever has an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the churches of his own gathering, or from the angel of his

own sending, may now hear the blessed tidings of the reign of the King of Israel, and of Zion his holy hill, and Jerusalem his holy city; and how to wait for the law going out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and how he may receive the sheep's nature, and the sheep's ear, which hears the voice of the Shepherd, and is not deceived about it. Oh, come out of the vain, disputing mind, and you come out of deceit! Come into the true silence and stilling of the fleshly part there, where God's voice is heard and understood; and you come into true certainty. There you come to hear the voice behind you, calling you from every false way (which is polluted, and where your soul's rest is not), and directing you to the true way, to the way of holiness, livingly pointing out and saying to you, "This is the way, walk in it." This is the way of life, this is the way of truth, this is the way of peace, this is the way of holiness, here all the true travelers are to walk, with their faces Zion-ward, to obtain the kingdom and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, O every one that truly thirsts! why do you not come to the waters? God has opened the way, he heartily invites you; yes, "the Spirit and the bride say come, and take the waters of life freely." Oh! wait to know the inward, holy power, and the inward birth, and the inward teaching, and the inward covenant, and this birth's overcoming, by the inward power, the inward enemies; that you being delivered from them, may come to enjoy the well of life, and to sit down in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, where the true rest is; and in the strength, life, and virtue of his Spirit, may serve the Lord in righteousness and holiness, without fear of those enemies which the Lord has delivered you from, and which his love, mercy, and power is as a wing over you to preserve you forever from; I say, that you may serve the Lord your God out of the fear of these, and feed on his holy mountain, out of the reach of those, in the majesty of the name of the Lord your God, and these may not be able to make you afraid, or disturb your rest, or hinder your sweet enjoyment and precious service of your God any more! O you that are afraid of being deceived! take heed that you be not deceived inwardly in your hearts, about these things; and, by the veil which the enemy spreads there, hindered and deprived of your share in the blessed administration of the Spirit, life, and power of our Lord Jesus; whom to know after the flesh (or as man can comprehend concerning him in his carnal mind) is of little value; but to know him inwardly and spiritually, to live and reign, and to exercise his dominion in the heart over every temptation, and over all that is contrary to God (whenever any such thing appears) is a pure, living, excellent, and satisfactory knowledge of him; which the Lord lead every truly hungering and thirsting soul towards the obtaining and full enjoyment of! Amen.

CONCERNING THE SEED OF GOD

OR THE SEED OF THE KINGDOM

What it is: Where it is to be found: Who sowed it there: What is hid or wrapped up in it: What is its Nature: What its Effects: Of its Growth, and Hindrances thereof; Of its Blessedness, and how it makes Blessed: How Christ is formed of this Seed; and how the Soul is born of this Immortal Seed.

First, WHAT is the seed?

Answer. The seed of God is the word of God; the seed of the kingdom is the word of the kingdom. It is a

measure of the light and life, of the grace and truth, which is by Jesus Christ, whereof in him is the fulness. It is a heavenly talent, or manifestation of his Spirit in the heart, which is given to man for him, in the virtue and strength of Christ, to improve for God. This which God has placed in man, to witness for himself, and to guide man from evil unto good (in the pure breathings, quickenings, and shinings of it), this is the seed, which is freely bestowed on man, to spring up and remain in him, and to gather him out of himself, into itself.

Secondly, Who is the sower of this seed?

Answer. God, in and through Christ. He is the good husbandman. He, by the word which created all in the beginning, creates anew in Christ Jesus, renews his workmanship in man, and puts a measure of this word or Spirit of life in man's heart, whereby he renews him; and they that are thus renewed by him, are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Thirdly, Where is this seed to be found?

Answer. Where God sows it, which is in the inward earth. It is an inward seed, and it is sowed in inward land or earth; that is, in the hearts of men. There the light of the word shines, there the life of the word is felt, stirring secretly in and quickening those that were dead in trespasses and sins. There the voice and call of the word is heard, calling from unrighteousness and sin, to righteousness and holiness.

Fourthly, In what sorts of earth is this heavenly seed sown?

Answer. In all sorts; in thorny ground, stony ground, highway ground, and good ground. God's inward lightnings enlighten the inward world throughout; so that God has not left any man without a witness in his conscience against sin. So that, though man's conscience be corrupt, and his light become darkness, yet God's witness in his conscience can never be corrupted; but whenever it shines in the heart, it gives true light there; and whenever it witnesses there, it witnesses the truth for God, and against man, and the corruption and searedness of his heart and conscience.

Fifthly, In what sort of earth it brings forth good fruit to perfection.

Answer. Only in the good ground. It brings forth fruit in other grounds, and the fruit it brings forth is good. The convictions are good, the desires begotten there by it, and that arise from it, are good. The leaving off of some bad things, and doing some good things, is good; but the thorns, the cares, the worldliness, the fear of persecution, that spring up from another root, and are of another nature, choke the good which the seed brings forth in the thorny ground, and stifle and choke the seed itself also, in such kind of grounds. But in the good ground which yields its whole nourishment to the good seed, and will not yield nourishment to any bad; the good seed not only springs up, but brings forth fruit to perfection.

Sixthly, How may the ground that is bad be made good? Was not the ground which is now good, once bad; and may not the ground which is now bad, be made good?

Answer. God has shut up all men in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. The heart that is now soft, was once hard. The heart that is now believing, was once in the unbelief. The heart that now loves God, was once in the enmity. The plow of God, put into the thorny ground, tearing it up, and rooting

out the thorns thereof, will change its nature, and make it become better.

"Break up your fallow ground: sow not among thorns;" said God to his Israel of old. And the stony ground, if the stones be picked out of it, will be less stony; yes, not at all stony if all the stones be picked out. And the highway ground, being inclosed, and dressed by God's Spirit and power, will be no longer common or highway ground. Does not man, by care, are, and industry, change the nature of outward land or ground? Surely then the Lord by the word of his power, by his inward destroying of evil, and creating good anew, can change the nature of ground inwardly.

Now, for the clearer and plainer signifying of what yet remains on my heart, concerning this precious seed of life, or seed of the kingdom of God; I shall distribute it under these three heads: under which the things mentioned in the foregoing title will be comprised.

I. What is hid or wrapped up in this seed.

II. The nature of it.

III. The effects of it.

I. What is hid or wrapped up in this precious, heavenly Seed

Answer. INDEED there is so much wrapped up in it, as the heart of man cannot conceive, much less the tongue utter; yet something have I felt, and something is upon my heart, to say in answer to this thing, under these four heads following: —

First, The glory of the kingdom of heaven, the glory of the everlasting kingdom, is hid and wrapped up in it as in a seed. Whatever Christ appears, reigns, and shines in, is there as in a seed. Oh, the shootings forth, and spreadings abroad of it, are indeed glorious and excellent! How can a man almost speak concerning it! the thing itself (being inwardly felt, known, and enjoyed) is so far beyond all words! What does the kingdom of God stand in? It stands not in word, but in power. The power is hid and wrapped up in this seed. The pure power of life is in this seed. The sword that pierces Leviathan, that wounds the serpent's head, that cuts Rahab and the dragon, is in this seed. Does the kingdom of God consist in righteousness, peace, and joy in God's Spirit? This is all in this seed, and is partaken of and enjoyed, as this seed springs up, and gains authority and dominion in the heart. Yes, the horn of God's anointed, the righteous and peaceable scepter of the Savior is known and exalted in this seed, as it springs up, and spreads abroad in the life and virtue of the Father.

Secondly, The divine nature of God Almighty is hid and wrapped up in it. It is the seed of God, and it is the very nature of God; and he in whom it springs, and who is gathered into it, born of it, and one with it, partakes of the divine nature. Peter speaks of the great and precious promises, whereby the saints are made partakers of the divine nature. All the promises are to the seed of promise, to Christ the Son of God, to the seed of God, to the heirs of life and salvation in Christ; and they are all fulfilled to them, and enjoyed by them, who are ingrafted into, and one with Christ, the seed; which cannot be, but by the grace, by the truth, by the light, life, Spirit, and power, which he sows in the heart; which are not many things, but all contained and comprehended in the one seed.

Thirdly, All the graces and virtues of God's holy Spirit are hid and wrapped up in this one seed. There is nothing God can require of the soul, nor nothing the soul can desire of God, but is hid and wrapped up in this seed, so that all that is needful, or all that can be desired, is the growing and spreading of this seed in the soul, and the soul's gathering into it, and its living, dwelling, abiding, and acting in it. And oh! the great difference between the soul's selfish striving and willing and running, to join to God and Christ, and to live in God and Christ; and God's joining it to himself and his Son in this seed, and its living, willing, and acting in the springing life of this seed! To make this a little more plain and evident to the hearts of those that desire the true understanding of this thing, I shall instance in some particulars.

First, The pure, living, heavenly knowledge of the Father, and of his Son, Christ Jesus, is wrapped up in this seed. God is light; and this seed, which comes from him, is not darkness, but light; and in the springing light of this seed, God and Christ are revealed. The divine nature of them springs up in the seed (and if I know their nature, I know them); yes, here we, whom the Lord has visited, and shown mercy to, though men despise us, know the righteous Spirit of Christ, the righteous nature of Christ, the righteous life of Christ, and feel him to be one with the Father, who begets of the same Spirit, nature, and life in us. And he that is born of the Spirit is Spirit; and he that is united to the Lord is one Spirit; and he that is united to the seed, to the measure of grace and truth from Christ (wherein and whereby the soul is united), is united to God, and ingrafted into Christ; and as the seed is formed in him, Christ is formed in him; and as he is formed and new-created in the seed, he is the workmanship of God, formed and new-created in Christ.

Secondly, Faith, the true faith, the lively, effectual, saving, conquering faith, which gives victory over the world, and over the devil and his temptations, is contained or wrapped up in this seed. Faith is the gift of God, the precious gift of God; which is not found in man's nature, but springs and grows from the precious seed of the kingdom, which God sows in man's heart. So that it is a gift to be waited for, and obtained from God. Therefore the apostle Peter, writing to the saints in his time, directs his epistle thus: — "To them who have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. 1:1. Faith is a precious thing, a righteous thing, a holy thing, which God is the giver of, which Christ is the author and finisher of; and it springs from the holy root, from the holy seed of life and righteousness which God sows in the heart. This faith (I speak not of man's ability of believing, or the faith which is found in man's nature) is the faith of God's elect. Tit. 1:1. The faith which God gives to them that are born of him, John 1:12-13. who are born of the seed incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever, 1 Pet. 1:23. which Word being nigh in the mouth and heart, and begetting, preserving, and increasing faith there (as is daily experienced plentifully, blessed be the Lord), is therefore called the word of faith. Rom. 10:8.

Thirdly, The pure fear, the holy fear, the heavenly fear, which is of a clean and heavenly nature, and endures forever, is also in this seed. The child-like fear is in the nature of the child; and the more it grows in the true child-like nature, the more it grows in this kindly fear, wherein there is no torment, but the pure pleasure of life, and of holy obedience to the Father of life. The child-like fear is a promise of the new covenant; and given to the children of the new covenant, by virtue of the new covenant; God putting it into their hearts from the seed of life springing up in them, which preserves them from departing from the Lord. Jer. 32:40.

Fourthly, The pure divine love is in it. As this springs, love to God springs. As God is love, so the seed

that is of him partakes of his love. There is no enmity in it, and no enmity or ill-will springs from it. This is it that makes it so natural to the children of God to love; because they are born of that seed which came from the God of love, whose nature is love. Oh, how daily is it found, by sweet and certain experience, that this seed (springing up) teaches and enables to love! And they that have this seed springing up in them need not to be writ to, or outwardly taught to love with the brotherly love; for in it, and by it, and through it, they are taught of God to love one another. So that there needs nothing but the circumcising of the heart, the purifying of the heart, through the obedience of the truth, the cutting off of that fleshly mind, nature, will, and wisdom, which cannot love aright; and the pure love will spring up fully towards the Lord, and towards the brethren, Deut. 30:6. 1 Pet. 1:22. yes, it will be natural to love all; and that command of Christ will not be grievous; namely, to love enemies, even the greatest revilers, cursers, and persecutors. Mat. 5:44.

Fifthly, The pure hope, the hope of the upright, the hope which makes not ashamed, the hope which goes within the veil, and is a sure and steadfast anchor there, staying the mind upon the Lord, who keeps such in perfect peace; this hope is contained in and springs from the seed. For nothing but that which comes from God (from the holy seed of truth and righteousness) can stay the mind upon God. So that he that feels the seed feels the hope, and keeping to the seed (to the holy root) to the end, the hope remains to the end. So the mind being turned to the light, being turned from Satan's power to God, being turned to Christ, being turned to the appearance and voice of the word of life within, being turned from the seed of wickedness and darkness, to the holy and righteous seed of the kingdom, it is turned to the hope, it is turned to that which begets a true and right hope in the heart; which hopes in God's love, hopes in God's mercy, hopes in God's kind, tender, and faithful nature; and has no confidence nor hope in the flesh, but in the holy and heavenly seed, and work of righteousness and of the kingdom; which is God's battle-axe and weapon of war, whereby he brings down the flesh. This hope stays the mind in every temptation, in every distress, in every trial, in all the winds, storms, and waves of persecution that it can be assaulted with. For in this seed the root of Jesse is felt, the everlasting rock and foundation of life is felt; and here the hope of God fills his, that are gathered here, and abide here, with all joy and peace in believing, that they may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Rom. 15:12-13.

Sixthly, The true patience, which obtains the crown, which makes perfect and entire; so that there is nothing lacking, where it has its perfect work; Jam. 1:4, the patience which enables quietly to suffer any chastisement from God, or any affliction, or hard dealing from men, it is contained in and given with this seed. As God is patient and long-suffering, so this seed is also. It is man that is of the brittle, fretful, impatient nature; but he that receives the word of faith, the seed of faith, in it he receives faith and patience also: so that to him it is not only given to believe, but to suffer also for the sake of Christ; and he that abides in the seed, and feels the seed remaining in him, and its nature prevailing, can never be impatient, whatsoever the Lord allows to befall him.

Seventhly, The Lamb's meekness is in it. Where should the Lamb's meekness be found, but in his Father's seed, or in the seed of his Father's kingdom? Here the meek and quiet Spirit is received, witnessed, and enjoyed, which in the sight of God is of much price. This seed is sowed or begotten in the womb of the heavenly wisdom; and the meekness of wisdom, the true meekness of the true wisdom, is found in it. Here the still, soft, gentle, lamb-like nature grows up, wherein there is none of Esau's roughness.

Eighthly, Here poverty of Spirit, true poverty of Spirit, is witnessed. He is poor indeed, who has sold all, and has nothing left him but this seed, and the appearance and help of God in this seed; which is not in his own hands neither, but in the will and disposal of God.

Ninthly, Here mercifulness towards others is experienced; for he that is brought here lives only by mercy; and he that lives by mercy, and is daily what he is by mercy, cannot but be merciful unto others.

Tenthly, Here the true mourning and lamenting after the Lord, and his precious life and presence, and because of the presence or power of that which hinders the growth of the seed, and the soul's union with, and enjoyment of, the Lord in it, is witnessed. For the true mourning, to which the blessedness belongs, is of God, from the living sense that arises from his pure seed in the heart; and blessed indeed are they that thus mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Eleventhly, The true hungering and thirsting after righteousness arises from this seed. It is the seed of God, the birth of God, that which has the sense of the excellency of his righteousness, that hungers and thirsts after his righteousness.

Twelfthly, The true sobriety, moderation, and temperance arises from this seed; and they that are joined to the seed, and are and act in the seed, easily learn such sobriety, moderation, and temperance, as they that are out of it cannot possibly learn.

Lastly, To name no more, the cross which mortifies and crucifies to the world and to sin, can only be taken up in the seed, or by virtue of the seed. Indeed the seed is a cross; yes, enmity to the serpent's nature, spirit, and course; and he that takes it up, its will, its nature, its law of life, takes up the cross to the other nature, will, and the law of sin and death. So that fly the holy seed, and you have only a shadow or appearance of the cross; but in a sense of and subjection to the seed, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is felt, working powerfully against sin, and the whole course of the evil and sinful nature, effectually crucifying and subduing it.

Fourthly, The fourth thing which is hid or wrapped up in the precious seed, which is the last that remains to be mentioned by me at this time, is this; The new covenant, which God makes with the new Israel, by which he makes the heart new, and writes his law in it, and takes away the stony heart, and heals all their backslidings, and loves them freely, and puts his Spirit within them, causing them to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and judgments, and do them; even the holy agreement of the soul with God in Christ Jesus, is in this seed.

God gave Christ for a covenant, and the seed of grace and truth comes by Jesus Christ; which is of his nature, of him the covenant; and all that receive this grace and truth from him, this holy seed of the kingdom, they receive the covenant; and they that walk in it, walk in the covenant.

Here, and here alone, the new creation in Christ Jesus is known.

Here, and here alone, the coming to God by Christ is truly understood and witnessed.

Here, and here alone, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is writ in the heart.

Keep here, you never go out of the holy agreement with God and with Christ; for in this grace and truth, in this seed of life, there is nothing that disagrees with them. Here you live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and do not, can not, fulfill the lusts of the flesh. There is nothing here that will either

displease God, or lead your soul aside from him; but here the Lord guides the feet of his saints, and teaches all of them (from the least babe of them, to the highest growth), and puts his law of life and new obedience, and his holy Spirit, into their hearts, that none of their steps may slide. Here the way of holiness, wherein God preserves his from erring, Isa. 35:8. is known and walked in. Yes, here Christ is known and felt to be the way, the truth, and the life. The sheep that are gathered here, and come here, are returned to the Bishop and Shepherd of their souls, who watches over them, and powerfully preserves them, that they run astray no more. For where should they go, or whom should they hear, when they have found him, and know his voice, with whom are the words of eternal life?

I shall conclude this head with that precious scripture, 1 Cor. 1:30. "But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." How are we of God in Christ Jesus, but by this seed of God, by being born of the Spirit of God, by being begotten out of the spirit of the world, into the nature and Spirit of Christ, from this immortal and incorruptible seed of life, truth, grace, and Spirit? And how do we put on Christ, but by putting on this seed? And how do we grow up in Christ, but by the growing up in this seed, and feeling this seed grow up in us? And here, in truth and demonstration of God's Spirit, we are formed in Christ, and Christ formed in us, as this seed grows up into a form and shape in us, and we into a form and shape in it. Now, we cannot receive this seed, but as we part with and deny our own wisdom and fleshly confidence; and denying that, and crying to God for wisdom, God brings up the wisdom of the seed in us, and makes Christ become unto us wisdom therein. And we cannot hunger after the true righteousness, the heavenly righteousness, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, but as we see the loathsomeness of, and put off, our own righteousness; and then becoming naked, we are taught of God to buy white raiment of him, which is the righteousness of the saints, and so he becomes our righteousness, made so of God to us.

And he is the purger and cleanser of sin and unholiness out of our hearts and lives, and the holy leavener and sanctifier of our hearts; so that we have nothing of holiness, but what we have of him and in him. And he is our redemption; our redemption is by him and through him, our redemption is wrought and preserved by him, and enjoyed in him; yes, he is made of God unto us redemption. So that having him, we have redemption through his blood; yes, he is our redeemer and redemption for evermore. Alas, what is it to get notions of these things into the outward comprehension! but to feel them livingly in the heart, is life and peace for evermore; and the knowledge of this seed of the kingdom, and of God and Christ in this seed, is the most precious knowledge that can be desired, obtained, or enjoyed.

II. The Nature of this Seed

WHAT is the nature of the seed of God, or the seed of the kingdom?

Answer. Though the nature of it has been largely signified already, under the foregoing head (for the mentioning of what is wrapped up in it, abundantly shows its nature), yet I shall speak a little more punctually and expressly of it in several particulars, according to the Scriptures, that the reader may have the more distinct sense and inward apprehension of it, the Lord opening his heart in reading these things.

First, It is of an immortal, incorruptible nature. 1 Pet. 1:23. It is a seed that can never die in itself, though it may be as it were dead in man, or unto man, not putting forth any of its hidden life or virtue in the man that has slain it as to himself; who having slain that whereby God gives life, is dead in trespasses and in sins, and cannot live any more, till God breathe upon and quicken this seed in him, and him by this seed. This is a great mystery. Doubtless the seed of life and godliness, wherein the life and godliness of the soul lies hid, must needs be a great mystery, and cannot be known but as God reveals it.

Secondly, It is of a gathering nature. It is of the nature of a net. Mat. 13:47. It gathers out of that which is contrary to God, unto God. It gathers out of the world, out of the sea of wickedness, out of the kingdom of darkness, out of a man's own nature and spirit, into God's nature and Spirit, and his light and kingdom, wherein the soul should dwell, and walk, and be subject, with God.

Thirdly, It is of a purging, cleansing nature. It is of the nature of fire, of the nature of water, inwardly and spiritually. This seed is Spirit and life in a measure; and by it, or by God's Spirit which dwells and is revealed in it, he washes and purges away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof. There is strength in this seed, and virtue in this seed, against all the strength of deceit and wickedness in the other seed; and as it springs up, and is received and joined to in the holy fear of the Lord, it prevails over it, and casts away its darkness, and purges away and burns up its filth, chaff, and corruption.

Fourthly, It is of a seasoning, leavening, sanctifying nature. It is like salt, it is like leaven. It seasons and leavens with life. It seasons and leavens with righteousness. It seasons and leavens with the image of God. So soon as ever it springs in the heart, it begins to leaven it; and if it be not snibbed, or grieved, or hurt, or quenched (for it is of a most sensible, tender nature), it will go on leavening more and more with the nature of truth, into the likeness of the God of truth. Mark 9:50. Luke 13:21. Col. 4:6.

Fifthly, It is of an enriching nature. It is a hidden treasure or pearl of great price. It makes the wise merchant very rich, who sells all for it, and buys the field and it. He that buys the truth, and will by no means sell or part with it, but gives up to it and makes it his treasure, oh, how does it enrich his heart with that which is holy and heavenly! How rich does it make him towards God! Mat. 13:44-46.

Sixthly, It is of an improving, growing nature, of a nature that will grow and may be improved. The one talent may be increased into more. The little seed, like a grain of mustard-seed, will grow in the good ground beyond all herbs, and become a tree, a tree of righteousness of the Lord's planting, that he may be glorified. Mat. 13:31,32. chap. 25:16. chap. 13:23.

III. Of the Effects

WHAT are the effects of this seed?

Answer. The effects of the pure seed in the heart are very many, very great, very sweet, precious, and blessed, which every one comes to experience, that experiences the growth and spreading of it. I shall instance only in some few, to give a taste thereof.

The first I shall mention is, union and communion with God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of this seed, and of all that are united to it. Union and communion with God is still in this seed, and never out of it. For as in the seed of the serpent, a man is separated from God, alienated from his life, and can never come near him, nor have fellowship with him; so in the holy seed, in the seed of life, in the seed of righteousness, in the seed of faith, the soul is united to God, has access to him, the living fountain, and has fellowship with him in that which is living and holy of him. Men may imagine a union and communion with God out of this, but none can truly unite to God, or have fellowship with him, but in the gift, in the grace, in the light, in the Spirit which is of God.

Secondly, This seed felt springing up in the heart, and joined to, brings down and keeps down all that is contrary to God. This honor and power God has given to the seed of the woman (even to the least measure of it), that it should bruise the serpent's head, and free the soul from captivity and slavery to the wicked one. So that the soul, in the living sense, authority, and virtue of this, may refuse yielding its members, its faculties, its will, its mind, its understanding, its affections, to sin and unrighteousness. Yes, the devil, the great red dragon, the god of the world, the mighty spirit and power of darkness, being resisted in this, is still overcome. When any resist the devil in their own strength (in the strength of their own desires, abilities, and resolutions), he still overcomes them; but they that resist the devil in the faith that springs from this seed, still overcome him. So that sin is brought down, and temptation kept out of, by the virtue and power of the life and authority of the Savior, that springs up in this seed of God, which the soul that is joined to it (leavened with, and transplanted into) partakes of.

Thirdly, As it springs, and its operations are felt and received, it brings into the image and nature of God. It blots out the devil's image in the mind, and makes like God and like Christ. Yes, here we have the very mind of Christ, and are one with the mind of Christ. As in the serpent's seed, the serpent's image and nature is put on; so in this seed, the image of God and Christ is put on. Yes, the serpent, the dark spirit, the wicked spirit, the deceitful spirit, is here put off, and Christ is put on; and whoever would know the real putting off the old man, and the putting on of the new man, which is created in the righteousness and holiness of truth, must know it in this seed. Here the truth is known as it is in Jesus, in its effectual power and virtue, putting off the old image and nature, and putting on the new, even the heavenly, divine image and nature.

Fourthly, It brings the mind, the heart, the soul, the spirit, into the new obedience (into its own obedient nature), even to do the will of God with great delight and pleasure. I delight to do your will, said Christ. This seed is of his nature. It is a measure, a proportion, a heavenly talent of his grace and truth; a gift of light and life from him, the fulness, given to make willing (like him) to do the Father's will, and it really does so, insomuch as the soul, that is thoroughly leavened and one with it, can also say, I likewise delight to do your will, O God! it is become my meat and drink; for I am nourished, refreshed, and delighted with the virtue that I feel spring in me, in doing your will. Indeed it is not so at first, while there is a nature, a will, a wisdom contrary to the nature, will, and wisdom of God; obedience is then hard, the cross is then a sore yoke upon my neck. But that nature being subdued, and the nature of the seed coming up and prevailing, what can be more delightful to this new nature, than to do the will of its heavenly Father, and to find the heart of the Father pleased with the child, which it always is, while the child is in tenderness of spirit, in the holy faith, and in the holy obedience to him!

Fifthly, It brings into the understanding, sense, and enjoyment of all the precious promises, and to the

partaking of all the spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus our Lord. All the promises are to the seed and yes and amen in Christ; and the least measure of his life has a share therein. The seed, the everlasting seed, is the heir; and we joined to the seed, born of the seed, growing up in the seed, are joint-heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. So that every promise comes to be understood here, tasted of here, enjoyed here. How full are the Scriptures of sweet and precious promises! Alas! what is it for men to apply them to themselves, when they have no right to them, nor indeed rightly understand them, nor were they intended by the Lord to their present states and conditions! But to come to the true understanding of the promises, to be led by the Lord into that condition, and preserved by him in that condition, to which the promises belong, and to have him bring home the promises to the heart, and drop in the sweet, healing, delighting, refreshing virtue of them; oh, how sweet, comforting, and gladding is this! Indeed, in this seed all the curses of the book pass away, and all the blessings flow in, and multiply on the soul day by day. So that this may well be called the blessed seed; for in it the soul is blessed, and filled with blessings by him who is able to multiply them upon the soul, and to guide the soul in the safe and right use and enjoyment of them.

But what need I mention any more? Here is light, here is life, here is righteousness, here is peace, here is heavenly joy, here is the holy power, springing and bringing forth their fruits, and precious operations and effects in the heart; and here is assurance of the love of God in Christ forever, and that God will never leave nor forsake that soul which is joined to him, and abides with him in this seed; but it shall be kept by the power of God, through the faith that springs from this seed, unto perfect redemption and salvation. Amen.

SOME QUERIES CONCERNING GOD'S KINGDOM

WHEREBY THE SEED THEREOF MAY BE THE BETTER ILLUSTRATED AND UNDERSTOOD

Query 1. WHAT is the kingdom of God, which Christ said he must preach to other cities also? For therefore was he sent. Luke 4:43.

Query 2. What is the kingdom of heaven, which first John, the fore-runner, and then Jesus himself, when he began to preach, bid men repent, because it was at hand? Mat. 3:2. and chap. 4:17. What would repentance advantage men? Would it fit men for entrance thereinto? Did those that truly repented and believed, come out of the kingdom of darkness and Satan, and enter into the kingdom of the dear Son? 2 Pet. 1:10-11.

Query 3. What is the kingdom of God, and the righteousness of God, which Christ (the everlasting, wise, and holy counsellor) advises men first to seek? Mat. 6:33. Where is this kingdom to be found? Where is this righteousness to be found? What is it hid and wrapped up in? Can it be found in any thing but what it is hid by God and wrapped up in?

Query 4. What kind of poverty of spirit is it, and who are those poor in spirit, to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs? Mat. 5:3.

Query 5. How may men know when the kingdom of God is come unto them? Is it not then manifest, when the stronger than the strong man, not only knocks at the door of the heart, but casts out Satan from there, and makes spoil of his goods? Mat. 12:28-29.

Query 6. Who are they that shall enter into the kingdom of God? Are they not they who are born of water and of the Spirit? John 3:5. Of what water? And how must they be born of the Spirit? Were not this worth the knowing? And they that become as little children; simple, innocent (not wise or knowing after the flesh), that know the breast that is natural and proper for them, and thirst after and drink in the sincere milk of the word of life, from the breast of the heavenly wisdom? Luke 18:17. 1 Pet. 2:2.

Query 7. Who shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven? Shall not all they be excluded who lack the wedding garment, who lack the true righteousness? Mat. 5:20.

Query 8. What are the glad tidings of the kingdom of God? Is it not that the kingdom of God is come, and that his reign is set up, and setting up therein? Luke 8:1. Isa. 52:7.

Query 9. Who are they, before whom publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of God? Mat. 21:31. Who were they in that age? And who are they in this age? Oh that men had hearts rightly to consider and understand!

Query 10. Who are they that the kingdom of God shall be taken from, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof? Are they not the wrong builders in every age, and such as are taught by the wrong builders, to reject the living stone? ver. 42-43.

Query 11. Who are the children of the kingdom that shall be cast out into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth? Mat. 8:12.

Query 12. Who are those God reveals the mysteries of the kingdom to in every age? (Are they not his begotten ones, his babes in the Spirit?) And who are those that he hides the mystery of the kingdom of life and salvation, and the way thereof, from in every age? (Are they not the wise and prudent in their own apprehensions of the letter, without the Spirit?) Mat. 13:11. and chap. 11:15.

Query 13. Who are those that are nigh the kingdom of God? Are they not those who know that love is the fulfilling of the law, and that the substance is beyond shadows? Mark 12:33-34.

Query 14. Who are those that shut up the kingdom of heaven against men? Are they not those who take upon them to expound the letter to men, and do not turn men to the Spirit, but quench it both in themselves and others? Mat. 23:13. Luke 11:52. Isa. 22:22.

Query 15. What kingdom is that, wherein he that is least is greater than the greatest prophet? wherein he that is feeble shall be as David, and the house of David as God, as the angel of the Lord before the inhabitants of Jerusalem? Mat. 11:11. Zac. 12:8.

Query 16. Who were they in the apostles' age (and are there any such in this age?) who shall not taste of death outwardly, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power inwardly? Mark 9:1.

Query 17. What kind of looking back is that, which makes a man unfit for the kingdom of God? Is it not a looking back from the plow, and not forward to the plow? And what plow is it a man must put his

hand to, and not look back, that he may be fit for the kingdom of God? Luke 9:62.

Query 18. What hand, what foot, what eye, is it, which a man may enter into the kingdom of God with? And what hand, what foot, what eye, is it, which a man cannot enter into the kingdom of God withal? Mark 9:47.

Query 19. What is it to eat bread in the kingdom of God? Is not there the feast of fat things, and of wines well refined, made to the soul; and does it not there sup with Christ, and Christ with it? And is not the wine of the kingdom there drunk new and fresh with Christ? Luke 14:15. Isa. 25:6. Rev. 3:20. Mark 14:25. Luke 22:16,18. Shall not the mountains there drop down new wine, and the hills flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah flow with water? And shall not a fountain come forth out of the house of the Lord, and water the valley of Shittim? Joel 3:18.

Query 20. How may one become as a little child, that he may receive the kingdom? Must not that man be born anew? Must he not be unborn after the flesh, and born after the Spirit? (And not only so, but he must receive and enter into and abide in the kingdom, in that child-like simplicity and innocent wisdom, whereof he is born.) Luke 18:17, John 3:3.

Query 21. What is that flesh and blood which cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and that corruption which cannot put on incorruption? 1 Cor. 15:50. (Let him that reads understand the thing, both in the letter and in the Spirit.)

Query 22. Who are the unrighteous, that shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Are they not both the manifestly unrighteous, and also the secretly unrighteous; who, though they may preach faith in Christ, and the righteousness of Christ, and may think themselves believers in him, and clothed with his righteousness, yet have not received power to become the sons of God, nor through the Spirit have mortified the deeds of the body; but at last, notwithstanding all their profession and pretense to Christ's righteousness (out of the faith that works by love, and out of the fine linen, in their own filthy rags), are found by him workers of iniquity. 1 Cor. 6:9. Luke 13:26. Rom. 8:13. 1 John 3:7.

Query 23. Shall any enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they that do the will of Christ's Father which is in heaven? Is it enough to pray, Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven? Is it not necessary also to receive that power which makes willing, and that nature and Spirit whose delight it is to do the will of the Father? Mat. 7:21.

Query 24. Who shall be counted worthy of the kingdom of God? Shall not they who suffer for it in the holy faith and patience, and so are willing through the much tribulation (whether outward or inward, or both) to enter into it? 2 Thess. 1:4-5, Acts 14:22.

Query 25. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven? Who has need of them, and whom are they given unto? Were they given only to the apostles? Or only to the ministers of the church? Are they not given to every one that has need of them, to whom God gives understanding to open the mysteries of the kingdom with them? Mat. 16:19. The lawyers were blamed for taking away the key of knowledge. Luke 11:52. Then they from whom they took it should have had it, that they might have entered into the kingdom of heaven by it, and not have been hindered from entering for lack of it: and they taking it away from others lost it themselves; for when Christ came and preached the kingdom, they could not see to enter into it, but were blind and opposed it. Mat. 23:13. And now, under the gospel, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (he is not the Father's child, who has not the Father's

Spirit to lead him. Rom. 8:4); and he that has the Spirit of Christ, has he not the key of knowledge"? 1 Cor. 2:10-11.

Query 26. What is the joyful sound, which they that know are blessed? Is it not the testimony of the kingdom? Is it not the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom? which they that repent, and become little children, being begotten and born of the Spirit, believing in the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, enter into, and walk in, the light of God's countenance there. Psa. 89:15. Gal. 4:15.

Query 27. Which is the joyful sound of the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, after the ages of the great apostasy from the spirit and power of the apostles? Is it not this, "fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship the Great Creator in spirit and in truth"? He that hears this sound, in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit, does he not hear the gospel? He that indeed knows this sound, does he not know the joyful gospel sound? And he that believes and obeys it, does he not believe and obey the gospel, even as God has appointed it to be preached, and obeyed by all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people? Rev. 14:6-7.

Query 28. What is that kingdom that comes not with observation, but is inward, and to be found within? Where men need not say, lo here, or lo there, but may find the Messiah, and his light shining in upon them? Luke 17:20-21. 2 Cor. 4:6.

Query 29. What is that kingdom which stands not in word, but in power; nor is meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost? 1 Cor. 4:20. Rom. 14:17.

Query 30. What is it to come unto and visit the churches of Christ, in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ? Is it not to come in the fulness of God's Spirit and power, to feed them with the bread of life, to fill their hearts with the strength and virtue of life from God, as the Lord shall please to drop it into their spirits through them, and to build them up in the holy faith, that at length they may be filled with all the fulness of God? John 21:15,16,17. Rom. 15:29. Eph. 3:19.

Query 31. Whom will the Lord assemble? And whom will he gather to make up his kingdom of, in the days of the gospel? Will not the Lord assemble her that halts, and gather her that is driven out, and her that he has afflicted? And will not he make her that halts, a remnant; and her that was cast off, a strong nation? And shall not the Lord reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth, even forever? (For when Christ, the inward and spiritual King, comes to sit on the throne of his Father David, inwardly and spiritually, he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Luke 1:32-33.) Mic. 4:6-7. Ezek. 34:16.

Query 32. What are the places wherein the sheep of God have been scattered, in the cloudy and dark day, which the Lord promised to deliver them out of? And what is the good pasture he will feed them in after he has delivered them? And what are the high mountains of Israel, where their fold and fat pastures shall be? Are not those things to be fulfilled to the spiritual people, in the inward and spiritual kingdom of the Messiah? Ezek. 34:12,14. John 10:3,4,9,27,28.

AN EPISTLE TO ALL SERIOUS PROFESSORS

OF

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

WHEREIN

**A BRIEF TOUCH OF MY KNOWLEDGE, SENSE, BELIEF, AND EXPERIENCE
CONCERNING THE GODHEAD, THE OFFERING UP OF
THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN HIS BODY ON THE TREE, AS A PROPITIATORY
SACRIFICE TO THE FATHER, AND THE IMPUTATION OF HIS
RIGHTEOUSNESS TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIS NAME AND POWER, IS
NAKEDLY LAID BEFORE THEM**

WHEREIN

**I AM NOT ALONE, BUT ONE WITH THOSE WHO HAVE SO LEARNED AND
EXPERIENCED THE SAME IN THE LEADINGS AND LIGHT OF
HIS HOLY SPIRIT**

**Written in love to them (that they might have the better understanding of us, as to these things,
and might not think otherwise either of us, or of the truth of our God, which we bear witness to,
than there is cause, to their own hurt and prejudice)**

ISAAC PENINGTON

[no date]

AN EPISTLE TO ALL SERIOUS PROFESSORS

AFTER it pleased the Lord to touch my heart with the sense of his truth, and to manifest unto me the principle of his life, in the demonstration and power of his own Spirit, insomuch as I could reason, dispute, consider about it no longer, but was fully satisfied concerning it, — I say, after this, the love of God sprang in me towards you, and pure desires and breathings unto him, that you also might have the way cast up before you, and might so walk therein, as to come to partake of the same mercy and salvation. How I have mourned before the Lord for you, and desired that the stumbling-blocks might be removed from you, and that you might so seek as to obtain (not in that wisdom and disputing mind, which still is shut out; but in that meekness, humility, and fear that gives entrance), the Lord God knows. Yes, the desires in me after you are still living; who knows, but the Lord may at length hear,

and with his key so open your hearts, and so anoint your eyes with his eye-salve, that you may see, acknowledge, believe in, and receive the Beloved of your souls, even as he now appears (after the long night of darkness) a comforter of the drooping spirits of his people, with the pure light of life, wherein the redeemed house of Jacob (who sat in darkness, and in the valley of the shadow of death, mourning after him) now in holy rejoicing, and pure joy of spirit, walk before him? Oh! the Lord God visit you, and break in upon you, as he has done upon us, and cause you to set to your seals also, as we could not but do, that this is he whom all our days we waited for, and longed after. And now there are two or three things in my heart to open to you, how it is with me in reference to them; for indeed I have not been taught to deny any testimony the Scriptures hold forth concerning the Lord Jesus, or any of his appearances, but am taught by the Lord more certainly and fully to own and acknowledge them.

The first is concerning the Godhead, which we own as the Scriptures express it, and as we have the sensible, experimental knowledge of it. In which "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one." 1 John 5:7. This I believe from my heart, and have infallible demonstrations of; for I know three, and feel three in spirit, even an eternal Father, Son, and holy Spirit, which are but one eternal God. And I feel them also one, and have fellowship with them (through the tender mercy of the Lord) in their life, and in their redeeming power. And here I lie low before the Lord in the sensible life, not desiring to know and comprehend notionally, but to feel the thing inwardly, truly, sensibly, and effectually; yes, indeed, this is to me far beyond what I formerly knew notionally concerning them, and I cannot but invite others here.

Now consider seriously, if a man from his heart believe thus concerning the eternal power and Godhead; that the Father is God, the Word God, the Holy Spirit God; and that these are one eternal God, waiting so to know God, and to be subject to him accordingly; is not this man in a right frame of heart towards the Lord in this respect? Indeed friends, we do know God sensibly and experimentally to be a Father, Word, and Spirit, and we worship the Father in the Son by his own Spirit, and here meet with the seal of acceptance with him. Nor would we contend with you about your crimes in this respect, but that you provoke us thereunto, in laying to our charge as if we denied the thing; whereas we do not, nor can, deny the expressions which the Scripture uses, nor our own sense and experience concerning the thing. I pray let this suffice, and let us all strive to know God, and his Son, Jesus Christ, in his life, Spirit, and power, wherein is unity and true demonstration; and not contend about such expressions concerning things, as are besides the Scriptures. For would not you yourselves think it hard (I mean such of you as read the Scriptures seriously, desiring to understand and observe what is written therein) to have a belief of things imposed on you otherwise than is there written, and otherwise than you have the sense, knowledge, and experience of them from the Lord?

The second is concerning the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, without the gates of Jerusalem. I do exceedingly honor and esteem that offering, believing it had relation to the sins of the whole world, and was a propitiatory sacrifice to the Father therefor. And surely he that is redeemed out of the world up to God by Christ, cannot deny that Christ was his ransom, and that he was bought with a price, and therefore is to glorify God with his body and spirit, which are God's. 1 Cor. 6:20. And, says the apostle Peter, you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain manner of life, etc., but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, 1 Pet. 1:18-19. who so offered himself up to God through the eternal Spirit. Heb. 9:14. This we do own single and nakedly, as in the sight of the Lord; though I must confess we do not lay the sole stress upon that which is outward and visible (though we truly and fully acknowledge it in its place), but

upon that which is inward and invisible; upon the inward life, the inward power, the Spirit within; knowing and experiencing daily, that that is it which does the work. The outward flesh is not the meat indeed, nor the outward blood the drink indeed; but it is the Spirit, the life, the substance, which the birth that is born of the Spirit feeds upon and lives by. Oh! consider seriously, and wait on the Lord rightly to understand that scripture, John 6:63. "It is the Spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." What does this scripture lay the stress upon? Is it not upon the quickening Spirit, and the words which the quickening Spirit speaks to the soul, which are living, and give life to those that hear them? "Hear, and your soul shall live!" Hear his voice who gives life, and your souls shall live by him; but can any one live, without hearing the voice of him who alone is able to quicken and raise the soul from death, and out of the grave of sin?

The third thing is concerning the imputation of Christ's righteousness, to such as believe in his name and power, which we have felt, witnessed, and own to be thus:

God visits men by the light and power of his Holy Spirit, in their dead and dark estate, even while they are ungodly. Now, they that feel life, and in the quickenings of life, by the faith which comes from life, turn to the light and power which visits them, by this faith in the power, they are in measure transplanted out of the unholy root, into the holy root, where they partake of the nature and virtue of the true olive-tree; and the mercy of the Lord in and through his Son Jesus Christ, is spread over them, and their iniquities are pardoned, and their transgressions done away for his name's sake; and they are reckoned by God, not as in the old root and unholy nature, but that whereon they lay hold by faith, and are in union with, they are reckoned by in the eye of the Lord; and they are accepted and beloved in him in whom they are found, by him who transplanted them there, and ingrafted them thereinto. So that Christ is really theirs, and they his; and what he did for them in his body of flesh is become theirs, and they have the benefit, and reap the sweet fruits of it. And if they sin afterwards, they have an advocate who pleads their cause with the Father, and who breathes livingly upon them again, and quickens faith in them, and gives them to turn from that which ran after them, and overtook them and defiled them. So that in this state of true faith in, and union with, the Son, the fountain is felt set open for sin and for uncleanness, which daily washes away the pollutions and stains of the mind, which it is liable to in the traveling state.

But now to every faith this does not belong, but to the faith only which flows from the power of the endless life, and which stands in the power. The faith which is from the power is precious, having a precious nature and virtue in it, and very precious effects flow from it. For it is the substance of things hoped for; it is of a pure nature, which has dominion, and gives dominion over the wicked one. There is no overcoming of the saints here; for as it came from the power, so it stands near the power, and engages the power of life against the enemy, and so is still too hard for him. For he that resists the enemy in the true faith, still overcomes him, and makes him fly. Jam. 4:7. But that belief on Christ, and applying his righteousness, which is not of this faith, nor in the true light of life, but according to the creature's apprehensions concerning things, that is not of the same nature with this, nor has the same virtue, nor produces the same effects; but notwithstanding such a believing and hoping, men are still in their sins, and they are not washed away from them by the blood of Christ, nor remitted or covered by the Spirit of the Lord. And oh that men were wary, and did take heed in this matter, that they might not miss of true pardon from the Lord, and so find their sins bound by him, in the days of his refreshing others!

For there is a state, wherein there is an imputation of Christ's righteousness to persons reached to by the power of the Lord, and coming up out of the ungodly state, and so a real bringing into the righteousness. For in the true growth the soul daily grows more and more out of its own unrighteousness, out of the dark, corrupt image, into the righteousness of Christ, and into his pure image. Thus Christ is formed in the hearts of them that truly believe, daily more and more; they receiving him as a heavenly leaven, and giving up to be leavened by him, are changed daily more and more into the newness of Spirit, even until they become a new lump, even a lump wholly leavened, so that old things are passed away, and all things become new; that is, not of old Adam any more, but all of God in Christ, all of the new nature and Spirit, which is all of it righteous in the sight of God. Now, this is it all should labor for and seek after, even the kingdom of God and his righteousness, to find an entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom, and the righteousness thereof, that they might really put off the old man with his affections and lusts, and put on the new man; the new man's nature, the new man's image, the new man's spirit, the new man's righteousness, the new man's holiness; that they might have the wedding-garment on to be married to Christ in, and might be as a bride prepared for the bridegroom. Oh, it is precious for any one to feel his soul in this state! And who would not travel and wrestle and strive and watch and pray and wait, that he might be thus fitted by the Spirit of the Lord for his Son Jesus Christ? For, friends, there is a coming under grace, under grace's wing, and out of shame and confusion because of sin, into the glory which is in the pure image; and there is a being changed from grace to grace, and from glory to glory, by the Spirit and power of the Lord. Oh that such as take upon them the profession of Christianity might feel the power, and wait upon the power, and know what it is to believe in the power, and live in the power; for without this, the oppressed state of Christianity is but dead, dry, and cold, not having the true living sap and warmth in it. There are great deceits in the world about these things, but he that knows the truth as it is in Jesus, who was visited by the power, gathered to the power, and abides in the power, he has that with him which anoints his eye and heart, and strengthens them against the most subtle devices and deceits of the transforming spirit. But whoever he be that professes Christianity, and is not here, he is not safe, but the enemy has ways of bewitching and deluding him, which he has not wherewith effectually to withstand and avoid.

Now, having nakedly expressed these things to you, as they are in my heart, there is a question lies before me to propound to you, which deserves your serious consideration of, and ability to answer in the sight of the Lord, which is this:

Question. Do you rightly, truly, and fully (as the Lord requires of you) know, esteem, and honor the Son? Do you own him as God has revealed him in the spirit of his children, since the apostasy? Do you feel him as a horn of salvation lifted up there? Do you find and experience him revealed within by the Father, as the seed of the woman, bruising the head of the serpent? Oh! this is precious knowledge, and the right way of truly knowing him as he came from the Father, lived in obedience to him, suffered for the sins of the whole world, ascended again to the Father, and now sits with him in glory! For, indeed, it is the chief thing, and that whereon the soul's rest depends, to know and feel him near. Oh that we were one here (I mean in the inward sense and acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ), and we should soon be one in the other also!

For we, who are reproachfully by many called Quakers, are (for the most part) a people who have much and long sought after the Lord, and after the experimental knowledge of those truths, which are testified of and related in the holy Scriptures. We sought not after a new Christ, or a new Spirit, or new

doctrines concerning Christ or his Spirit; but to know Christ, so as to receive life from him, and to live to him in the life and spirit received from him; this has been the single aim and desire of our souls. And if men could with patience consider what we hold forth, and wait till God open their understandings, they would not lay such blame upon us as they do in many respects, but find that we reverence the Scriptures, believing and holding concerning the things of God according as is there expressed, from a true understanding received from the Lord, and in the true light and guidance of his Spirit. There is another question springs in my heart unto you, I beseech you consider of it seriously, perhaps there may be a blessing to you in it.

Question. Do you rightly and weightily consider and embrace that counsel of Christ, Mat. 6:33. "Seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness"? Do you mind what Christ likens the kingdom to? Even a grain of mustard-seed, a pearl hid in a field, a little leaven, a lost piece of silver, etc. Do you know, and are you acquainted with that little thing which is like unto these? And do you really and rightly seek after it? Do you seek it where it is to be found? Do you know the place where it is hid? And do you take the right way to buy and purchase it? How is that? Why not by outward observation, says Christ, but by inward sweeping the house; by keeping the eye upon it, and sweeping out the rubbish that covers it; this is the way to find it, purchase it, and possess it. Oh that you could all learn thus, and be thus exercised by the Spirit of the Lord daily. Surely they that thus seek shall find, and they that thus ask shall have, and they that thus knock, to them the everlasting kingdom shall be opened.

For mark the difference between the state of the law and gospel. The law was a shadow of good things to come. The gospel is a state of enjoyment of the good things shadowed out under the law. The law was a type of the kingdom, of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which is set up under the gospel. In John's day the kingdom was at hand; but in the day of Christ's power the kingdom is come. Under the law there was a tabernacle pitched by man; but under the gospel the true tabernacle and temple is witnessed, which God pitches and not man; and the holy, spiritual, heavenly sacrifices, and the living covenant, whereof Christ is the mediator, and the law written in the heart, and the Spirit of the Lord put within, so that his presence is as really witnessed inwardly, in that which is truly his tabernacle and temple now, as ever it was witnessed outwardly, in his outward tabernacle and temple under the law. Oh that Christians might not have the name only, but might be in the life and in the power, wherein these things are felt and experienced! for indeed, the wonders of the Lord are seen in his temple, and his name is praised there, Selah. There he breaks the shield and the bow, the spear and the battle, Selah. There the enemy is overcome; the holy victory that brings him under, issues out from there, Selah. There the well is opened, and the Philistine nature has power to stop it no more, Selah. There the treasury of life and wisdom, and the riches of God's goodness are made manifest forever.

Truly, friends, I have not lost any thing that ever I had, or acknowledged of God in the days of my former profession, by believing in the light which God has now revealed in me, but have it still with me, and in greater clearness and plainness, and fuller demonstration than I then had it; but that of the flesh which mixed with it, and hindered it from being rightly serviceable to the Lord, and fully comfortable to me, that the Lord has been removing by his searching light, and by the demonstration of his Spirit and power. And if at length, after all my deep and long misery, the Lord has given me to meet with and enjoy that which is truly excellent (among those whom men despise) I could heartily wish for you, that you also might meet with and enjoy the same, without passing through that misery and bitter anguish and distress of spirit, through which the Lord led me thereto. The Lord preserve his people, by the arm of his mighty power, which he has stretched out for them, and whereby he has

gathered them to himself. And those which are not yet of this fold, oh that it would please him to seek them out, and bring them home also; that the Lord may be one, and his name one amongst us, and that that which divides and scatters from the living truth, might be scattered and brought to nought everywhere, in all who would be one, and desire to serve God (with one consent) in that which is true and pure! Amen.

A REPLY TO AN ANSWER OF SOME QUERIES

CONCERNING THE

GOSPEL BAPTISM

GIVEN FORTH BY ME, I. P.

WITH

ANSWERS TO SOME QUERIES

RETURNED, IN A PAPER SUBSCRIBED

N. B.

[1679]

Query 1. WHICH is the gospel baptism, or of what kind is the baptism in the gospel state? Is it outward or inward? Is it the figure of the inward baptism, or the inward baptism itself?

N.B.'s answer is, "It is a stooping to God's law."

Reply, This is a very improper answer, and not at all to the thing in hand; for the query was not concerning the stooping or subjecting to baptism; but what the baptism is, which is to be stooped and subjected to, whether that be an inward or outward baptism? Whether it be a figure of the holy and heavenly baptism of the gospel, or the holy and heavenly baptism itself? So that in these words, there is no answer at all returned to the query, but rather the asserting of another thing, which the query did not mention, altogether improper in this place; for the query tends to determine what the baptism itself is, and when that is once determined, about stooping and subjecting to it, there will be no question I hope between us.

Now, to explain what this law of God is, which is to be stooped to, he says, "It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ;" quoting to prove it, Rom. 8:2. Mat. 28:18-19. Mark 16:16.

Reply, That baptism (water-baptism), as he afterwards expresses it in his answer to this query, is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, I never read in scriptures. Nor does it effect in the heart what the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus does, which the apostle says, made him free from the law of sin and death; and it has virtue and power in its nature over the law of sin and death, which water-baptism has not. The law of sin and death is of an inward and spiritual nature; and the law of the Spirit of life also is of an inward and spiritual nature, stronger than the law of sin and death, and is able to make free from the law of sin and death inwardly. But water-baptism is an outward thing, an elementary thing, not able to reach the law of sin and death, nor to make free from it. I beseech you consider, you who look upon this to be a command and ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ, are you, or are they, who are outwardly baptized with water, made free from the law of sin and death thereby? No, Paul himself, who was by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made free from the law of sin and death, yet was not made free so by outward baptism. For if he was outwardly baptized (as I am ready to believe he was, it being usual at that time), it was when Ananias came to him, and when the scales fell from his eyes, and he received sight. Acts 9:18. But he was not then made free from the law of sin and death; for afterward, in his inward and spiritual exercise and holy travail, he found and complained of a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin in his members. Rom. 7:23. This was not a state of freedom from the law of sin; for with his flesh he still served it, while in this state. But when by the Spirit the flesh was crucified, when the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus prevailed over the law of sin and death in his members, then he was no longer under Satan's captivity by sin, but a delivered man, made free therefrom by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Then he knew the truth, and the power and virtue of the truth manifested itself in him, and made him free, and he was free indeed; and said no more he could not do the good he would, nor forbear doing the evil he would not; but he was more than a conqueror over the evil, and set at liberty to work righteousness, and could do all things through Christ that strengthened him. Oh that you that plead so much for outward water, knew this law writ in your hearts, and the effectual power and virtue thereof freeing you from the law of sin and death! and then you would no more attribute that to an outward thing (or to your obedience as to such an outward thing), which belongs to the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, and to the law of his life inwardly written in the heart.

Another scripture he brings to prove water-baptism to be the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, is Matthew 28:19.

Reply, If it were granted, that Christ did in that place command water-baptism, yet that would not prove it to be the law of the Spirit of life in him. The law of the Spirit of life in him is a deep thing (I beseech you do not mistake it), and has mighty effects in the soul, which water-baptism never had, nor can have upon any. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has that virtue and power from God in its nature, which water-baptism is not capable of. The figures, the outward representations, have not a capacity to receive that from God, which the inward law and substance has.

But that outward baptizing with water is there commanded by Christ, is not at all manifest from that scripture, but rather the contrary, if it be well minded. For Christ says, all power was given him in heaven and earth, and bids them go and baptize. Does he say with water? No; does he not say into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit? So that now, when the gospel is preached in the Spirit and power of God, and his Spirit and power reaches to our hearts, we are by that Spirit and power both taught and baptized inwardly, gathered into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and baptized into their name.

And he that does this in the heart, teaches the heart to call this the gospel baptism; and to call that which came forth in the hand of the forerunner, the type, or figure of this, the representation of this, the shadow of the gospel baptism, but not the gospel baptism itself. Indeed, we dare not call John's baptism, or water-baptism, the gospel baptism, or Christ's baptism; the Lord, who has manifested things to us, and taught us to put a difference between things that really differ, would judge and condemn us for so doing.

Mark further, Christ, who says, "All power in heaven and earth is given me," and therefore bid them go teach and baptize, yet withal bid them wait for the same Spirit and power which was given him. Acts 1:4-8. And then having his Spirit and power, wherewith he inwardly taught and baptized, might they not be able therewith to reach the heart and conscience, and spiritually both to teach and baptize, as instruments in God's hand, in the springings of his life and power in them?

Now to manifest this further; for I feel the Lord opening my heart in this thing, and I hope it is for your sakes, (O you mistaken ones in this weighty business!) that the Lord may explain things of this nature to you, and do you good thereby. To whom was this commission or command, in the authority and power of God's Spirit given, to go and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name, &c? Was it not especially given to the apostles, who were especially gifted thereunto? And was not Paul one; yes, one of the chief, made so by God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ? And he being in a special manner sent to the Gentiles, or Heathen nations (for the Jews were but one nation), did not this commission extend to him, and this command lie upon him? Now, if this command did extend to inward, spiritual, gospel baptizing, with the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, he had it as full as any of them; but if it be understood of water-baptism, we do not find that he had any such commission, but rather otherwise. Read his commission, Acts 26:18. is there any thing of water-baptism in it? There is remission of sins, which depends upon believing and turning to God, in his illuminating Spirit and power, but nothing of water-baptism. And mark, it is God that opens men's eyes, and it is God that opens their hearts, and inwardly turns them from darkness to light, and Satan's power to God; yet Paul was sent by the Lord to do this. And is it a harder matter inwardly to baptize than to do this? So that it is not Paul, but the Lord that opens the eyes, and turns men; yet the Lord sent Paul to do it, and surely the Lord enabled him, by his Spirit and power, to do what he sent him to do.

Objection. But though it is not here particularly expressed, yet it may be implied or intended. Or if this commission did not reach to him, the former apostolic commission would, he being made so extraordinary an apostle. Or at least it would reach him as a teaching disciple; for he that has authority to teach the nations, has also authority to baptize them.

Answer. No, Paul neither by this commission, nor by the apostolic commission, nor by his discipleship, had any authority or mission from God to baptize, if you take baptism in this place for baptizing with outward water, as he himself expressly says, "Christ sent me not to baptize (speaking of water-baptism), but to preach the gospel." 1 Cor. 1:17. No, he thanks God that he baptized none of them, to his remembrance, but Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanus, ver. 14,16. Now, if he had looked upon water-baptism as Christ's ordinance, and as the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, would he thank God he had obeyed it no more?

Objection. But he gives the reason of that, lest any should say he had baptized in his own name.

Answer. Why, persons might say he preached in his own name, yet that would not have excused him

from preaching. No more would men's saying he baptized in his own name excuse him from baptizing, if water-baptism had been Christ's command and ordinance.

The last place he brings to prove water-baptism to be the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus is Mark 16:16. "He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believes not, shall be damned."

Reply, This shows the necessity of the gospel baptism, but this does not express which the gospel baptism is, whether an inward or outward washing. We know, having been taught by the Lord, that there is no salvation without inward washing, which is also very demonstrable to others; but God forbid that all should be damned, that are not baptized with outward water.

He says, "This law was confirmed by them that had the Spirit-baptism, being commanded to be obeyed by them that had the Spirit." Acts 10:47-48.

Reply, That Peter did command persons to be baptized with water, and that John's baptism, or water-baptism, was made use of in those days, and that John had it from God, and that it was done in God's name, this is not denied; but that water-baptism was Christ's baptism, or the gospel baptism, this place does not prove.

He says, further, "The kind of this baptism is water-baptism," bringing Mat. 3:16. and Acts 8:38-39. to prove it.

Reply, Mat. 3:16. only proves that Christ was baptized with water, but does not prove that water-baptism is the gospel baptism. If I could prove by scripture expressly, that Christ was circumcised, yet that would not prove that therefore that was to be the gospel circumcision. So though it be manifest, that Christ was baptized by John, with his water-baptism, yet that does at all prove that John's water-baptism is Christ's gospel baptism. The end of John's baptizing with water was, that Christ might be made manifest. John 1:31. And when he is made manifest (when he who is the word, who is the life, is made manifest, 1 John 1:1-2.) then men must come to him, to be baptized by him with his baptism, which is with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, Mat. 3:11. or with the Spirit of judgment and burning. Isa. 4:4.

That other place of Acts 8:38-39. does not at all prove that water-baptism is the gospel baptism, but only that Philip did baptize the eunuch with water, which is not a thing denied by us. Yes, what if I should grant, that the Lord did honor it as much as any shadow, or more than other shadows, by letting it have a longer time, and otherwise; yet that will not prove it to be Christ's baptism, or a gospel ordinance. And if men do take it up in tenderness of spirit, bowing to the Lord, it is so much the better; yet it is not easy to believe that all do so; and those that do so, may err in their judgments, notwithstanding; though I am persuaded, the Lord is tender to persons that do things in tenderness of heart to him, notwithstanding some error or mistake in their judgments.

Query 2. What is it that is to be washed in the gospel state? Is it the outward or inward man? And what is the inward man to be washed with?

Answer. His answer is, "it is the body, the whole man or woman to go into the water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; so that the soul comes to be sanctified by the word and Spirit." For the proof of which he quotes John 3:23. and chap. 15:3.

Reply, That the whole body was to go into the water, according to John's baptism, is granted; but that this is the gospel baptism, or Christ's baptism, is denied by us. It is the inward Jew that is to be washed in the gospel state, and it is inward water, spiritual water, that he is to be washed with. I pray consider that scripture seriously, (and the Lord give you the true understanding thereof) Zech. 13:1. Does not that scripture speak of the gospel state? What fountain is it that is opened in the gospel state? Is it an outward fountain of outward waters, which is opened for sin and for uncleanness, to wash it away? The Lord knows of what nature sin is, and with what water it is to be washed away, and therefore opens that fountain in the house of David in the gospel state, which is proper to wash it away with. What is the house of David? Who is the Jew in the gospel state? What is the tabernacle or house of David that is raised up then? What is the fountain that is opened there for sin, and for uncleanness? Can sin be washed away from any heart and conscience, but by the water of this fountain? And is not the gospel baptism with this water? Do not those that are washed with this water feel the true washing, and know it certainly, evidently, infallibly, in the demonstration of God's Spirit, to be the true baptism; not the figurative, outward washing of the body, but the real inward washing of the soul? There is the washing of regeneration, Tit. 3:5. which is with that which regenerates, which the water of the fountain of life and holiness does, which God opens in the heart, and washes the soul with, and causes the soul to wash in; but the outward water, which washes the outward body, has no such nature or virtue in it, nor ever was appointed by God to produce any such effect. That the soul is sanctified by the Word and Spirit, is granted: but that the soul is not sanctified by the Word and Spirit, unless the body is washed with outward water, that is denied; and the scriptures afore mentioned by him, of John 3:23. and chap. 15:3. do not at all prove any such thing. Now, the gospel obedience is to Christ's baptism, not to John's baptism. And the soul that is subject to Christ's baptism, does not live in disobedience, for not taking up John's baptism; which God does not allow him to do; but in the gospel state, every one is to hear the Son, the Shepherd of the soul, and follow him the substance, and not Moses's circumcision or John's baptism.

Query 3. What is washed away by the gospel baptism? Is it the filth of the outward body or flesh? Or the filth of the soul? And with what water is the filth of the soul to be washed away?

Answer. "Sin is washed away by the gospel baptism;" for the proof whereof he quotes. Acts 22:16. Rom. 6:17-18.

Reply, Thus far we agree, that sin is washed away by the gospel baptism; but what that baptism is which washes away sin, herein we greatly differ. He affirms it to be outward water, and the washing of the outward man therewith. I affirm it to be inward water, from the inward, holy fountain which God opens in the house of David, whereby the soul and conscience is washed from sin, and uncleanness. That place of Acts 22:16. speaks of Paul's being baptized, and washing away his sins; but does not say, that outward washing the body with outward water is the washing away of sins; but bids him wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord. And thus the washing away of sins is at this day experienced. The Lord manifests sin, turns the mind against it, and causes a cry to the Lord, and then the Lord opens the fountain, causes the pure water to flow, which the soul is washed with; and so far as it is washed therewith, it is clean in the sight of God, and has the inward sense of its cleanness from the Lord. Yet that there was a figurative washing away of sins by John's baptism, I do not deny; for it was unto repentance, and they thereby professed repentance, and were to "bring forth fruits worthy of repentance." Mat. 3:8. Nor does that other place (Rom. 6:17-18) prove, that washing the body with outward water washes away sin, or makes free from sin; but that which makes free from sin, is the

power, virtue, and life of truth felt in the heart, washing and cleansing it. It is receiving the truth in the love of it, and being moulded into the nature of it, believing it in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit, and obeying it in the obedience of the new nature, mind, and Spirit. And the answer of a good conscience comes from the inward baptism, from the washing which the apostle calls ἈΝΤΙΤΥΠΟΣ, the anti-type, 1 Pet. 3:21. which baptism is not the washing away the filth of the flesh or body; but an inward baptism, which so washes inwardly, that the answer of a good conscience is presently felt, in the sight and presence of God. And then the soul knows what water it was washed with, which was able to produce, and did produce this effect.

He says, "And thus it appears; First it takes off disobedience."

Reply, What is it takes off disobedience? The truth as it is in Jesus, the life and power of truth, felt and working in the heart, destroys the disobedient nature, and takes away the disobedience thereof; but outward washing of the body does not, though men may apprehend there is an outward command for it, and judge they do it in obedience to that outward command. But obedience is from true understanding of the mind and will of God, and from that holy light of his Spirit wherein the holy understanding is given. And in this obedience the Lord's justification is witnessed; which is not witnessed in the other; I mean in that which men call obedience to that which they account a literal command, according to their conceivings and apprehensions.

"Secondly, As it leads persons unto Christ;" for which he quotes Rom. 6:2-3. Gal. 3:27.

Reply, That which leads unto Christ, and into the truth as it is in him, the children of the new covenant know, who are drawn by the Father, and are taught and learn of him to come to the Son. John 6:44-45. And how can we give that honor to John's baptism, or outward washing the body, which belongs to the Father, and his powerful Spirit? To be baptized into Christ is a great thing. To be buried with Christ by baptism into death is a precious state, and effected by the inward work of the Spirit in the heart, working against sin, working the mind out of sin, into the nature, Spirit, and life of Christ. And the being baptized into Christ is the real putting on Christ. It is the effect of knowing the truth as it is in Jesus, which causes the putting off of the old man, and the renewing in the Spirit of the mind, and putting on the new. Eph. 4:22,23,24. But John's baptism, or the washing the body with outward water, does none of these things, but is only a type or representation of what is done in and by the inward baptism.

He adds further, "And so the soul receives Christ in his prophetic and priestly office; so by Christ we are delivered from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may perfect holiness in the fear of God."

Reply, The kingdom of Christ is spiritual, the kingdom of Christ is within, and he that would truly know him as he is King, Prophet, and Priest, must hear his knocks, know his voice, open to him, and let him in, and then he will manifest himself there, and the soul shall know what he is, even his King, Priest, and Prophet, and feel him exercising all these holy offices, in the authority and power of his Father, in the heart. This is precious knowledge indeed. Yes, he shall know him with his fan in his hand, thoroughly purging his floor from all unbelief, from all disobedience, from all chaffiness and earthliness; yes, from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; for his fan turns against them all, and his Spirit of judgment and burning flames inwardly against them all; and as they are consumed and burnt up, the pure fear of the Lord is increased in the heart, wherein holiness is begun, and at length perfected, by the thorough circumcision and baptism of the Spirit. But the Corinthians were not cleansed from all

filthiness of the flesh and spirit by water-baptism, but were afterwards exhorted by Paul to do it.

Query 4. What water is it that the inward Israel shall be sprinkled with, that they may be clean? Is it not inward water, spiritual water? And can any be clean or baptized in the sight of God, that are not baptized with this water, wherewith God sprinkles and washes his inward and spiritual Israel?

Answer. "Baptism is not sprinkling, nor so rendered by the Spirit, but baptize; baptize is to dip or put into the water."

Reply, When God sprinkles his inward Israel, with the water which he has promised to sprinkle with, he does sufficiently cleanse them; for whom the Lord sprinkles with this water, they are cleansed thereby. Ezek. 36:25. And this relates to the gospel state; for a new heart is immediately promised, ver. 26. which is the promise of the gospel covenant. And the blood of sprinkling in the new covenant does sufficiently wash and cleanse, Heb. 12:24. Rev. 1:5. sprinkling and dipping are but figures; but they are both comprehended in the substance, which we should wait inwardly to feel and experience. The water which Christ speaks of, John 3:5. (which place he quotes) is not outward, but of the same nature with the Spirit, whereof the soul is washed and born again, and rises up in the new life with Christ.

He says, "The inward fits for the outward."

Reply, It is true, John's baptism did require inward qualifications (in which respect it went beyond circumcision), and so, where those qualifications were found, who could forbid water? But Christ's baptism, the baptism with Spirit and fire to purify the mind, and burn up the dross, is of a higher ministration, and a far more glorious baptism than that. Mat. 3:11. "He shall baptize you:" you, what you? You whom I have baptized with water? So that those whom he has baptized to repentance, he tells of another baptism, a more glorious baptism than his, which happy are they that wait for, and feel accomplished in them.

Query 5. What is the gospel circumcision? Is it not an inward and spiritual circumcision? And is not the circumcising knife, wherewith the inward Israel is circumcised, inward and spiritual? And is not the gospel baptism, wherewith the inward Israel is washed, as inward and spiritual as the gospel circumcision? Is not this circumcision and washing of the same nature, and effected without outward hands?

Answer. "It is inward, spiritual, heavenly, that which God works by the knife of his word." Heb. 4:12. Hos. 6:5.

Reply, This is true; we whom God has called, quickened, enlightened, circumcised, and baptized, experience it so; and happy is he, if he experience it also. For the word is living, and makes alive; the word is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and it does inwardly pierce to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, (oh, this is a blessed experience inwardly, wherever it is felt!) and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And this word came to the prophets, and did hew through the prophets, and God's judgments by this word were as a light that went forth. This word is the word of life, and the life is manifested in it, as the apostles knew in their day, 1 John 1:2. and as God's gathered ones know in this day.

But let him take heed, lest he put the letter, or outward descriptions of heavenly things, for the word; for the kingdom or gospel state stands not in such kind of words, but in power, 1 Cor., 4:20. and the

apostles were made able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit ministers life. 2 Cor. 3:6. So we distinguish the word of life (the quick, piercing word that gives life), from the words which came from it, Acts 5:20. which words are also living, as they come from the life, and are livingly spoken to the heart by him, who is the life; otherwise, in the mouth, understanding, or comprehension of him who is not living (nor in a true sense and understanding of them), they are not life. So men should not strive to comprehend things with that outward understanding, which can never attain thereto, but wait to receive the understanding from God, whereby they may know him that is true, and his gospel ordinance, and the holy laws of his kingdom, and be found in the obedience thereof to him in the Spirit.

Now, granting the gospel circumcision to be inward and spiritual, how can he make the gospel baptism to be of a nature inferior to it, even outward and carnal; that is, a washing with the elementary water of this creation, and not with the inwardly sanctifying and cleansing water of life, which God sprinkles upon his spiritual Israel, and also plunges their souls into? And consider seriously, whether the apostle, speaking of both circumcision and baptism, Col. 2:11-12. did intend either of them as to the outward, and not rather both of them as to the inward, wherein the true, inward, spiritual circumcising, and also the true, inward baptizing, is witnessed, and both without hands; for neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails (no more does outward washing the body, or not washing it avail), but a new creature; the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision and baptism of Christ, this avails, and is of great esteem with God.

Query 6. What is the one baptism of the spiritual Israel, without which, there is no salvation? Can there be any salvation without the inward washing of the soul? May there not be salvation without the outward washing of the body?

Answer. "That which Christ Jesus commanded; for there is but one baptism commanded, and that leads us to Christ and God."

Reply, Was not John's baptism commanded, which was an outward washing? And is not the inward washing commanded also? Was not Israel commanded to circumcise their hearts, and was not that an inward circumcision? And were they not also commanded to wash their hearts from wickedness, and was not that an inward washing or baptism? How could they do either of these? Why, did not Moses direct them to the word nigh in their mouth and heart, whereby both these might be done? And can either of these be done in any heart, but by the operation of this word of life inwardly in the heart? We know, There is no other name under heaven, nor way to be saved, but Christ, the word of life, and light of men. But they that are saved by him, must know him as a living stone within, and come from all else in their hearts to him (as to a precious foundation-stone of life), and be new-created by him, circumcised and baptized into him, and so walk in him, the new and living way, and serve God his Father, in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter; which happy are they that understand what it is, and are found in this obedience to the Lord, and in thus worshipping him in his Spirit and truth, which is the gospel service and worship. For men may easily mistake about the letter; but the new birth does not mistake concerning the Spirit, nor the true sheep concerning the voice of Christ.

Query 7. How are men buried with Christ by baptism into death? Is it not an inward, spiritual death, that men are thus buried with Christ into? And is it not effected by an inward, spiritual baptism?

Answer. "By water-baptism; for Christ was buried, so are we. Christ was buried by baptism in the water, so are we."

Reply, Christ was outwardly circumcised; so are we also circumcised; not outwardly, as Christ was. Christ was not circumcised to effect any thing upon him (for he needed it not), but for our sakes. And he was baptized for our sakes also, that we also might be circumcised, and baptized with the circumcision and baptism which we need, which is the circumcising and baptizing of our souls, and not the circumcising or washing of our bodies.

He adds, "Christ did it to fulfill all righteousness; we to fulfill the righteous law and will of God, we thereby entering into covenant with God, whereby we set to his seal [I suppose he means, our seal], that he is true.

Reply, It remains yet to be proved, that baptizing with water is God's law and will in the gospel state. I am sure there are those that are taught otherwise by him that teaches all his children, from the least to the greatest, in the new covenant. And the new covenant is an inward covenant; which they that hear God's voice therein, and have his law written in their hearts, and obey it, are led by him more and more into. Now, the new covenant is not made with every thirsty one after the living waters, but only such as come to Christ in the drawings and teachings of his Father; and when they are come to Christ, incline their ears, and hearken diligently to him, Isa. 55:1,2,3. such assuredly know and enjoy the sure mercies of David, having God to be their Shepherd to spread their table for them; and they eat that which is good, and are satisfied with the fat things of his house, and so can set to their seal that God is true and faithful, who has not only promised such things, but is daily fulfilling and making them good in and to their souls.

Query 8. What is that baptism, from which there certainly and constantly arises the answer of a good conscience towards God? Does not this always arise from the inward baptism, from the washing away of that which defiles the conscience? Is not then the conscience thereby made good and holy in the sight of God? And does it not then answer the holy will, law, and Spirit, of the holy and good God?

Answer. "The baptism of water; being that which Christ commanded."

Reply, Water-baptism, or outward washing of the body, cannot make the conscience good; for a man may do that upon a mistake, through error of judgment, and go unchanged into it, and come unchanged out of it. But the inward circumcision and inward baptism, does really cut off and wash away the sin and filth of the conscience, and so make it good; and then the good conscience does answer to God, in what he teaches and requires. But that water-baptism was commanded by Christ, is still denied on our part, and unproved on his.

He says, "A clear conscience arises from a true conformity to the law of God."

Reply, This is very true. But what is the law of God in the new covenant, but what he writes in the heart? God is the teacher of his people in the new covenant, and what he teaches and requires of them by his Spirit, is their law. Christ is their law-giver, and he gives forth his law of life, from his Spirit of life, to those that wait for it. Isa. 42:4. And he likewise opens the Scriptures, and shows what God taught and required of former ages, and of this present age. He shows what the shadows of the law were, and what the ministration of the prophets and John was, and what the ministration of the Son is; who is faithful in all his house to every one there, as a Son, to give the law of the Spirit of life to them;

even as Moses, the servant, was to give the outward law to those of his house. So that it is not sufficient to read a scripture, or scriptures, and say this was commanded, and this was practiced of old; but to wait to know how it was commanded, and how practiced, and of what nature it was, whether of the everlasting nature of the kingdom, which is to remain; or of an outward, elementary nature, which might be shaken and pass away. For it was the will of God, that all such things should be shaken and pass away, that the kingdom itself alone, which cannot be shaken, might remain. Heb. 12:27.

Conclusion. Oh that people knew and experienced the baptism which is the substance, and then they would not idolize that baptism, or outward washing, which in its nature can be no more than a sign, signification, or representation of that which is the substance!

Answer. "Our baptism, which is the gospel baptism, being baptized into Christ, is that which brings us to the substance, Christ Jesus our Lord, the substance of all things. So that signs or significations are nothing to us, but Christ is all to our souls."

Reply, That water-baptism is the gospel baptism, can never be proved by you, it being neither the nature of the gospel, nor commanded by Christ, the law-giver in the gospel. And that this washing with outward water is the baptizing into Christ, is a very low and dark apprehension, far from truth, and the right understanding of the Scriptures, and the experience of those who are baptized with Christ's baptism. And that which brings to Christ, is the Father, by his drawings; not outward baptizing, or washing the outward man with outward water; that is but a bodily exercise, and bodily exercises profit little, so far are they from bringing to Christ, the substance. And as for what he says concerning signs and significations; oh that it were so indeed, that they were nothing to you, but Christ all to your souls! For if it were so indeed, could you thus cry up a figure or shadow of the gospel baptism, and be so ignorant of the substance? Do the Jews know the inward circumcision? Or do you know the inward baptism, any more than the Jews knew the inward circumcision? Read that scripture, Rom. 2:28-29. and the Lord apply it home to your souls; "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." Now, may not the Spirit of God say in these our days (yes, of a truth the Spirit of our God does say so, and many have heard his voice so speaking), He is not a Christian which is one outwardly, neither is that gospel baptism, which is outward on the flesh; but he is a Christian which is one inwardly, and the gospel baptism is that of the heart in the Spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God. The Jews praised the outwardly circumcised, and you praise the outwardly baptized; but God praised the inwardly circumcised and washed. So that their justification and praise is of him, and they matter not the justification or praise of man.

He adds further, "Neither do we these things but to obey him and follow his footsteps that he went before us in, and so he is our leader and commander."

Reply, Every practice of his he does not lead or command his disciples to follow him in. He was circumcised outwardly; are we to take it up because it was his footstep? No more are we to take up the outward washing, because it was his footstep. But we are to take up that circumcision which cuts off that which is evil from us, and crucifies to the world; and we are also to take up that baptism which inwardly baptizes and effectually cleanses from sin. Oh, how plain are these things where the eye is single, and the mind not blinded or prejudiced with its own conceivings and misapprehensions!

He adds yet, "So that we are not idolizing any thing, but following Christ in the way he went before us in."

Reply, I wish from my heart you were not idolizing John's baptism, or water-baptism, by setting it in the place of Christ's baptism, and not attributing that to it which belongs to Christ's baptism, and not to it. To affirm that water-baptism is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, and that stooping to it is stooping to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, and that the soul cannot be sanctified without going into the outward water; for till then it is in disobedience, and charged as a transgressor; and the inward man cannot be washed while living in disobedience, and that sin is washed away by this outward water-baptism and that this takes off disobedience, and so is the answer of a good conscience in obedience to God, and that it leads persons into Christ, with more of this nature; what is this but the idolizing of an outward, elementary creature and creaturely action, and an undervaluing of that water and blood which alone can do this? Now to term this idolizing is no reflecting on Christ; but on men's error of judgment, and their erroneous practices which ensue thereupon; much less is it blasphemy, although Christ himself was accounted a blasphemer for testifying the truth, by the professors of that age; and such a judgment may his followers meet with now, from the professors of this age.

He says further, "I know that the pretense of all this is the baptism of the Spirit."

Reply, He is greatly mistaken. It is not a pretense, but a feeling of the baptism of the Spirit, by the water of the fountain of life which God opens in the heart, and the being born of this water and of the Spirit. By this means we came to know the baptism which saves, and the Spirit's washing and regenerating us therewith; and if we should give the honor of this baptism to the washing of the body with outward water, we should sin against the Lord, and be unfaithful in the testimony he has given us to bear.

He says, "Take notice that the baptism of the Spirit is a promise, not a duty."

Reply, That it is a promise is granted; but it is also a duty to receive the promise, and to give up to be baptized by him. Now, to open this a little; for I write in love and tender good-will, and in that which opens my heart. The Spirit of the Lord did strive with the old world. What did he strive for? Did he not strive to reclaim them from sin? To circumcise them? To wash them? God gave his good Spirit to the Jews to instruct them. To what end to instruct them, but that they might circumcise the foreskin of their hearts, and be no more stiff-necked; and that they might be inwardly washed in heart from their wickedness, and their vain thoughts might no longer lodge within them. So that the inward circumcision and the inward baptism of the soul and conscience (from which is the answer of a good conscience) was before either the outward circumcision or outward baptism, and is the substance, whereof the other were but figures. The Spirit was not only promised in the time of the gospel, but was also promised in the time of the law (though more abundantly promised to be poured forth in the gospel days). Prov. 1:23. Now, what does it do when poured forth? Does it not enlighten, quicken, lead, touch, wash, or sanctify, purge out the old leaven, and leaven with the new leaven of the kingdom? Here is true understanding and true experience. Oh that you might come to witness and partake of it! Do you desire to obey? Oh that you were taught of God to know Christ, as the Father reveals him inwardly, and to deny and put off all that is contrary unto him, that you may be baptized into him, and be found in him, filled and clothed with his righteous Spirit, life, and nature! in which righteous Spirit, life, and nature, the true circumcision and the true baptism is witnessed.

He says, "The promise of the Spirit, John calls the baptism of the Spirit." Mat. 3:11.

Reply, Though the Spirit, when poured out according to the promise of the Father, did baptize several ways; yet that is not it which John there calls the baptism of the Spirit; but the baptism of the Spirit is the inward purging away of sin and filth, by the Spirit and its fire, or by the Spirit of judgment and burning; which those that were baptized by John were afterwards to expect and wait for, that with his fan their floor might be purged, their chaff burnt up, and the wheat gathered into the garner, ver. 12.

He says again, "Take notice, that the being baptized with the Spirit, or having the Spirit, does not excuse us of our being baptized in water, but rather fits us for it."

Reply, If baptism with water were a command of Christ, being baptized with the Spirit, or having the Spirit, would not excuse from it. But if baptizing with the Spirit be the gospel baptism, and that which was figured out or represented by John's baptism, then we are not to turn back from the substance to the figure, or from Christ's command to his disciples, to God's command by John to his disciples.

He quotes Acts 8:29. compared with ver. 38-39. "Where" says he, "we may see, that the Spirit was in the work of the administration of water-baptism, as it leads men to the truth of the gospel, and therefore it is that the apostle says, 'that by one Spirit we are baptized into one body.'" 1 Cor. 12:13.

Reply, God, from whom the law was, and the prophets, and John's preaching and baptism, did work in them all by his Spirit; and John's ministration being the highest, God might please to work most therein. But that this is Christ's baptism, commanded by him in the gospel, or the water thereof, the water wherewith Christ washes the soul, or the water of regeneration whereby God regenerates, that we cannot but deny, being taught of God, and having experience of the contrary. Yes, it is manifestly but a shadow of Christ's baptism, and not the baptism itself; not the baptism of his Spirit and fire, wherewith alone the soul can be inwardly purged. Mat. 3:11. compared with Isa. 4:4.

But that water-baptism leads men into the truth of the gospel, is his great mistake. He had said but a few lines before, "that it is the office and work of the Spirit of God to lead us into all truths of the gospel;" let him stick to that, and wait to experience that, and not attribute that to a dead thing, which belongs to the living Spirit.

And whereas he interprets that scripture, 1 Cor. 12:13. of outward visible baptism with outward water, that is a very manifest misapprehension (I wish he did not so misunderstand and misinterpret scriptures, for lack of the right key which opens them). For all that are baptized with outward water (whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free), are not baptized into one body; but all that are inwardly baptized by the one Spirit, are baptized into the one body, whereof Christ is head, and they all drink into one Spirit; in which Spirit they all have life to act in the body, and have a living sense of their place and service in the body, which they who only are baptized with water have not.

Thus far in way of Reply to his Answers to those Queries, which did flow from me, as life and the love of God sprang up in me, without any premeditation at all; which retain their truth, evidence, and strength, notwithstanding all that he has said to invalidate or weaken them. Now, follow his Queries returned to consideration, which it is on my heart to return an Answer to, in the nakedness and plainness of truth, as the Lord has pleased to open and give me the knowledge and experience of the things queried of.

Query 1. "Whether the baptism of the Spirit be not a promise, and the work of God to give it to his creatures, and the baptism of afflictions an imputation of wicked men; and but one baptism commanded by Christ as a duty to submit unto; if not water-baptism, what is it then?"

Answer. The baptism Christ commands his disciples to submit to, is his own baptism, the baptism of his Spirit. The true disciples of Christ are inward Jews and inward Christians, and they are to submit to the inward circumcision and baptism of Christ their Lord. They are to be washed inwardly with the water of that fountain, which God opens to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. Zech. 13:1. Does God set this open for the inward and spiritual Jews or Christians? And is it not their duty to be washed or baptized inwardly with it? They are to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Mat. 3:11. Every disciple ought to wait for, receive, and experience this baptism. They are to be washed with the Spirit of judgment and burning, and to have their corrupt blood purged away thereby. Isa. 4:4. They are inwardly to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, that they may inwardly rise up in the newness of the life, and of that living name. Mat. 28:19. They are to be baptized into the one body, which is the spiritual body; and by spiritual baptism is the soul baptized into it (and not by that which is carnal), and so to come to Mount Zion, and the heavenly Jerusalem, and enter into it; which the uncircumcised and unclean cannot enter into, but they alone that know the truth as it is in Jesus, and keep it. Heb. 12:22. Isa. 52:1. and chap. 26:2.

Query 2. "If but one baptism commanded, and men cannot baptize one another with the Spirit, and it is sinful to afflict one another, what baptism is this one baptism?"

Answer. God made his apostles (and makes those whom he makes ministers in the gospel) able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. And if the Lord make them able ministers in his Spirit, what should hinder them from ministering the spiritual baptism? The same Spirit that teaches through them, is it not able to baptize through them? "Who is sufficient for these things?" says the apostle, 2 Cor. 2:16. Were they sufficient to teach, but as God taught through them? And are they not sufficient to baptize, as God baptizes through them? How often have we found our souls taught and baptized by the water of life flowing from the spring of life through the holy ministry, which God has mercifully raised up, and makes use of, in these our days.

Query 3. "Whether it be not the work of God on the inner man, that brings the outward man to be baptized, and obey the commands of God?"

Answer. It was the work of God on the inner man, when John's baptism was commanded by God, to bring men to John's baptism; and it is the work of God's Spirit in the heart, which brings men to discern and subject to Christ's baptism; for the baptism of Christ is not discerned by man's wisdom, or by the reasoning mind, but by the sense of life in the heart.

Query 4. "Whether men can be truly sanctified by faith and the Spirit, that are disobedient to God, and live so?"

Answer. No, they cannot. But true obedience requires true light and true understanding; for all are not obedient who judge themselves so, but those whom God judges so. The inward Jew is obedient to the inward baptism, which Christ has appointed, and dares not set up John's outward in its place.

Query 5. "Whether the Spirit of God does not distinguish between sprinkling of the Spirit, and baptism?"

Answer. They are both figurative expressions; but they tend to, and end in, one and the same thing in substance, which is inward cleansing. "Sprinkling clean water upon the soul, does cleanse it." Ezek 36:25. And dipping into, or being overwhelmed with, the water of life, in the pourings out of the Spirit upon the soul, does cleanse also. For there is a river, the streams whereof do not only refresh, but also cleanse and carry away sin and filth from the soul, as with a flood.

I pray consider that place, Isa. 44:3,4,5. When God, from the fountain of life, pours out water and floods upon him that is athrist, do not these floods and water wash him and nourish him also? Do not they wash away that which hinders his springing up and growth in the truth? And is not he hereby baptized into the name of the Lord? God is the God of Jacob, the Holy One of Israel. And does not one that is washed, feeling that carried away by the floods and overflowings of the Spirit, inwardly feel, and presently say in his heart, "I am the Lord's. And another surname himself by the name of Israel"? Now, I am one of the seed of Jacob indeed, and of God's Israel, and that name belongs to me. I am inwardly washed from my former wicked and deceitful heart: that is gone, and a new heart and spirit of God's creating and forming is witnessed by me, and God's Spirit testifies in me, and to me, "That I am an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

Query 6. "Whether the circumcising knife be not the word of God, and the soul obeying of it be not a sign the knife has entered, and taken place on the soul of man?"

Answer. It is true; the word of God, the quick, powerful, piercing word of life, the word which lives and abides forever, and is a commandment of life in the heart, (Deut. 30:11-15. which is the commandment, law, or word of the new covenant, chap. 29:1. which is the word of faith, which the apostles preached, Rom. 10:8.) this word of God is the circumcising knife, and the soul obeying of it cannot but be circumcised by it.

But I am jealous with a godly jealousy, lest he mistake and call something else the word, and reckon his obedience to what he apprehends from the letter, to be obedience to the word; and if so he greatly deceives his own soul. And I have good reason thus to be jealous concerning him, because I find him, in his answer to my first query, terming water-baptism the "Law of the Spirit of life in Christ;" which cannot but be strange language to all that know the nature, virtue, life, and power of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Query 7. "Whether baptism does not lead men into Christ, as obedience to the mind of God in Noah's time led him into the ark, that we may be saved by Christ, as Noah was by the ark?"

Answer. It is the Father, by his drawings, that leads men to Christ, and Christ by his Spirit baptizes them into himself. He conforms those to himself that come to him, both in his death and resurrection, by the Spirit and power of the Father.

Now, it is this baptism, or the inward washing, which removes that which destroys; and the soul that is subject to the ministration of Christ's Spirit, and gives up to be washed by him, is washed and made clean, and comes into the number of the saved; for feeling the power which saves, and experiencing the virtue and operation of it, he must needs be saved thereby.

Nor was it obedience in Noah's time which led him into the ark, but God's voice or special command to him, which he received in the faith, ("By faith he prepared the ark." Heb. 11:7.) which faith produced obedience; so that it is faith in the mighty power of God which saves; which power works mightily in

them that truly believe, mightily circumcising, mightily baptizing, mightily burying with Christ, burying the soul into his death, and raising it up again in the newness of his life. So that here is a real inward work of faith, a real inward appearing and working of the power, and a real obedience to, and a going along with, the power in its work, in the holy fear and trembling; and so the soul works out its salvation, by the power which works in it "both to will and to do according to God's good pleasure." Phil. 2:12-13. Eph. 1:19-20.

Query 8. "Whether Christ was not buried in the water in baptism? We then being baptized, are we not buried with Christ by baptism?"

Answer. Christ was circumcised with Moses' circumcision, and was also baptized with John's baptism, which was a dipping into, or burying in, the water; yet notwithstanding this, he has his own spiritual circumcision and spiritual baptism, to be administered in the gospel dispensation unto his. And as all Moses' disciples were to be circumcised with his circumcision, and all John's disciples to be baptized with his baptism unto repentance, so all Christ's disciples are to be inwardly circumcised and baptized with his inward circumcision and baptism, which is the substance of both the other figures.

Now, those only that are thus circumcised, are circumcised by Christ, and those only that are thus baptized, are buried with him by baptism into his death; which must be, before they can truly know a rising with him in his life. May not a man or woman easily, from an apprehension in their understanding, go into the outward water, and rise up again out of the water, and yet not know what it is to die with Christ, or rise with Christ? But he that knows the inward baptism witnesses and experiences these things, being made a partaker with Christ, both in his death and resurrection.

Query 9. "Whether obedience to the law of God does not give a soul a good conscience in the sight of God, and disobedience make the conscience guilty? And whether ever the soul can be clear of sin, while living in disobedience to the law of God?"

Answer. It is God's sprinkling the soul, whether with the water of his holy fountain, or with the blood of the covenant, and his washing them therewith, which makes the conscience good. Ezek. 36:25. Zec. 13:1. Heb. 10:22. (Let it be considered seriously, whether outward water, or inward, be intended in that place. Heb. 10:22. And when David said, he washed his hands in innocency, Psa. 26:6. whether he did it with outward water.) This water, this blood, this sprinkling, this washing, is received in obedience, and not in disobedience. But what obedience is it received in? Is it received in obedience to Moses' circumcision or John's baptism? or in obedience to Christ's circumcision and baptism? And let him, and all of his persuasion, seriously weigh, whether ever the soul can be clear of sin, while living in ignorance of, or disobedience to, Christ's circumcision and baptism, whereby alone sin can be cut off from the heart, and washed away from the conscience.

Query 10. "Whether to obey God be not the way to meet with God, and to be baptized of God?"

Answer. "Obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams." And to obey Christ's Spirit in the gospel dispensation, being inwardly circumcised and washed by him, is far better than to be circumcised with Moses' circumcision, or baptized with John's baptism. The day is dawned, and the shadows are fled away, and the obedience is not now to the shadowy ordinances of Moses, or John the Baptist, but to the light of the day, which shines in the hearts of the children of the new covenant. And they only have the true knowledge of Christ, and the true obedience, who know the shinings of this

light, and walk with God in the shinings thereof. 2 Cor. 4:6. 1 John 1:7.

Query 11. "Whether men can idolize God's ordinances, in keeping, doing, loving, and living up to them?"

Answer. They that set up Moses' circumcision or John's baptism for Christ's (which are not outward, as Moses' and John's, but inward and spiritual), they idolize them, and are found guilty of so doing, in the sight of him who judges righteously. Is it not idolizing the shadow or figure, to set it up in the place of the substance?

Query 12. "Whether men's calling the keeping, doing, loving, and pleading for God's ordinances, idolatry, but not some of those hard speeches Jude speaks of, Jude 15?"

Answer. He still all along takes the thing in question for granted. We grant that Moses' circumcision was God's ordinance, and that John's baptism was God's ordinance; but that either of these is a gospel ordinance, that Moses' circumcision is the circumcision of Christ, or John's water-baptism is the baptism of Christ, — that we conscientiously and groundedly deny; God's Spirit in the Scriptures putting a difference between them; as particularly, between John's baptism and Christ's. Mat. 3:11. So that as he greatly mistakes the thing, so (through his mistake) he lamentably wrests and misapplies that scripture, Jude 15. And let him seriously consider, whether that scripture may not justly be applied to them, and whether they can possibly avoid the lash of it, without repentance, who deny and revile the inward appearance of Christ, by the light of his Spirit, in the hearts of his, in this our day, and deny his inward circumcision and baptism to be the gospel ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ, setting up John's water-baptism in the stead thereof.

The last Query, "Whether it be not invading, and laboring to make void God's law and commands, when men so slight, contemn, despise, write, and do all they can to keep people from closing in with them, and make them afraid of them by their writing and preaching, as some do?"

Answer. This Query implies a very deep, wrong charge against the children and servants of God, for their obedience to God's Spirit. Oh, how will he answer this to God! Because we own Christ's baptism, with the Holy Ghost and fire, and into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, with the water of the fountain which God opens for sin, and for uncleanness, and give testimony thereto in the requirings of God's Spirit, having learned it of him, and experienced it from him, and having a necessity upon us in his name and authority (many times) to testify, that this is the gospel baptism of Christ our Lord, and that John's water-baptism is not the gospel baptism, but only a figure, representation, or shadow thereof; therefore this man charges us with invading, and laboring to make void God's law and commands, with slighting, contemning, despising, etc. Are not these hard words, and a very unjust accusation against God's chosen messengers and servants, and any whom he pleases to make use of in this testimony? But the truth is, these hard words are not so much against us as against Him that sends us with this testimony, and is no less than a fighting against Him who will be too hard for you all, and will gather people more and more from the outward water-baptism of John, to the inward baptism by His Holy Spirit and fire, which happy are they that know and are baptized with.

He says at the close, "I have no end in this, but God's glory."

Answer. But he greatly mistakes the way to glorify God; for to set up the shadow of a thing, instead of the thing itself, is not the way to glorify Christ, or the gospel dispensation. For Christ is the Son, who

does not come forth with Moses' circumcision, or John's baptism (who were both servants), but with the Spirit and power of his Father, wherewith he circumcises and baptizes inwardly and spiritually. And to set up that which is outward in the stead of this is both to dishonor the Father and the Son.

THE CONCLUSION

Now, for a close, I shall open a little of the mystery of Christ, and of his enlightening, quickening, circumcising, and baptizing, from some scriptures, as the Lord has pleased to open them in me, and to me, and give me the inward sense and experience of them.

John 1:1 and 3. "The Word was in the beginning, which created all things;" and this Word is also the beginning of the creation of God in the heart. "In this Word was life, and the life was the light of men; and this light, which is life in the Word, shines in men's darkness," which enlightens them that believe in it, and the life thereof quickens and gives life to them that hear its voice, and believe in it; and both the light and life, or the Word by its light and life, circumcises and baptizes. Does not the pure light cut off, chase away, wash away darkness (wherein all sin and uncleanness is comprehended) from the heart? Does not the pure Word of life, received in the faith, purify the heart?

Question. But where is this Word? or how shall a man come at this Word, or hear its voice or commandment, in the obedience whereof he is enlightened, quickened, circumcised, and baptized?

Answer. It is not far off; "It is nigh you, says Moses, you need not go up to heaven for it, or down to the deep," etc. For God, in his love to man, has placed it nigher, even in man's mouth and heart, that he might hear it and do it. Deut. 30. and Rom. 10. And he that inclines his ear to this Word, hears and obeys it, lives. And as it is the Word of the new covenant (in which is the light and life of the new covenant), so it brings him into the new covenant, or makes an everlasting covenant with him, even the sure mercies of David. Isa. 55:3.

Another scripture is, 1 John 1:1. where he speaks of the same Word, of the same life, of the same light, wherewith men are enlightened, and wherein they are to walk. ver. 7. That which is declared of, that which is to be testified of by the gospel ministers, is the Word, the life, the light. This is the message Christ gave his apostles to preach, "That God is light." ver. 5. What is the intent of this message, but "that men might be turned from darkness to this light." Acts 26:18. And then the light enlightens them, and they soon come to feel life, and the Word from which the life comes. And so they that truly received the testimony of the light (which is the gospel message, ver. 5), they soon come to the manifestation of the life (or of him who is the life) in their own hearts, and so into fellowship with them that are in the light, and with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ also.

A third scripture is, 2 Cor. 4:6. which shows the way of enlightening the mind, which is by God's causing the light of life to shine in the heart; which being believed in, gives the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God is a Spirit; the knowledge of him is spiritual, given and received in the shinings of his light in the heart.

Thus we receive the beginnings of our spiritual knowledge, and thus we receive the increase thereof day by day. In his light (in the shinings of his light in our hearts) we see light at first, and in the further

shinings thereof we see more and more light.

The last place I shall mention is Mat. 13:31. The kingdom of God was that which Christ much preached, and here he preaches it as a "seed sown in the heart," and that a very little one. Now, consider if this be not the Word of God in a seed, Christ in a seed, life in a seed, light in a seed, God's seed ("his seed remains in him," 1 John 3:9). Now, this seed as it grows in the heart, grows in its own life, light, nature, Spirit, power, etc., and puts all these forth in the heart in which it grows against sin, and towards righteousness. Yes, the judgment of God is revealed in the spiritual light, life, and power of this Word against sin, and for righteousness; and God's Zion, God's inward, spiritual Zion (or his people and children) is redeemed by the judgment and righteousness which is revealed from and in this Word in the heart. And this Word is so powerful against sin, that it does not only cut it off, and wash it away from the mind and conscience, and so make them clean, but it also keeps the mind, in which it remains, as it is regarded and hearkened to, from joining to sin any more; and if sin cannot be joined to, it can neither be conceived nor brought forth. 1 John 3:9. James 1:15.

Objection. But by this doctrine or experience, as you call it, Christ in his outward appearance, his sacrifice and blood, as also the Scriptures, with the exhortations and commands thereof, are all laid waste, and made void, and of no use or effect, all being attributed to this Word, life, and light within.

Answer. No, in nowise. This Word within, with the life and light thereof, does not make void any former appearance or ministration of God, but rather establishes them, by owning them in their proper place, use, and service. For he that truly owns this Word, light, life, spirit, power, etc. in his own heart, must also own it in the hearts of others, in Moses, in the prophets, in John, and in its fulness in Christ in the flesh; and the virtue of all it did in Christ, and by Christ in the flesh, towards the salvation of mankind, which his obedience, and the shedding of his blood, was by the Father made absolutely requisite unto. And the Scriptures, the instructions reproofs exhortations, commands thereof, etc. in the hand of the Spirit, are very useful to this day; and the shinings of Christ, and the quickenings of his life, are felt in them, when the Lord manages them unto the soul for good. Yes, the words which Christ spoke in the days of his flesh, are spirit and life to this day, when he speaks them in the heart. But they are not life, as men apprehend, understand, or speak them of themselves, but rather death, as so made use of.

And those that thus only learn the words, or practice the words, they do not learn aright, pr practice aright; they do not know Christ aright, they do not believe aright, or repent aright; they cannot know Christ as he is the word of life in the heart, nor hear him, nor obey him, nor be circumcised or baptized by him; but are drowned in literal apprehensions and conceptions of their own, beneath him who is the life.

Thus the Jews, in their day waited for the Messiah, and spake great things of the kingdom of the Messiah, but knew neither him nor his kingdom, when he appeared and preached it. So likewise, many now speak great things of Christ being come, and of his obedience, death, resurrection, ascension, etc., and yet know not him, his voice, his appearance in their own hearts, or in the hearts of others; but think in their obedience to what they apprehend from the Scriptures to have eternal life, while strangers to the living principle of truth, whereby he gives eternal life to his sheep "that hear his voice, and follow the Lamb of God wheresoever he goes," and leads along his sheep with him. John 10:27-28.

He that would know God and Christ to salvation, must know them in that mystery of light and life,

wherein and whereby they save and deliver from the mystery of sin and death; for there is the mystery of God, the mystery of the Father, the mystery of Christ, the mystery of the gospel, the revelation of the mystery, the preaching of the mystery, the mystery of the kingdom of God, the speaking the wisdom of God in a mystery, the riches of the glory of the mystery, the acknowledgment of the mystery, the fellowship of the mystery, and the mystery of the faith held in a pure conscience. The true ministers of Christ are stewards of the mysteries of God. They have the treasure of life in their earthen vessels, and are to give forth from that treasure to those they minister to, and bring them to the discerning and partaking of the same treasure in themselves.

Oh, consider, consider all you professors of Christ, and of the Christian religion! There is a mysterious power that begets, a mysterious womb that conceives and brings forth, a mysterious birth that is begotten and brought forth, which hungers after the mystery, and is fed with the knowledge, life, and virtue of the mystery. That birth which is of a nature below this, or feeds on a knowledge below this, and has a faith and hope beneath the nature of the faith and hope which God gives to his birth, is but the child or birth of the bond-woman, which is not to inherit with Isaac, the true heir; but all such kind of children of the kingdom must be cast out, with the bond-woman, their mother. Mat. 8:12. Gal. 4:30.

The birth of the Father's Spirit and power is only the true inward Jew or Christian, to which the promises, the kingdom, and everlasting salvation belongs; and all else are but pretenders to be what they are not; who after all the fires of their own kindling, and sparks wherewith they compass themselves about, will at last lie down in sorrow from the hand of the Lord. Oh that none might be deceived by the enemy of their soul, about matters of so great concern!

I. P.

Eighteenth of 5th Month, 1679

SOME QUERIES CONCERNING COMPULSION IN RELIGION

[1670]

Query 1. WHETHER every man ought not to endeavor to be fully persuaded in his own soul concerning the religion and worship which he performs and offers up to God?

Query 2. Whether, when a man is fully persuaded concerning the religion and worship he ought to perform to God, whether he is not then bound in conscience so to worship and serve God, as he is fully persuaded in his own soul?

Query 3. Whether, if a man should leave that way of religion and worship, whereof he is fully persuaded in his own soul, and should worship according to the law and worship of the country wherein he lives, whether this would be accepted of the Lord, and whether his soul would not be in

danger of the displeasure and wrath of the Lord therefor?

Query 4. Whether God has given any man or men power, by laws and penalties, to compel men to worship him contrary to the belief of their hearts and the full persuasions of their souls? Is it not written, that whatsoever is not of faith is sin? And has God given any men power and authority to compel others to sin? Surely the end of magistracy is to restrain men from sin, and not to compel men to sin.

Query 5. Whether under the law of Moses, the worship was not first made manifestly clear to men's hearts and consciences, and they fully persuaded thereof, before they allowed any penalties annexed for failing in it, or turning aside from it?

Query 6. Whether under the gospel, Christ or his apostles did ever compel any by outward force to their way of worship, or give any rule for compulsion after their days. Did not they say, they were not lords over men's faith, but that there was one Lord and Master, even Christ, to whom every man was to give an account? Now, if men should commend us for worshipping as they teach us, and by laws require of us contrary to the belief and full persuasion of our own souls, and Christ condemn and punish us therefor, would it not go hard with us?

Query 7. Was it not the beast that compelled men to worship, and is he not branded therefor? Rev. 13. But could he by his laws and penalties compel any, whose names were written in the book of life, to his worship? others indeed he did compel, and cause to worship, as may be seen in that chapter.

Query 8. Is not Christ's kingdom spiritual? Are not the weapons of his warfare spiritual? Are they not mighty through God, to convince and establish men in the truth, and in the way of the gospel worship? Would Christ have any people forced by outward compulsion, to serve or worship him? Whosoever will, let him come, says he; and his people are a willing people, and God loves a cheerful giver and a cheerful worshipper. Is not compulsion a great argument against that church and ministry that uses it, that they lack the spiritual weapons? that they lack the authority and power of the true church and ministry, and so are quick to supply it by the authority and power of man? For that which is of man, if it were not held up by man, would fall; but the truth will grow and increase, and that which is of God will stand and out-live all the violence and oppositions of men. And one thing is worthy of very serious consideration concerning this worship, which there is such striving to compel men to, which is this; what kind of persons they are that dissent from it, and what they are, for the generality, that so cry it up. Are not many of them very loose, profane, swearers, cursers, excessive drinkers, yes, some of them Atheists? Is there not a ground of jealousy at least, if not a strong argument, against that worship and way of religion which pleases these?

Can that which came from God, and is of God, please corrupt man? And who are they that dissent from, and dare not practice it? Are they not men of tender consciences, and that fear to offend the Lord, and who seek after that religion and worship, wherein there is truth, life, virtue, and power? Now, which of these are likeliest to know the truth, and to be taught of the Lord the true worship?

Oh that these things were seriously considered of! for though men were wicked and profane themselves, yet if they did not oppose that which is good, but could allow others quietly to serve and fear the Lord, neither their sin nor danger would be so great.

I. P.

Reading Jail, 19th of the Seventh month, 1670.

He that rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God; now he that is just and rules in the fear of God, cannot afflict or punish any for fearing God, or for worship which they perform to him in his fear. Shall not he that made the world be worshipped by his children and servants, according as he requires of them? But shall the authorities of this world oppose him therein, and with all their might stop and hinder (as much as in them lies) his children and servants from obeying him? Now, the Lord God of heaven and earth (who is above all, and has power over all) knows, that not in opposition to authority, but in the fear of his name, do we (who are called Quakers) meet together to worship him as he has required of us; and that if we should not so do, we should sin against him, and be guilty of rebellion against the King of kings, who is able to save and destroy body and soul forever. And in this case it is that Christ has bid us not fear him that can kill the body, and can go no further, but rather to fear him who can kill both body and soul, and cast them into hell.

Oh that the magistrates of this nation were just, ruling in the fear of God! could they then afflict those that fear him as they do, even such as are taught by him to love and pray for their enemies? Is not there work enough for the magistrate's sword against manifest wicked men, but it must still be turned against those that fear the Lord? Will you provoke the Lord to the utmost? Are you stronger than he? Will you put it to the proof, whether he be able to deliver his people or no? Remember, the nations are but as the drop of a bucket, and as the small dust of the balance before him? What then is the wisdom and strength of one, two, three, or four nations, to his wisdom and strength?

This is written in our hearts, that God is to have his due, as well as Caesar his; and that God is to have his due in the first place, but Caesar after God, and in subjection to God. But if there be an absolute necessity put upon us by men (which they ought not to do), either of disobeying God or Caesar, we do really believe that question of some of the apostles, in this case, to be very weighty, and worthy to be duly considered. Acts 4:19. Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge you, for we cannot but obey the Lord our God in what he has required and does require of us. And truly, if we should do so, great and dreadful woe would be upon our souls, and we should lose the enjoyment of God's presence, and the peace which passes all understanding; which we cannot but value above our estates, liberties, or whatever outward thing we can enjoy or possess in this world, above our very lives; yes, it were far better for every one of us to lose our lives in our faithful testimony to the true worship of God in Spirit and truth, which he has taught us, and required us to practice and give our testimony to, than to be found unfaithful and disobedient to him herein.

I. P.

Reading Jail, the 12th of 7th Mo. 1670

CONCERNING THE DISPENSATION OF THE GOSPEL

OR THE

DISPENSATION OF THE SON IN SPIRIT

WHICH IS THE LAST DISPENSATION

WHEREBY THE

Mystery of God, the Mystery of the work of Redemption, is finished in the Heart, all created anew inwardly, all subdued that is contrary to God, the Soul brought into, or translated into, the Everlasting Kingdom, and the Kingdom at length delivered up to the FATHER, and GOD becomes All in All; where all Names cease, and the Pure, Eternal Being is known, united to, and lived in, after an unutterable Manner.

[1678]

TO know the Father (even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) as the fountain or original spring of light, life, love, wisdom, power, holiness, righteousness, and all spiritual and heavenly blessings:

To know the Son as the way to the Father, as the way to life, peace, and blessedness in the Father:

To know the Son's Spirit, and the Father's also, whereby the Father draws to the Son, and the Son brings to the Father; whereby the Son quickens, begets, renews, sanctifies, destroys, cuts down, burns up that which is drossy, corrupt, and chaffy; yes, not only the fruits of sin, but the very root itself, yes, the very earth in which the root grows, and the heavens that water the earth are consumed and pass away inwardly, and a new heaven and a new earth is inwardly planted and formed, wherein dwells righteousness; so that the cage of unclean birds, the place where the dragons lay, is shaken and removed, and the place of the wicked inwardly known no more; but instead thereof there are new heavens and earth, even of the new creation of God; which earth brings forth the increase of life, and fruits of life, the seeds and trees of righteousness, of God's sowing, planting, grafting, pruning, and causing to grow, that he may be glorified, — I say,

Thus to know the Father, thus to know the Son, thus to know the Holy Spirit of light, life, love, and righteousness, etc., not notionally in the brain, or with a comprehensive knowledge of the mind, but livingly in the heart, in the light that shines from the Father and Son, in the life that springs from them, in the love which is of them (for indeed, it is love that gives the bright, purely sensible, and uniting knowledge), — this is precious knowledge; and all knowledge of the very same things any otherwise than as coming from, and held in, this springing life, is of no comparison with the excellency (for nature and virtue) of this kind of knowledge.

Now, there have been two great dispensations of the Father, Son, and Spirit. The one figurative, the other substantial. The one called the law, the other the gospel. For under the law the Father was made known, the Son made known, the Spirit made known; but all in figures and outward ways of manifestation. God was to that people of the Jews a fountain of living waters; and when they forsook him, and trusted in lying vanities, they forsook the fountain of their own mercies. They then forsook the fountain of living waters, digging to themselves broken cisterns that could hold no water.

So the Son was made known under the types and figures of the law, as the King of righteousness, as the high priest of God, as the prophet that God would raise up, as the spiritual rock which yielded the spiritual waters, of which the soul was to drink. And they that were athirst were to come to him and buy wine and milk of him, and incline their ear to him, that they might hear and live, and he would make an everlasting covenant with them, even the sure mercies of David.

So the Spirit of God, which was typified under a pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderness, did strive with man before the law, and was given to the Jews to instruct them, and to plow up their fallow ground, and circumcise them inwardly, and to wash their hearts from wickedness and vain thoughts, that they might not lodge in them.

But all this was not properly (in the Spirit and power of it) the dispensation of the law; but hid in a mystery, and running under-ground, as I may so say. This was from another covenant, and part of another covenant than the covenant of the law, though in the time of the law. For there was another covenant which Moses declared of, besides the covenant of the law made in Horeb, which was the word of life, or word of faith in the mouth and heart, which teaches the substance of the law, and also gives power to fulfill the righteousness of the law, to them that hear and receive its voice, in the faith which it gives or begets. And so the Father of Spirits was known in the time of the law. Christ, the Redeemer, was known to live, yes to live in the heart in the time of the law. The free Spirit, the Spirit of love was received, and the presence of God felt and enjoyed by God's Calebs, Joshuas, and Davids (by men after God's own heart) in the time of the law. Moses had his meekness and tenderness, and was made faithful in all God's house by the Spirit of Christ, the meek lamb-like Spirit.

Now, when the shadows came to an end, Christ, the substance, was to come. The everlasting King, the everlasting High Priest, the everlasting Prophet was to appear. The everlasting Rock and holy Builder was to appear, and raise up David's tabernacle in Spirit, and minister in the true sanctuary, by his light, by his life, by his power, by his righteous Spirit. There is not another tabernacle to be built, not another temple, not another Jerusalem than the heavenly Jerusalem, not another Mount Zion to be known or come to than the gospel Mount Zion; not another God than God the judge of all in the gospel state; not another word or law of life than the law which goes forth out of Zion, and the word that issues out from this heavenly Jerusalem; not another water to wash the soul with, not another blood to sprinkle the conscience with, not another spirit to enlighten, quicken, keep alive, and comfort, than the Spirit of light, life, and love from God, which reconciles unto God, and brings into the gospel righteousness, rest, and peace, and establishes the soul therein.

So now, feeling the Spirit of the Son, and being led by him to the Father, and the Father with the Son by the Holy Spirit, creating me anew, enlightening me, quickening me, raising me in life, circumcising my heart to love, I am come to life, and at rest in him that lives in me, and works in me, and gives me to live, and work, and rest in him. For there are the sabbath-day's works, even works of love, works of life, works of righteousness and holiness, works that the Lord works in the souls in whom he dwells

and rests, and which they in the pure rest, peace, and joy of life, work in the Lord their God, who works all their works in them and for them.

Now, in this gospel dispensation, or this dispensation of the Son in Spirit, all other dispensations are gathered into and wrapped up, and thoroughly experienced by the soul that travels with and is led by Christ, in this his gospel dispensation.

As first, There is Moses in Spirit known and traveled through. There is the ministration of the law in Spirit inwardly commanding known, heard, felt, received, before the gospel power is given to perform. And here is hard travel and sore exercises. Here the Father is known commanding, the soul consents and would eagerly obey, but finds the law in the members rebelling against the law which the mind has a sense of, and desires after.

Then afterwards comes the dispensation of the prophets, wherein there are prophecies of a better state to come, openings of the mercy and love which is to be manifested in the latter days, at the end of these trials and exercises, wherein the soul has promises from God, that the righteousness shall be revealed, that power to become a son shall be given, and the enemy's strength broken, and the bowed-down soul raised up from under his oppression, and the Lord shall tread him under the feet of the poor and needy, and the hungry and thirsty shall be filled with righteousness, and the meek come to inherit God's earth, and the beggar come from the dung-hill, raised up in the power of life, to sit among princes, even the princes in the heavenly glory of God's everlasting kingdom.

After this succeeds John's ministry in Spirit, even the leveling the mountains, the raising up the valleys, the preparing the way for the King of glory, that he may come in and reveal his glory inwardly. For not in the time of the law inwardly, nor in the time of the prophecies inwardly; but after the soul is exercised and prepared inwardly (that being wasted which hindered, that raised up which lay low, that made straight which lay crooked, that made plain that was rough, and so the way is prepared and fitted for the great appearance of the great God and Savior, in the pure, bright gospel glory, Spirit, and power), does the King come suddenly into his temple; not when the foundation is laid, but when Zion is built up, does God appear in his glory therein. Read Isa. 40:3-5. and consider. After John's coming in a body of flesh, and preparing the way by his outward ministry, Christ came in a body of flesh, and was revealed as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, by the life, Spirit, and power that that body was filled with. And after John comes in Spirit, and prepares the way in any heart, by the mighty and effectual operation of his ministry there, then Christ comes after him in Spirit, in the great power and glory of the Father, and the Father is revealed, and the Son also in the Spirit of light, life, love, and righteousness, and the glory of the Lord is beheld with open face, in the glass of life and righteousness, and the soul is changed into the same image, and partakes of the heavenly glory, and is married or joined to the Lord, to become one spirit with him, and has fellowship with the Father and the Son in the light of life; and this is the gospel state and glory, and there is not another.

Now take one scripture more which sums up all dispensations, and sets up the dispensation of the Son in Spirit as the last, as the dispensation of the last days. It is Heb. 1:1; read but what things are spoken of to be brought to pass in the last days of the great gospel glory to be revealed then, of the perfect redeeming to God, and centering in him, of being married to him, and becoming one with him, etc., and of the Son's being the minister in the gospel state, by the Spirit and power of the endless life, to bring it all forth, and accomplish it in the husbandry and building of God. Consider the place; at sundry times, and in diverse manners, God spake in times past by Moses, by the prophets, by John;

but now the last days are come, now the last dispensation is come, now the covenant wherein God himself is the teacher is come, now the time of building the Zion, the Jerusalem, wherein God himself will dwell forever, is come; now the light of the city of God is come, which is an eternal light, an unchangeable light. Now, the Spirit of love, which brings up the gospel life, is come, and edifies the holy gospel building, in the gospel love and life. Oh, the light, oh, the life, oh, the love, oh, the righteousness, oh, the divine nature, which is now revealed and partook of in the Son! He is the brightness of the Father's glory; and there he brings his. What would you have more? He destroys antichrist inwardly, by the brightness of his coming or appearing. Oh, the desolations that he makes inwardly of sin and iniquity in the hearts of his! He is the express image (or engraving) of his Father's substance; and he makes you, who are one with him in his Spirit of life and love, of the same image with him. He translates you out of Satan's image, into his very image. His light, his life, his love, his righteousness, his divine nature, does not wax old as a garment, but endure and remain the same forever. He is Alpha and Omega. There was nothing before him, nor shall be after him. There is no other thing appertaining to life and godliness, but what he now dispenses in the gospel; no other kingdom, but what stands in the power of the life and righteousness, which is now revealed in the peace, love, and joy of the Spirit. The gospel building is his house; and he is faithful in all his house, as a Son, having received all power from his Father, to gather fully, to preserve fully, to build up fully, to leaven fully with life and righteousness, even in soul, body, and spirit, to lead into the Holy Land, and to enable to keep the holy sabbath there, even to cease from sin, and every thing that burdens the life, and to rest in God, and not work any thing of ourselves any more, but to feel the Spirit of life, love, and power work in us. And his yoke of life, his yoke of love, his yoke of the power, is the pure gospel liberty comprehended in. The Lord Jesus did appear in flesh; but now he appears in Spirit, and is Spirit; giving himself to be life and Spirit in his. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and every thing which is of a fleshly nature, which deceives and imbondages, wherein the pure liberty is not, he discovers, and keeps his out of, that so they may stand fast in the pure liberty of the light, life, and love of his Holy Spirit, wherewith he makes his free.

I. P.

The 18th of the 9th Month, 1678

SOME EXPERIENCES

WHICH IT HATH PLEASSED THE LORD TO GIVE ME, CONCERNING HIS WAY, HIS TRUTH, HIS CHURCH AND PEOPLE, AGAINST WHOM THE GATES OF HELL CANNOT PREVAIL

First, IT has pleased the Lord to manifest to me, that there is a light wherewith he (in his tender mercy, love, and good-will) enlightens mankind. This light I have found my own soul enlightened with, even from my very childhood, though I never took notice of it to be what it is, till the Lord manifested it to me. But ever since it pleased the Lord to manifest it to me, and to turn my mind to it, I have found it to shine inwardly in my heart, even as the outward light of the sun shines outwardly to the outward eye.

Secondly, By this light it has pleased the Lord to give me the distinction of things inwardly in my own heart. The Lord has shown me by it evil and good in my own heart, and taught me to choose the good, and refuse the evil. So that as my eye has been turned to this light, and kept to this light, I have known and walked in the way of life; for the power which has appeared in this light, has created me anew, made me a child of light, and taught and caused me to walk in this light, as God is in the light. And in this light I have experienced fellowship with the Father who is light, and with his Son who is light also, and with all the children of light.

Thirdly, In this light (being gathered out of darkness into it, and abiding in it) I have had remission of sins. For no sin is laid to the charge of any soul that abides in this light, but only to such as continue in darkness, or go out from it into darkness. This I have had the constant experience of from my first distinct knowledge of God's truth; for I never found, at any time, any condemnation, while I abode in the pure light of God's Holy Spirit, and blessed witness; but if at any time, I hearkened to the enemy, the prince of darkness, and went by his allurements into darkness, I still met with condemnation there.

Fourthly, In this light I have received power to become a son to God. Oh, it is unutterable to relate what power is here received against the soul's enemies, and to do the will of God! Indeed, in the light there is power; yes, full power, suitable to every soul's condition. There needs no more power (no not to the highest condition) than what is laid up, and to be received in this light. All the power of darkness is communicated in the darkness to the children of darkness; and all the power of light is communicated in the light to the children of light. In the light there is a holy will and ability given daily more and more, and the unholy will and ability (which troubles the holy seed) removed out of the way.

Fifthly, In this light I know the true church, the holy gathering by the gospel spirit and power; for none are the true church in the gospel days but such. The law church was a company of Jews after the flesh, circumcised in flesh, to keep the outward law of commandments; but the gospel church is a company of believers after the Spirit, circumcised in Spirit, to keep the inward law, even the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes free from the law of sin and death. So that all the gospel church are children of the true woman, growing up in the holy liberty from the bondage of sin and corruption, unto the royal law of holiness and righteousness. So that being in the light, I see the children of light, and know that the holy gathering, even the gospel church, are such, and that none else can be of the gospel church, having (out of the light) nothing of the nature of the gospel church or Spirit in them. You may as well make a man without the nature of a man, as a Christian without the nature of a Christian. He was not a Jew outward under the law, without the nature of a Jew outward; nor is he a Jew inward under the gospel, without the nature of a Jew inward. And as the law church consisted of Jews outward, so the gospel church consists of Jews inward; which are children of light, and not of darkness, and can be known only by them who are in the true light. So that the Lord having mercifully gathered me into his gospel light, these things (in his gospel light) have been clearly seen by me.

Sixthly, In this light I know the gospel worship, the worship which lies not in the darkness of man's apprehensions, but in the light which shines from God in the heart. For the children of God are taught in the light, know God their Father in his own pure light, and worship in the light, wherein they are taught by him to know him. They worship in the truth. They are led by the Spirit of light and truth, out of darkness, out of deceit, out of all kind of error and unrighteousness; and they worship in truth, and in the Spirit, into which they are led, and in which there is no deceit nor error. They gather together in the Son's name (in his living name, oh, wait to understand that!). And there the Son is in the midst of

them, and his life and Spirit intercedes in them; and in his name they offer up the righteous sacrifices, the holy sacrifices of life, and the pure incense, in which the Father is greatly delighted, and smells a sweet smell and savor of rest.

Seventhly, In this light I have experienced the good conscience, even the conscience which answers to truth, and will not answer to unrighteousness. Indeed in this light I have felt my heart sprinkled from an evil conscience (I testify it in deep humility of spirit, and in great thankfulness towards the Lord). The darkness defiles and stains; but in the pure light the heart is washed, cleansed, and sanctified, from which arises the answer of a good conscience towards God. And in this light the conscience is still kept good; but though it has its habitation in the light, if it keep not its habitation, but go out from there into the darkness, it is soon defiled and corrupted again.

Eighthly, I have, and (bless the Lord) daily do still, experience faith, the heavenly faith of the new birth, the precious gift of God to his own children, in this pure blessed light of the Son of God, which shines from the heavenly glory into the hearts of his redeemed ones. Unbelief came at first from the darkness, and lodges in the darkness, issuing from there into those that give ear to the dark spirit; but faith springs from the holy root of life in the heart. Here I cannot but believe, and also know him in whom I do believe, who is the holy power of life and light, who opposes and overcomes the prince of darkness, who has the power of death. And in the light God carries on the work of faith with power; and unbelief, which stops it, is not able to enter the minds of those, who are stayed upon the Lord in his pure light.

Ninthly, In the light I taste and enjoy the pure peace, which passes man's understanding. In the darkness is condemnation and trouble, as man's mind comes to be awakened; but in the light is righteousness, justification, and peace, to all that dwell and abide there. Perfect peace the mind here grows up into, which the enemy cannot break or interrupt. Indeed, in the darkness, out of the light, the peace that is there is easily broken; but never in the light is the true peace broken.

Tenthly, In the light I have experience of the killing or mortifying of that which is contrary to the light. "I kill, I make alive, says the Lord." Indeed he does so in and by his light. Does not light expel darkness in the figure? Much more does it so in the substance. Light drives away darkness, banishes darkness, destroys darkness, in the mind that is truly enlightened by the Lord, and singly gives up to his light. Oh! the desolations of darkness (the works of darkness, the power of darkness), that God makes in the hearts of such as are sensible of and subject to the light of his Son shining there. The Lord there cuts his work short in righteousness, making an end of the kingdom of darkness, revealing his own kingdom instead thereof, and gathering and translating the mind thereinto.

Eleventhly, In the light I have experience of the new creation in Christ Jesus, even the passing away of the old things, and the new things coming instead thereof. The old heart gone, the hard heart gone, and a new and tender one instead thereof. The old law of sin and death taken out of the way, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus received in the place thereof. And the fear of the new covenant put into the new heart (in which is the beginning and perfection of the heavenly wisdom), and the Spirit of God put within, to enlighten, enliven, and fill the mind with life and righteousness, and cause it to walk with God in the new and living way, and to know his statutes and judgments, and do them.

Twelfthly, In the light the gospel love is known and springs. In the darkness is enmity; but in the light is love. It is true indeed, that here the whole law is fulfilled, even of loving the Lord God with all the

heart, soul, mind, and strength, and one's neighbor as one's self. Yes, here one is not only commanded to love enemies, but taught and enabled so to do. Yes, keep but here in the light, no enmity can spring up, but only love to the greatest enemies, whom we have no coals of wrath, but only of love to heap upon.

Thirteenthly, Here I meet with and partake of a cool, meek, patient, tender, gentle, quiet, lowly spirit, which is of the Lord, and of much esteem with him. This is the Lamb's nature, who is light; and this also is their nature who are of the Lamb, and walk in the light of the Lamb. All Esau's roughness, all Ishmael's disdain and scoffing, all Cain's envy and cruelty towards his brother, is of the darkness, whereof Cain, Ishmael, and Esau are, and wherein they walk, and their offspring; but this is not found in them who are light in the Lord, and who walk in the light, as he is in the light. And in patience to possess the soul, and to be tender towards sinners, meek, quiet, and humble before the Lord, and of a gentle spirit towards all. Oh! who, besides the children of light, know the preciousness of being created by the Lord, and of thus walking before him, in the light of the Lord Jesus, in the renewings of the mind by him, in the life and power, wherein he anew creates and changes, these things become natural. For in the light, whatever is of the darkness, whatever is corrupt, whatever is of the devil's kingdom, is discovered and removed from them that take up the light's yoke; and a contrary nature planted in the mind instead thereof, which brings forth quite other fruits, even of a contrary kind to what the darkness brought forth before. So that as it was said of Christ, Behold the Lamb of God; so it may be said of them, behold the lambs of God, who are sweet, meek, gentle, lowly in heart like him, bringing forth fruits like him, and walking like sheep among wolves, as he also walked.

Lastly, (To mention no more) Here, in the light, I meet with certainty, assurance, satisfaction; yes, infallibility. I meet with the evidence and demonstration of God's spirit, which is infallible. I meet with God's witness, which is an infallible witness. I meet with God's Spirit, which is an infallible Spirit, who infallibly leads into all truth, and infallibly guides in the truth. I meet with an infallible Shepherd, who has an infallible voice, and gives to his sheep an infallible ear, wherewith they infallibly hear. He opens an infallible eye, and gives to it an infallible sight of God, and the heavenly mysteries of his kingdom. The Spirit breathes infallibly, begets infallibly, leads infallibly, creates a new heart, a right spirit; which heart, which spirit, is of God's infallible nature, like him; for that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. That which is born of man's fallible spirit and wisdom is fallible; but that which is born of God's Spirit and heavenly wisdom, is of the nature of his Spirit and wisdom; and hence it is that wisdom is justified of her children. The apostle speaks to the Galatians of having begun in the Spirit, chap. 3:3. and did they not begin in that which is infallible? And if they went on in the Spirit, did they not go on in that which is infallible? I never found the light deceive me, nor did I ever find the birth of God's Spirit, the holy elect seed, deceived in me. And the new and living way, wherein this birth walks, is infallible, in which there is no erring by those who eye the Lord, and follow his Spirit therein. This is the way cast up (the way of holiness, life, and peace), for the ransomed and redeemed of the Lord to walk in, in the gospel days, in which the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err, Isa. 35:8. The Lord, who has promised, is able to make it good. The Lord make it more and more manifest, and bring more and more people into it, and keep them in the guidance of his blessed Spirit of truth, that they may see his light, and walk therein, and not let in any temptations from the spirit of darkness, and so follow him, and miss of the guide unto, and the preserver in, the new and living way.

POSTSCRIPT

I DO not say that I, as a man, am infallible, or that any of us as men are infallible; but God's light, God's grace, God's truth, God's Spirit, God's wisdom and power, is infallible; and so far as we partake of that, are gathered into and abide in that, we partake of that which is infallible, and are gathering into and abide in that, which is infallible. And oh! let not men rest in, or be contented with, that knowledge which is fallible, but press after unity and fellowship with the Lord in his infallible spirit; there being no true union nor fellowship with him in any thing that is fallible.

Oh that Protestants, Papists, Jews, Turks, Indians, did all know and own this light, that there might be an end of the darkness and misery, wherewith mankind has been so long overwhelmed; and happiness both in particular nations, and in the whole world, might be experienced in the stead thereof. For men's erring from the light and spirit of God, has been the cause of all their misery; and their returning to the light and Spirit of God (from which all have erred) will take away the cause of their misery, and in it (as they faithfully subject to the Lord and travel therein) they shall find his power, love, and mercy revealed, towards their restoring unto happiness.

I. P.

Thirty-first of the 5th Month, 1679.

CONCERNING THE TIMES AND SEASONS

BOTH WHICH HAVE BEEN, AND WHICH ARE YET TO BE

[1679]

WHEN God made man in his own image, placing him in paradise, and giving him dominion over the works of his hands; then was a time of great joy to Adam and Eve, and should have still been so to them, and all mankind, had they continued in the state wherein they were created.

When Eve, and by her means Adam, hearkened to the voice of the serpent, disobeyed the Lord their Creator, aspiring after wisdom, and the knowledge of good and evil, out of God's way; then was a season of misery to Adam and all his posterity; the holy and heavenly image being lost, and a cursed image gained in the stead thereof, and so man thrust out of paradise, and the blessedness thereof, into the earth, which was cursed for man's sake. So in this state, sin and the curse is man's portion, instead of the holiness and blessedness, which his Creator had allotted him.

When God promised the blessed seed, and revealed himself to the fathers in the faith, begetting sons to himself, who heard his voice, obeyed and walked with him; then was a blessed time and season to them, though sin and death reigned in the world. But when the sons of God also forgot him, and mingled their seed with the corrupted world, then the deluge came, sweeping away all but Noah with his family, and the creatures saved in the ark.

When the Lord chose the Jews to be a people to himself, from amidst all nations, delivering them by his out-stretched arm out of Egypt, destroying Pharaoh, and his host, and led them through the wilderness, fitting the succeeding generation for the good land, bringing them into it, blessing and establishing them in it, while they feared him and walked in covenant with him, then was a blessed time and season with that people. But when they provoked God, brought his judgments often, and at last utter ruin and desolation upon themselves, then were seasons of great misery and distress, and at last of utter destruction to them.

While the Gentiles were cast off, and were no people, being of the corrupt seed which God has not chosen, nor had any delight in, and while they knew not the living God, but worshipped stocks and stones, and so were liable to the pouring down of his wrath and indignation upon all occasions, and to utter ruin and destruction, when their iniquities were full, it was a sad time and season with them, wherein they were estranged from the life of God, and his holy covenant of promise, and were without God in the world.

When the Lord preached the gospel to the Gentiles, by his holy apostles and ministers, manifesting Christ to them, the hope of glory, the mystery hid from ages and generations, ingrafting them into the holy vine and olive-tree, giving them to partake of the sweetness and fatness thereof, even of the riches of his grace and goodness in his Son, who is eternal life, and gives eternal life to all his; then was such a time and season of love, grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ (both towards Jews and Gentiles) as had not been known in the world before.

When the Christian church apostatized, the love in many waxing cold, men minding the name of Christianity, and form of godliness, but not the life and power, and so the Lord was provoked against them, to remove their candlestick out of its place, and give up the outward court to the Gentiles, and so the Spirit was lost and departed from, the life lost, the power lost, the everlasting gospel hid from men's eyes, and darkness and men's inventions set up instead thereof, in nations, tongues, and people, and the witnesses to any appearances of God's living truth and holy power persecuted; then was a sad time, then was a season of death and darkness reigning over all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, and the cup of fornication drunk by them all, and all generally bewitched by it, except those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life. This was the greatest time of darkness (wherein the mystery of iniquity most deeply wrought in the deepest ways of deceit) that ever was in the world.

When the church comes again out of the wilderness, when the Spirit and power of God build up again the gospel church in its primitive glory, when the everlasting gospel is preached again to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and languages, in the authority and power of God, when the Spirit of the Lord is poured out plentifully on his sons and daughters, and they prophesy, walk, and live in it, when God dwells and walks in his people, and his true light shines in them, dispelling the darkness thoroughly, and filling them with the glory and majesty of the Lord, and they ascend up out of the world's spirit and nature, into his Spirit and nature, even in the sight of their enemies, and the full wrath of the Lamb be poured out on Babylon, and the full glory revealed in Zion; then shall there be such a day of brightness and pure, heavenly glory as shall dazzle the eyes of all beholders.

But the passing away of this night, and the bringing forth of this day will be very terrible and dreadful, both in particulars and in nations. The kingdoms of this world must indeed become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; but it will require great power to bring it about. The wrath and strength of the spirit of darkness will be working against the Lord and his power to the utmost; and the more it

works against the Lord and his power, the more will the Lord's power, and the wrath of the Lamb be revealed against that spirit, and against all its devices and undertakings against the counsel and power of the Lord. Oh! blessed are they that are of the Lamb's nature and Spirit, of his righteousness and meekness; for the wrath of the Lamb will not be kindled against them, but he will be a munition of rocks unto them, and their inward life shall be preserved, and they shall enjoy peace with the Lord in the midst of all that shall outwardly befall them.

Mesborow in Kent, 22nd of the 6th Month, 1679

The everlasting gospel has been preached in this nation (and also other nations), just after that very manner as it was foretold it should, Rev. 14:7. "Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and fountains of waters."

Now, they that have heard this blessed sound of the everlasting gospel, and have learned to fear God with this fear which the gospel calls for (which is the fear of the new covenant, which is not taught by the precepts of men, but which God puts into the heart in the new covenant), and to give glory to him, bowing to him, and learning righteousness of him, in the hour of his judgment upon their souls, and have worshipped him, and him only, in his Spirit and truth, which is the gospel worship, or the worship of God according to the everlasting gospel; these are accounted with God knowers and obeyers of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These are a peculiar people to God, whom he has taken an especial care of, and whom he will hide under the shadow of his wings, and in the secret of his pavilion, while his wrath is poured out upon peoples and nations.

But others that have not been gathered under the shadow of God's wings, by the preaching of the everlasting gospel, who have not known or obeyed the sound thereof; when the storm comes, when the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (whereof this nation is full, and has had several tokens of God's great displeasure for a long time), they will not find a shelter, though they flee to the rocks and mountains to hide and cover them from the wrath of the Lamb, but will lie open to the stroke of the overflowing scourge, which uses to overflow nations, after such a deluge of sin as has long overflowed this nation. Oh that men could hear the voice of the rod, and him who has appointed it, and seek a hiding-place, and enter into the chamber of rest and quietness with the Lord, until the indignation be past!

Now, unto any whose hearts are touched with the fear of the Lord, and the sense of his righteous judgments and wrath due to this nation (which doubtless have come in part already, and are coming faster and faster, and entering into the very heart and bowels of it), and who would escape the stroke of God's dreadful hand, and find inward rest and peace with him in the day of outward trouble and sore distress;

To such, a few words of advice, very early this morning, lay upon my heart.

First, Seek the Lord (oh, do not seek the world, but seek the Lord who redeems out of the spirit of the world, where the wrath comes, and upon which it is to seize!). And "seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Zeph. 2:3.

Secondly, Wait upon God, that you may learn of him to "keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." If ever you know the issues of life, you must know them there; and if you know

the issues of life there, and they sweetly issue up, and flow into your souls, they will refresh and delight you in the midst of all the sore afflictions, troubles, and distresses, which can befall you outwardly. Read Psa. 46. and consider.

Thirdly, Mind who knocks at the door of your hearts, whether it be the destroyer or Savior of the soul; for both of these knock often at the door, but men are not aware thereof. And wait to receive power from God, to be faithful door-keepers, that you may keep the door of your hearts shut against the enemy, when he knocks with any temptation, and may open them to the Lord, when he knocks with any motion or pure stirring of life.

Fourthly, Wait to know, and experience truly, and also more and more, the Christian Spirit and state, the state of a servant to the Father, and his Son Christ, the state of a soldier, the state of a pilgrim and holy traveler; to be doing the Lord's work (the Lord's will, and not your own), to be fighting the Lord's battles, against his and the soul's enemies, and to be traveling farther and farther out of the spirit, mind, and nature of this world (wherein the kingdom of darkness stands), into God's Spirit, where the kingdom of the dear Son is known and entered into, by those that deny their own wisdom, and become as little children.

Many have the form of godliness, who are not accepted of the Lord; but such only as know God's power, and are led by his Spirit, such are indeed in Christ Jesus; for the holy power grafts the soul, mind, and spirit of a man, into the holy stock and root of life. And such know the new creation in Christ, and the works of the new creation, which they perform and walk in (being God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works). And here the old things pass away (which can pass away by no other means, but by the revealing of the arm and power of God inwardly in the heart, and by its effectual operation there), and so all things become new. Now, where all things become new, where the heart is new, the mind and spirit new, the desires new, the joys and delights new, the life and conduct new, and the soul walks before the Lord, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, even in the newness thereof; what is there for the wrath of God to seize upon?

Though the Lord be a consuming fire, yet it is to his enemies, to sin, to unrighteousness, to the chaffy, earthly mind and nature; he is not so to his children, to the wheat, to the holy seed, to them that are new-created and cleansed by him, to them that fear him, love him, walk with him, keep his commandments, obey the gospel of his Son, denying all for him, and following the Shepherd and Leader of their souls, out of all untruth and unrighteousness, into all truth and righteousness. Surely, these shall not only be able to abide, but dwell with the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings; and that shall be their safety and shelter, when the flames thereof break forth to consume and burn up the chaff everywhere.

25th of the Sixth Month, 1679

POSTSCRIPT

THE gospel religion is very precious, being inwardly felt and experienced in the life and power of it; but a bare profession of it, out of the life and power of godliness, is of no value in the sight of God, nor is it of any profit or advantage to the soul.

ISAAC PENINGTON

EPISTLES TO FRIENDS

TO FRIENDS IN AND ABOUT THE TWO CHALFONTS

DEAR FRIENDS.

YE have a deep place in my heart, and my cries are to the Lord for you, that you may live to him, and find his life springing up and abounding in you. What is it to have a distinct name, or distinct meetings from the world, unless the power of the Lord be felt in your hearts, and his presence in your assemblies? Oh that the Lord would awaken you! Oh that the Lord would quicken you! Oh that it would please the Lord to raise up a strict watch in you, against all drowsiness, and carelessness, and temptations, and snares of the enemy, that you may travel on your journey, with your backs upon the world, and your faces towards Zion; never looking back to the fleshly nature, desires, or lusts, to entertain any thing of that any more, which you have parted with in the demonstrations and leading of life, but still pressing on further and further, till you come to apprehend and be possessed of that, for which you have been apprehended by God, and drawn in some measure towards.

O my friends! There is a path of life in which you must travel, even to the very end of it, or the crown of life is not to be received! Oh that you might travel on! Oh that nothing might stop you! Oh that you might every day wait for and feel the leader, and walk on with him in the simplicity, uprightness, and sense of his life, out of the reach of that wisdom, which is ever and anon forming reasonings in the heart against it, and striving to darken, and make the plain way of God intricate to the soul!

My life often reaches to you, my soul exceedingly longs after you! And in the stirrings of the same life be you also helpful to me, crying to the Lord for me, that I may abide with him, feel his preservation, and dwell in that which he has chosen to appear to and refresh the soul in, that I may be acceptable to him, and further helpful to you, in the season of the stirrings of his precious and powerful life in my heart. The Lord God of mercy watch over you, pruning and keeping down all the earthliness and corruption in any of you, and watering and cherishing his own plant in you all, that you may daily witness the dying and decrease of the one, and the quickening and growth of the other, even till death be perfectly consumed and swallowed up by the growth, power, and presence of the immortal life in you, and your souls safe and happy in your God.

And so to the tender mercies and care of the Lord do I give you all up, breathing for you (as for my own soul) that you may be perfectly the Lord's, perfectly given unto him, perfectly waiting upon him, and daily receiving into your precious vessels the precious, living testimonies of his love and acceptance, and his sweet, heavenly dews, which will exceedingly refresh and make your hearts glad, as he causes them to descend and light upon you. So that which is of God in your hearts, every day wait to feel God breathing upon, that it may open unto him, receive strength from him, and you in it be more and more gathered and united to the Lord, even till you wholly become one nature, mind, and spirit with him; and then you will see the end of your travels, and sit down in his joy, and peace, and pure rest, from all laboring after life, and all sorrows for the want and absence of it, and all fears of losing or being

separated from it; being established in the power which is over all, and which preserves all that are encompassed with it, and established in it, forever and ever.

Your friend and brother, in the meek, innocent nature of the Lamb, and in the begetting of the royal, heavenly life,

I. P.

From my present place of Confinement in Aylesbury, according to the will of God; who is blessed, and to be blessed in all that he does, or allows to be done: 22nd of the 3d month, 1666.

O my friends! prize the rich, tender mercy of the Lord, in calling you out of this world, towards his everlasting inheritance and fulness of life! And let not anything of this world come between him and you; but let all that is of this worldly nature, both within and without, be trampled upon by you, and the prize of the high calling of our God in Christ Jesus be faithfully and earnestly pursued after; that none fall short of the hope and glory set before him, but that every one may so run, as certainly to obtain and enjoy forever, even the dominion and reign of God over all that is contrary to him, and the sitting down in the rest, joy, and peace of his nature for evermore. Amen.

TO FRIENDS IN TRUTH, IN AND ABOUT THE TWO CHALFONTS

OH, let every soul wait to feel the pure life of God, that in that we may wrestle with our tender Father, for the opening the depth of his bowels and tender mercy, that that may be brought forth in every vessel, and in the whole body, which may make the glory of his name shine, and may fill the vessels of his choice with the joy and pleasure of his salvation! Oh that the pure measure of his life might be awakened and raised in your assemblies together, that you might feel the pure fountain, the springs opening in you, the streams running through you, and every soul refreshed, filled, and satisfied; that you might go away blessing his name, who has taught you and given you hearts to wait upon him, and who shows you mercy, and gives you acceptance in your waitings!

And, dear friends! watch, that life may be always fresh and savory in you, to the seasoning of all your thoughts, words, conversation, and actions, that you may feel the name of God written upon you, and his precious presence in you, and with you.

And in this freshness remember me, to whom the Lord has given to remember and breathe for you, who am a prisoner, and have suffered many afflictions, because that of God which is in me cannot bow to that which is of man.

I. P.

From Aylesbury prison, the 23d of the Sixth month, 1666

TO DILIGENT AND FAITHFUL FRIENDS, IN AND ABOUT THE TWO CHALFONTS

O tender and dearly-beloved Friends,

MY spirit is at this time touched with the sense of the great goodness and mercy of the Lord, insomuch as I feel breakings forth therein, and repeating there over and over again, Oh, what has the Lord done for us, what has the Lord done for us? For he has not only given us a sense and taste of the precious promises in the Scripture, but has also led us in the way of the fulfilling of them. He has manifested that to us, wherein not only the promise is made, but whereto also the promise is fulfilled. Which of you, that is open and fresh, does not know the seed of life, the living principle, the light eternal, which leads out of death and darkness, into the land of the living, the holy land, wherein dwells peace and righteousness, the land which flows with milk and honey, wherein are the vineyards which you planted not, and the houses that you built not, wherein the true vine grows, and its branches shoot forth and bear the right grapes? O my friends, do you not know the Father which begat you, and the Son in whose image he has begotten you, and his Spirit, which is the breath, strength, and power of your life? How has the Lord God advanced you, a poor, afflicted, despised, persecuted remnant, above all kindreds, families, and professions of the earth! How nigh is the Lord your God unto you! Does he not tabernacle and dwell in you? Do you not feel him walking up and down, and taking delight in your spirits, who are separated from the unclean thing, and to whom subjection to him is become pleasant and natural? Oh! the Lord God give his people a sense what he is unto them in this day, and lead them along into their several professions and inheritances, that they may sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, each in his portion in the holy land, and in the heavenly dwelling-places in Christ Jesus, which the souls of those that are redeemed by him are acquainted with and sit in.

It is on my heart to instance in some things a little more particularly, that the sense and remembrance of God's goodness to you herein, may come the nearer and closer to your spirits.

First, Have you not had experience of the Lord's love and faithfulness in manifesting his name unto you, which you have in some measure known, as pure, precious, and excellent, as a strong tower in case of danger and assaults from the enemy? And has not the Lord taught you, by a secret instinct of his Spirit and life in you, to retire and hide yourselves in this tower, from the violence and fury of the enemy? And have you not always found relief, safety, and protection therein? Indeed, when you have gone out into your own thoughts, and consulted with the reasons of the fleshly mind, there you have met with a wound and a hurt, and have lain open to the stroke of the betrayer and devourer; but the name of the Lord has never deceived or disappointed any of you that have trusted in it, relying upon his kindness, tenderness, mercy, love and faithfulness therein.

Secondly, Has not the Lord given you a proportion of the pure, heavenly patience, even of the Lamb's meekness and patience, and also given you to possess your souls therein, wherein has been felt a true measure of rest and peace with him, in the midst of all the disturbances, fears, and troubles, both within and without? And has not this been a help and succor to you, even in the time of his judgments, wherein you have been enabled to wait and lie still, until the indignation was over-past, and the mercy sprang afresh?

Thirdly, Has not God manifested to you the place of his worship, even so that you know, and have often experienced it to be in his name, Spirit, truth, and power? And has he not prepared for you, and given to you, the pure offering and sacrifice, and accepted it at your hands? And have you not often, yes, may I not say always, felt his presence meeting there, and the refreshments which come from his presence in this day of his mercy, and of his tender visiting and refreshing his seed?

Fourthly, Have you not felt the word of his power shaking the mountains, breaking the rocks, and making the dark hard part in you, and the enemy of your souls, to tremble at the sound of his voice? Yes, have you not found thereby the stony heart in a great measure taken out of you, and a tender heart, a heart like flesh, given you instead thereof, which has melted and bowed before the Lord, and tenderly received the impressions of his Spirit?

Fifthly, Have you not found the laws of life, the laws of the new covenant written by the finger of God's Spirit in this new heart, so that you could read the will and requirings of your God, by the light of his Spirit in the inner man?

Sixthly, Has not he also put his Spirit within you, that you have not only read the law written, but have also found a delight (and ability also in him) to do his will? For the Lord has not left you to do what he requires, according to the old covenant, but he himself works in you both to will and to do what is acceptable to him of his own good pleasure.

Seventhly, Have you not found his fear put into your hearts, even a fear which no precepts of men can teach, nor you can by no means attain to, but as he pleases to give it you? And does not this fear make you wise in him to depart from evil? Does it not cleanse out the evil? Does it not keep out the evil? Did you not find this virtue in it at the very first, and do you not still find it to this very day?

Eighthly, Do you not find the blotting out of iniquity, and the not remembering of your sins by the Lord? Ah! how has the Lord forgiven you! How does he pity you! How does he bear with you! Do you not know the place and state wherein mercy pleases him, and where he is never weary of pardoning, blotting out, and forgiving? Do you not feel the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant daily by him upon your consciences, and the precious virtue thereof?

Ninthly, Do you not find the anointing near you, yes, within you, ready to teach you to know the Lord, so that you indeed know him, not according to outward names and apprehensions only, but his nature in his heavenly power, in his inward virtue, manifestations, operations, and appearances in you? And this is true knowledge indeed, pure knowledge, fresh knowledge, living knowledge, which makes you conformable to, and brings you forth in, the image and likeness of what you know.

Tenthly, Is not the way of the ransomed, the way of holiness, become clear and pleasant to you? Has not the Lord removed many stumbling-blocks, that he might make the way plain? And is it not a path wherein there is no erring, wherein a way-farer may walk without fear or danger, the light is so certain, the guide so faithful, and the path so easy and infallible to the plain, honest, single, upright heart, who freely gives up to the Lord, and waits to be taught and led by him? Indeed, to the wise, reasoning, disputing mind, it is not thus, nor to you at any time when that part is up; but as that is brought down, and the simplicity of Christ (the innocent birth) raised in you, do you not still feel it thus? Therefore you had need to watch and pray and wait and believe, that you may know and enjoy the preciousness of your spiritual estates and conditions in the Lord, and that that which would corrupt and destroy,

may, by the lifting up and displaying of the banner of his love and power in you, be beat down and kept out.

Eleventhly, Has not God given you of the true humility, whereby that which was once exalted in you above his fear, and above his seed, is now brought down and laid low, and his pure life and fear in you exalted over it? Do you not know the feigned humility and fear (which man's wisdom teaches, and man's wisdom learns) and abhor them? And is not the true fear and humility which you have received from God very precious, and of great use and service to you?

Twelfthly, Have you not received the true love, whereby you are taught and enabled to love the Lord your God above all, and the brethren, children, and fathers in him; yes, and your very enemies also. How precious is this! Who can witness this, but he who has received it! but he whose heart the Lord has circumcised, and from which he has cut off the enmity and contentious nature, which cannot truly love neither the Lord nor his people, nor his creatures, though it makes a subtle, deceitful show thereof, to the deluding both of itself and others.

Thirteenthly, Do you not know the true righteousness and the true sanctification which is in Christ Jesus, and which you receive and abide in in him, which formerly (in a great measure) you did but talk of, and which many to this day (whom the Lord has not gathered, as he has done you, but has left behind, out of the power, out of the calling, out of the election) have only the words of, and their own apprehensions upon the words, but know not nor feel nor enjoy the thing itself, as you do this day, blessed be the name of your merciful God and Redeemer?

Fourteenthly, Do you not know Zion, the holy hill of God, and Jerusalem the holy city which is built thereon, which has long been hid, even from ages and generations, but now is made manifest in the Spirit, and many are already come there, and many more are traveling there, and some dwell and abide therein, and feel the law going forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and find their souls translated by the mighty power of God from death and hell and enmity, into the nature, love, and life of the Lamb; in whose light those that are saved and redeemed by him walk?

Fifteenthly, Do you not know the true church and body of Christ, which is one spirit with him, which is flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones? And has not the Lord in his mercy made you members thereof? And do you not feel the nourishment, virtue, life, and Spirit of the whole body in your own vessels, and so are partakers of the true union and fellowship, both with the Lord Jesus Christ, and one with another? For he that is gathered by, and walks in, the true light, is also in the true life and fellowship, both with that which begets, and with that which is begotten.

Sixteenthly, Do you not know the kingdom and reign of Christ already in measure set up, and daily more and more setting up in your hearts? And is not his government sweet, pure, heavenly, precious, refreshing to that which is of God in you, and an iron hammer and scepter to that which is earthly and fleshly? And is it not your joy to feel him reign and overcome his enemies, exalting his holy name, power, and scepter over them? And what he has done, and what he is doing, and what he yet will do in you, of his own tender love, and for his own name's sake; do not your hearts leap within you, when at any time the Lord pleases to give you the sense and sight thereof?

Seventeenthly, Do you not know the fast which the Lord has chosen, and has not the Lord helped you to keep that fast? Have you not felt his power break the bond of iniquity in you, and the once

oppressed in you coming up in a true measure of the pure freedom, to serve and worship the Lord? And have you not also had a taste of the feast which the Lord has prepared on his holy mountain, even of the fat things, and wines on the lees well refined, which they that inhabit there eat and drink of abundantly in his presence?

Eighteenthly, Do you not feel God the Lord making an everlasting covenant with you, even of the love and mercies sure to David and his seed for evermore? Is not he near you, yes, with you and in you, who is the gatherer into, and the preserver in, this covenant? Yes, do not you feel him teaching and enabling you to keep covenant with the Lord your God (by the virtue, power, and presence of his life and Spirit in you), even as he keeps covenant with you; insomuch as you begin to feel a settlement and establishment in him that is true, and your calling and election becoming sure, and the danger and fear of falling away or miscarrying removing from off your spirits?

What shall I say to you, what shall I mention further, or what shall I instance in? Have you not felt the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field become a forest? Have you not felt the lame walk, the deaf hear, the blind see, the dumb speak, the leper cleansed, the dead raised, etc.? Have you not witnessed the sore shaking, and terrible passing away (in measure) of the old heavens and old earth, and the forming, planting, and bringing in (in measure) of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness, in the stead thereof? So that in places where dragons lay, is now green grass, with sweet-smelling flowers; and in the once parched, dead, dry, barren, desolate heaths, are now springs and flowings of the pure, living water.

Friends; There is one, whom the Father has sealed (and he is but one, yes, the very same in us all), in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and all the riches and substance of life; and we, through the mercy and goodness of the Lord, partake thereof, as we are gathered into him, found in him, and abide in him.

And now my friends; What has differenced us from others, or why has the Lord done this for us more than for others? Search your hearts, see if any of you can find the cause thereof in yourselves. Indeed I cannot. From my very heart I cannot but cry grace, grace! mercy, mercy! love, love (deep, tender love)! goodness, goodness! from the very first beginning, all along, throughout the whole carrying on of the work, to this day; and I have nothing else to hope in, or plead before my God. Do I believe? It is he gave me faith; yes, he puts it forth, and causes it to act in me, or I easily fail therein. Do I will that which is good in any kind? My will is of him, yes, it is in him, and has its creation, preservation, being, and strength from him. Do I obey or do that which is good? No, no, not I; but his life, power, and Spirit in me. Do I suffer inwardly or outwardly? That is not of me neither, but he that has given me to believe, he also gives me to suffer, and bears up my spirit in my sufferings, by his power, and for his name's sake. So that my heart says (and I confidently believe he will, in his mercy and goodness, preserve me in that sense forever), Not unto me, not unto me, in any one respect, but to your name, to your holy name, to your tender name, to your infinite bowels, and precious love and compassions in every respect, be the acknowledgment and praise given of what you have done, and yet do, and will do in and for my soul, forever and ever.

And now, my dear friends; As the Lord has demonstrated the way of life unto you, so that it is sealed in your spirits, and you have walked in it, and always met with, not only the promises of life, but even life itself therein; so the Lord still watch over you, that nothing ever blind that eye in you, which alone can see this way; and the Lord preserve you in uprightness of heart, that you may singly wait on him, for

his further manifesting of it in you and to you; and that he, by his living Spirit, would continually quicken and rouse up your spirits, to walk diligently and faithfully therein; that so you may come to see what you have not yet seen, and to desire what you have not yet desired, and may find your hearts and inheritances enlarged in the Lord. Ah, what is the world, or any worldly thing or interest, in comparison of this! The Lord remove every snare and every stumbling-block out of your way, and every weight and burden from off your spirits, that you may run with joyfulness to the end of your course, and may enter into the full kingdom and possession of life. You have received already that which is all; but you must wait for the further opening and spreading of it in you, and your further growth into it. The Lord's soul has travailed for you, and his faithful messengers have likewise travailed and sought after your souls, and your souls have travailed and mourned and waited, and gone through temptations and trials of many kinds, and had a taste of the true peace, and true holiness, the true righteousness, the true joy, even the joy of the everlasting kingdom. Now the Lord God preserve you, that nothing may interrupt or come between you, and that wherein you have felt him, and wherein is his riches and fulness; but that you may always feel that, and abide faithful to the Lord in that, wherein the preservation and growth unto life eternal alone is witnessed.

And friends; Put the Lord in mind, that as he has pleased to manifest the way, and show that clearly unto you, whereby the heart is joined to him and preserved in him; so he would please, of his free and tender mercy, to add this also, even to give upright hearts, and entire spirits, to abide with him in that principle of life wherein he has gathered you, and to watch unto, and be faithful to, all his warnings, drawings, movings, and leadings, that his Spirit may have no matter of grief against you, but it may be the delight of his soul to do you good continually, and to answer the desire of your souls in every thing that you breathe unto him for; that the Lord may not be ashamed to own you to be his people, and you may feel with joy, and abundant consolation, that he is your God. And this will be enough in all the tribulations, afflictions, and trials that you meet with, either inwardly or outwardly. So the God of love and peace preserve you, in that wherein is fellowship with him, and in which his life, love, joy, and peace naturally and delightfully spring up and flow into the soul. Amen, Amen.

I. P.

Written in Aylesbury Jail, about the Ninth and Tenth of the Twelfth month, 1666

FOR FRIENDS OF OUR MEETING, AND THEREABOUTS

DEAR FRIENDS,

I AM deeply sensible that it is a day of trouble, rebuke, and distress, to the Israel of God. The Lord has pitched his pure, living tent, and begun to build up his beloved city; the Lord has indeed had mercy upon Zion, and favored the ruins and desolations thereof. But the malice and rage of the enemy is great, who seeks to compass the tent of the holy and the beloved city, that he may lay waste and destroy the work and heritage of God. Now, all that feel life, all that are of the true birth, all that know the seed; oh! abide, live, and breathe in the seed, that you may come forth in the true life, and in the strength of God's holy Spirit (with strong cries and tears, with innocency and righteousness, with meekness and patience, etc.), to the help of the Lord against the mighty. We have no strength but our God, nor is our expectation from man (whose breath is in his nostrils, who is to be ceased from); but

we believe the voice, that not by strength, nor by man's power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts, shall this work of his be preserved and go on. Therefore every one wait to feel the seed travail and cry daily to the Father, that so the spirit of darkness may be hindered, and by the power of life withstood, in all its enterprises against the children of light. Oh! let the condition of Jerusalem be written upon every one's heart; and as members of the living body, feel the needs, afflictions, and distresses of your fellow-members day by day. And let every one say in spirit:

Lord, take care of all your children. O you tender Father! consider what they suffer for the testimony of your truth, and for your name's sake, and uphold them, and give them victory and a holy dominion over all, because it belongs to your seed into which you have gathered them, and in which you have united them to yourself. Oh! carry on your glorious work, which your own mighty arm has begun, and cut it short in righteousness for your elect's sake, that it may be finished by you, to your own everlasting praise. Your children wait on you, they cry to you day and night, that they may be preserved by you in the well-doing, and in the pure, holy, innocent sufferings for your truth's sake; until you say, It is enough, until your holy Spirit say, It is finished: my lambs, you shall suffer no more, but now you shall reign with me and my Son forever.

My dear friends, it is now the time of prayer, and of waiting upon, and hoping in, the Lord, who knows and considers all our conditions. If any be afflicted, let him pray. We are afflicted, we are oppressed without cause or provocation on our parts, only because we fear, and love, and obey our God, according as he has taught us, and because he has put this resolution into our hearts, that we will abide in subjection to him, and stand to the holy testimony which he has given us to bear, whatever befalls us. And what shall separate us from his love, or come between us and his care over us, who is able to bear us up in all, and carry us over all (in the holy dominion and strength of his seed) that can set upon us, and strive to turn us out of the way, or to make us faint in the way?

Dear friends, In my bonds I remember you, and pray for your prosperity. Do you also remember me in your daily addresses and approaches to God, that I may receive increase of virtue and strength from the Lord, by the help of your prayers; and, oh! feel the afflictions of the afflicted, and breathe for them day by day, that the whole body may receive the flowings in of life, help, and strength daily, from the pure breathings of life in every member of the body every day.

So the God of love and mercies be with, and do good to, his whole heritage; and fill you (with the rest of his children) from the pure fountain of life, with fresh streams of life day by day. Amen. This is the hearty desire of

Your friend, brother, and companion in the faith and patience of the saints, who has had a share in the afflictions which befall his children and chosen ones, for his name's sake,

I. P.

Reading Jail, the 9th of the Sixth Month, 1670

And truly friends, it is not grievous, but rather joy to me, to undergo the several afflictions and temptations, which my tender Father, in his tender love and good-will, orders for me. Yes, all that can taste, tell me, is it not greater riches, and far sweeter, in this our day, to bear the reproach of Christ, and to suffer for the testimony of his precious truth, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin and glory of this world, which are but for a season?

TO FRIENDS IN TRUTH, IN CHALFONT, AND THEREABOUTS

Dear friends (whom I love in the Lord, and whose prosperity and growth in the truth I greatly desire), this sense is on my heart, in reference to you at this time.

THE Lord's soul travails for you (having visited you in tender mercy, and with great loving-kindness), and he desires to enjoy and possess you, as an inheritance for himself, to delight in and to do good unto continually; and I know there are many among you, who have also desired and travailed after the Lord, and have been burdened and grieved with that which has in any measure hindered your souls enjoying the Lord, and your faithful serving him, and his delight and pleasure in you. Now friends, this is my present desire and breathing for you, even that you may be joined further and closer in the everlasting covenant of life and peace with the Lord, which must never be forgotten on your parts, as it cannot be on his; wherein to help all the tender and faithful-hearted among you, this advice sprang in my heart to you this morning.

Mind and watch to that which quickens and enlivens the soul towards God, and watch against that which flats and deadens it; for they are both near, and they both seek after you, the one for your good, the other for your hurt. I need not tell you what these are, nor where or how they appear (you have been abundantly, and as you wait on the Lord, are daily instructed therein, blessed be the name of the Lord), but in continual watching to the one, and against the other, is the diligence and care of your spirits daily to be exercised. Oh, at no time let your spirits be loose and careless! For the enemy waits to do hurt, and the Lord waits to be gracious, and to do your souls good. Watch, therefore, and pray, that you enter not into the temptation of the enemy, nor miss of the tender mercies and loving-kindnesses of the Lord, which are sure to the seed (and to all that are of and abide in the seed) forever.

Oh! who would miss of the quickening virtue of our God, of being anointed with his holy oil, and having the flames of life kindled further in him? Who would be captivated and brought into subjection to sin, Satan, vanity, and the spirit of this world again, who has witnessed any proportion of deliverance therefrom? You know that you can do nothing of yourselves: oh, what need have such to watch to that, which is able to work mightily in the heart, and to bring forth the fruits and effects of righteousness, and to bring under, and keep under, kill and slay that power of unrighteousness, and to root out and bury the dead, out of the sight and remembrance of the living! Glorious things are testified (truly testified) concerning the power of the Lord, and his mighty operation inwardly in the hearts of his children, in this day of the preaching of the everlasting gospel again, after the long night of darkness. Let none be content, without witnessing and experiencing a measure thereof in their own particular. Oh, dwell not with death, vanity, nor corruption! O my dear friends, let not vain or earthly thoughts lodge in any of your hearts! but dwell with him who is pure, who is living, and gives life to your souls; and also gives peace, and brings it home to you, leaving upon your spirits that "peace which passes all the understanding" and comprehension of man, and who makes his called, chosen, and faithful ones glad with his deliverance from the power and temptation of the enemy, and with the flowings in of life and redeeming virtue, from the fountain thereof. Judea (the city) is known among the living, whose walls are salvation, and all the gates and entrance into it praise.

And, my dear friends, mind your meetings together, to wait upon your God with great seriousness and intention of spirit, every one watching to feel life up in your own spirits. Oh! sit down (yes, breathe

earnestly to the Lord to give you to sit down) in the silence of flesh, and in the stillness of your spirits, waiting for the presence, appearance, and power of your God to be revealed in the midst of you, that your hearts may be searched more and more, and the pure judgment revealed against whatever would appear or rise up contrary to the holy nature and will of God, and that which is for death, brought into death more and more, and so the bread and water of life given to that which is to be nourished up in life, that all that is impure may be kept down, and that which is pure (the plants and trees of righteousness) may thrive, flourish, and spread more and more, and you sit down under the shadow of your own vine and olive-tree, partaking of the sap and fatness thereof.

Oh that every one of you, in all your meetings together, might witness that scripture fulfilled in you! "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house, and you shall give them, or make them to drink, of the rivers of your pleasure."

And I beseech you, in the bowels of tender love, take heed of sluggishness, or carelessness, or deadness of spirit in your meetings; these things in nowise become the Lord's people, nor your professions of waiting upon the living God; you are to look up, to watch, wait, and breathe for the Lord, to be exercised by his Spirit, to have to do with him before whom all things are naked and bare, to offer up that acceptable sacrifice of a broken heart, of pure praises, of love, life, humility, thanksgiving, etc., and to receive what the Father of mercies stands ready (in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of his love) to give forth unto you. Can you be thus exercised, while in a drowsy, sluggish, careless spirit? Do not such dishonor the Lord, whose name you should honor? And is not the jealous God provoked and grieved by such things as these, whom you should walk in all humility, tenderness of spirit, and well-pleasingness before?

I beseech you, therefore, watch against all things of this nature, and be diligent, that you may witness the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus making you free, and fencing you against all things of this kind, that you may be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, a temple of living stones, wherein the living God may dwell and walk, and sup with you, and give unto you to sup with him, where you shall eat the pure bread of life, and drink the wine of the kingdom, which will glad your hearts exceedingly, and the joy of the Lord will become your strength; which strength will carry you above the strength of the enemy, and cause you to bring forth the fruits of life, and righteousness, naturally to the Lord; and so you shall shine as lights in your several places, and show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; for it is a marvelous light indeed, which the Lord has caused to shine in the spirits of his children, whom, in this day of his power, he has begotten to himself, and the life eternal is wrapped up in it; and they that truly know it, know it to be no less than the light of life, even the light which came from the pure life of the Son, and leads to the habitation and dwelling-place of the Father.

There is one thing yet remains with me, which I would eagerly have you grow in a true, sensible, and experimental understanding of, which is this; namely, What it is not to touch the unclean thing. The enemy will be stirring up and casting in that which is unclean, upon the vessels which God is purifying and preserving from all pollution. But there is a starting back from and eschewing the evil, a forsaking of the vain, earthly mind and thoughts, and a receiving in such temptations and suggestions no more. Oh that you might all experimentally know and witness what this is! I know many of you do in some measure, blessed be the God of our mercies, blessed be our Savior and Redeemer forever and ever! But oh! more, more, more of this knowledge, more of this experience, my heart livingly breathes for,

for myself and you, that we may witness the scripture abundantly fulfilled in our hearts from the Lord: "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Oh, feel the weight of this scripture, in that which gives the understanding of it! The Lord has made a new covenant, and a living covenant, and prepared a new and living way for the ransomed to walk in without erring, that he might amend all (in this new people) which was amiss in those under the first covenant.

Oh! let the Lord enjoy the design of his heart, and his people so wait upon him, that they may all be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and the Lord may have a generation of Calebs and Joshuas, who may fully follow after him in all things, and who may witness his power and presence still with them, and the holy, tender, merciful God may never be provoked by them, to cause him to withdraw his good Spirit from them, and so to leave them and forsake them; for if any draw back from the Lord, and from the holy commandment of life, the Lord's soul can have no pleasure in such. Oh that, therefore, there may be none among you drawing back to perdition! and take heed of deadness, drowsiness, sluggishness of spirit, earthliness, fleshly wisdom, unbelief, etc. (for that is a degree thereof, and leads there), but all to grow in faith, with diligence, towards the saving of your souls (which is far nearer than when you first believed), which you shall be sure in due time to reap, even the salvation you wait for, if you faint not, nor grow weary in your minds, but abide in the faith and patience, unto the end of your trials, both inward and outward, which are measured out by the Spirit and wisdom of the Lord, and not by the wiles of your enemies, whom the Lord stops and chains at his pleasure.

The grace, mercy, love, and peace of God our Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied unto you, and fill your hearts from day to day, according to your several capacities, and enlarge your capacities, and bring you more and more into the heavenly fellowship, that your joy therein may abound, and you may daily rejoice in the goodness of the Lord, and in his exercising loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.

This is from your brother and companion in the afflictions, and also in the joy and glory, of this day of the salvation of our God, which is further to be revealed and enjoyed by those who meekly and patiently wait for it,

I. P.

Reading Jail, 22nd of the Third month, 1671

And all my dear friends, who have known what it is to be uncovered and stripped of your own righteousness (and of all fleshly robes and garments), and to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, even the innocency and righteousness of his nature and Spirit, and so to appear before the Lord, and walk with him in the garment which he puts upon you; O friends! keep this garment about you, that you be not stripped and robbed of that wherewith God once clothed you, and so your nakedness appear, and men see your shame; and instead of being an honor, you become (any of you) a reproach to the name and truth of the Lord, which is very honorable, and should be honored in and by us all.

The direction of this in my heart was to Friends in truth in Chalfont and thereaways, among whom my heart has been greatly comforted and refreshed, who (some of you) had some knowledge of my former great misery and distress, for lack of the power and presence of the Lord, and are now witnesses with me of his tender mercy and great salvation; glory to him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb

whose kingdom is exalted over all, who already reigns in righteousness in the hearts of a remnant; who sit down, and find rest and peace, and true joy of heart, soul, and spirit, under the shadow of his government, and cannot but sing and sound forth praises, pure praises, honor, and dominion, and strength, to the name and arm which has done the valiant acts, bringing sin, corruption, death, and the grave under, and bringing life and immortality to rule and have dominion over it; so that he that is pure power and life is felt tabernacling and living in his people, and he gives unto them to live in and through and with him; and they cannot but sound praises to the power and glory of his life from day to day; glory in the highest to our God, and to his Christ, forever and ever, amen, hallelujah!

TO S. W.

DEAR FRIEND,

I ever had a love to you, and a deep sense of the serious work of God upon your heart, and the upright desires of your soul after Him. And, that the Lord should yet preserve you alive, in the midst of so great and languishing weakness, is wonderful in my eye, and I hope, has a tendency of some honor to his name, and good to you. I have often inquired of late concerning you, and was glad to understand what I inquired after, by a letter from your own hand; upon reading whereof, in the retired sense of my heart, I felt love arise to you, and breathings to the Lord for you; and, oh that you may fully feel, and be joined to the seed of life, the seed of the kingdom, which our Lord Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh, did not disdain to be a prophet of.

O my dear friend! let not any part of your life lie in notions above the seed, but let it all lie in the seed itself, in your waiting upon the Lord for its arisings in you, and in your feeling its arisings. Oh! what becomes of flesh, and self, and self-righteousness, when this lives in the heart? My religion, which I now daily bless my God for, began in this seed; which, when I first felt, and discerningly knew from the Lord, my cry to him was, oh, this is it I have longed after and waited for! Oh, unite my soul to you in this forever! this is your Son's gift from you, your Son's grace, your Son's truth, your Son's life, your Son's Spirit! I desire no more, than to be made nothing in myself, that this may be all in me: and what I meet with and witness here, what I feel the Lord Jesus Christ to be made to me here, none knows, or possibly can know, but they that have felt the pure power of the Spirit of life, and have been led by it into the same holy and blessed experience.

Ah! sin has no share here, in this blessed seed; but is excluded by the life and power which is stronger than it. Here Christ is formed in the soul, of a truth, here the black garments of unrighteousness, yes, of man's righteousness too, are put off, and the white raiment put on; here the holy image is brought forth in the heart, even the image of the dear Son, which partakes of the divine nature of the Father; here the soul is new created in Christ Jesus, here is no deceit in any kind met with, but only truth from God, even the true life, light, virtue, power, of the Lord Jesus Christ, as livingly felt in the heart, and as effectually operating there, as ever the power of sin did. Oh that you might daily discern this, and feel this to grow up in you more and more, and die to all notions, even of the heavenly things themselves, out of this; that your soul may fully live in the life, Spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus Christ; and nothing but his life, Spirit, and power may live in you; to the glory of God the Father, and to the great joy and gladdening of your heart in his presence! Amen.

Your friend, in the true, sincere love of the heavenly, everlasting seed.

I. P.

13th of Twelfth Month, 1678

TO THE LADY CONWAY

DEAR FRIEND,

In tender love, and in a sense of your sore afflictions and exercises, I do most dearly salute you; desiring for you, that the work of the Lord in your heart may not be interrupted by any devices of the enemy; but that it may go on and prosper in you, in the springing up of the pure seed of life in your heart, and in the powerful overturning, by the mighty arm of the Lord, of all that is contrary thereto in you. Oh that you may daily feel that holy birth of life, which is begotten by the Father, and lives by faith in him! I say, oh that you may daily feel it living in you, when temptations and trials on every hand increase – feel the birth of life, which will cry to the Father, "Lord, increase my faith!"

Though sorrows, heaviness, and faintings of heart ever so much increase; yet, if your faith increase also, it will bear you up in the midst of them. I would eagerly have it go well with you, and that you might not lack the Reprover, in any thing that is to be reprov'd in you; nor the Comforter, in any respect wherein your soul needs comfort; nor the holy Counsellor and Adviser, in any strait or difficulty which the wise and tender God orders to befall you.

Ah! that you might come to feel the daily wasting of sin and death, and the daily springing of life and holiness in your heart. The pearl is worth thousands of worlds, with the greatest earthly glory and pleasure imaginable. Oh that you may be taught of God to discern it more and more, and to buy it, and to come into the enjoyment and possession of it! The Lord manifest Zion more and more to you, and show you the glory of it, and set your feet towards it; and put into your heart to seek of him the way to it, renewing you more and more in the spirit of your mind, whereby the way comes clearly to be discerned, and faithfully walked in; that you may witness, daily, the everlasting covenant of life and peace, even the sure mercies of David.

The desire of my soul is, that your afflictions, which how grievous soever, yet are but momentary, may fit you for, and work out, an eternal weight of glory, for your soul to inherit in another world, forever.

I remain a sympathizer with you in your sufferings; who desire all the advantage and blessings from the God of my life may come to you, which hardships, temptations, and trials prepare the heart and make way for.

I. P.

14th of 12th Month, 1678

POSTSCRIPT

My dear Friend,

Some time after writing the foregoing, this arose in me to you. If the Lord, in your waiting upon him, to search and try your heart and ways, shall please to show you any thing amiss therein; mind this counsel on my heart to you: Be not looking at it too much, on the one hand, or excusing it, on the other hand; but sink down beneath yourself, retiring there, where you may receive from the Lord true judgment concerning it, and also strength against it. And know this, in the holy experience; that you must be weakened by the Lord, and be contented in or with your weak and distressed estate, if you would receive mercy and strength from him. And the more you are weakened and distressed, the more you are fitted for, and the more abundantly shall you partake of, his mercy and strength; waiting upon him in the meek, quiet, patient, and resigned spirit, which he will not fail to work your mind into; that, in the issue of all, you may reap the quiet fruits of righteousness and heavenly peace from his hand. Amen, so be it from the Lord to your soul!

TO S. W.

DEAR S. W.

I have ever had a love to you, and have many times been filled with earnest desires for you; that you may know the Lord in his own pure teachings, and travel into and dwell in the fulness of the kingdom of his dear Son; and that you may be blessed with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

In order to arrive here, you must wait to know God and Christ, in the mystery of their Spirit, life, and power; and by that Spirit, life, and power, find the secrets of the mystery of darkness searched and purged out, and the mystery of godliness opened and established in your heart, in the room thereof; — Christ formed inwardly; the soul formed, yes, and created inwardly anew in him; a real transplanting into his death, and a real feeling of his springing and rising life; and an experience of the sweetness, safety, and virtue of his rising life; and daily to be sensible, what it is in the risings of the life and power; and so be only what you are made and preserved to be, in the light, grace, life, virtue, and power of the Lord Jesus Christ; and to feel him remove any thing that is unrighteous, and clothing you with his pure life, Spirit, and righteousness.

Oh! this is indeed the pure, precious, living knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; which all the outward knowledge tends to lead to, and is comprehended and ended in. This is the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, which Paul was so ravished with, and counted all things but dross and dung for. Now, that you may obtain this, mind the inward appearance, the root, the fountain, the rock within, the living stone within, — its openings, its springings, its administering life to you; and take heed of running into the outwardness of openings concerning the heavenly things; but keep, oh learn to keep, oh mind to keep, in the inwardness of life within! This is the everlasting habitation of the birth which is begotten and brought forth, bred up and kept alive, alone by the presence, power, and operation of the living Spirit; and the Lord Jesus is that Spirit, as really as he was man, even the holy, heavenly, immaculate, spotless Lamb of God. And in this state, life reigns in the heart, and the horn of the Holy One is exalted, the head of the serpent crushed, yes, Satan trod under foot, by the God of peace; who would have his children dwell in the sweetness and fulness of the gospel, in the peace, life, righteousness, and joy of his blessed Spirit and power.

Oh! who would not desire after and wait for and walk with the Lord, towards the obtaining and possessing of these things? All the promises, in Christ, are yes and amen. Inward victory is promised; the inward presence of God is promised; God's dwelling and walking in the soul is promised; Christ supping with the soul, and the soul with him, is promised; putting the law in the heart, and writing it there; putting the pure, living fear into it; yes, also the holy, powerful Spirit into it, which can cause it to walk in God's ways, and to keep his righteous judgments and do them: and he is able to do this work in the heart; for what cannot the Spirit of judgment and burning consume and burn up within? Yes, all these things are promised. He can cause the soul to rejoice in the Lord, and work righteousness, and to remember the Lord in his ways, as some were taught and enabled to do in former times; Isa. 64:5; yes, he can bring into the way of holiness, the King of glory's highway, into which no unclean thing can enter, and [can] keep undefiled therein; and they that are kept undefiled therein taste the sweetness, blessedness, purity, and holy pleasures thereof.

I would eagerly have my own soul and yours, and all the real, serious, faithful people of God experience, and be able to say with David, that which, after his many trials, afflictions, troubles, temptations, and grievous fall, he was able to say, in relation to his walking with the Lord, "For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from iniquity." Ps. 18:21-23. Oh! this is precious, when a man comes to know his iniquity, wherein the enemy's strength lies as to him, and whereby the enemy has most advantage to tempt and gain ground on him, brought down and subdued. Certainly, when one gains strength from God, to overcome the enemy here, and to keep out of this, he comes very near to the keeping of himself, in and by the virtue of the Holy Spirit and power, so as the wicked one cannot touch him, and nor draw him to touch any unclean thing. If that be indeed put off, wherein the enemy's power lies; and that indeed put on, wherein the strength of the Lord Jesus is revealed; and the soul be really in the possession of, and abide in this state; how can it be but strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and witness the good pleasure of the goodness of the Lord fulfilling, and the work of faith going on with power, daily, more and more; a little measure whereof, kept to, removes the mountains inwardly, and gives strength over the enemy. How, then, does it increase and grow up in life and virtue, and in a sensible understanding and experience of the name of the Lord Jesus? Is there not, in this state, a feeling of remission of sins, a feeling of redemption, a feeling of reconciliation, a feeling of oneness with God in Christ, a feeling of God being the salvation, strength, and song, and a trusting in him, and not being afraid? Isa. 12:2. Is there not a being careful in nothing, but in every thing making the requests to God, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, in that Spirit and holy breath of life, which the Father cannot deny; and so, the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keeping the heart and mind through Christ Jesus?

O my friend! there is an ingrafting into Christ, a being formed and new created in Christ, a living and abiding in him, and a growing and bringing forth fruit through him into perfection. Oh, may you experience all these things! and that you may do so, wait to know life, the springings of life, the separations of life inwardly, from all that evil which hangs about it, and would be springing up and mixing with it, under an appearance of good; that life may come to live fully in you, and nothing else. And so, sink very low, and become very little, and know little; yes, know no power to believe, act, or suffer any thing for God, but as it is given you, by the springing grace, virtue, and life of the Lord Jesus. For grace is a spiritual, inward thing and holy seed, sown by God, springing up in the heart. People have got a notion of grace, but know not the thing. Do not you matter the notion, but feel the thing;

and know your heart more and more plowed up by the Lord, that his seed's grace may grow up in you more and more, and you may daily feel your heart as a garden, more and more enclosed, watered, dressed, and delighted in by him.

This is a salutation of love from your friend in the truth, which lives and changes not.

I. P.

27th of Twelfth Month, 1678

TO M. HIORNS

DEAR FRIEND,

I received two letters from you lately, whereby the sense is revived in me of your great love to me, and the Lord's great goodness to you, in administering that which rejoices and refreshes you.

Now, this advice arises in my heart. Oh! keep cool and low before the Lord, that the seed, the pure, living seed, may spring more and more in you, and your heart be united more and more to the Lord therein. Coolness of spirit is a precious frame; and the glory of the Lord most shines therein, in its own luster and brightness; and when the soul is low before the Lord, it is still near the seed, and precious (in its life) one with the seed. And when the seed rises, you shall have liberty in the Lord to rise with it; only take heed of that part which will be outrunning it, and getting above it, and so, not ready to descend again, and keep low in the deeps with it.

O my friend! I have a sense, that this has been the error of that people that you have formerly walked with: and I observe in your spirit yet a liability thereto; which the Lord give you to watch against, that you may come to a pure observation and discerning of the everlasting, unchangeable seed in your own heart, and may daily feel your mind bowed down and worship in it, become wholly leavened into it, and perfectly changed and preserved by it.

POSTSCRIPT

We are here but awhile in this world, for the Lord to make use of us, and serve himself by us; and so, by his ordering of us, to fit us for the crown of glory, which he will give us fully to wear in the other world. Now, feel the child's nature, which chooses nothing, but desires the fulfilling of the Father's will in it. I cannot desire to enjoy any thing (says the nature of the true birth), but as the Father, of himself, pleases to give me to enjoy. There is a time to want, as well as to abound, while we are in this world. And the times of wanting, as well as abounding, are greatly advantageous to us. How should faith, love, patience, meekness, and the excellency and sufficiency of God's grace shine, but by, in, and through the many exercises and varieties of conditions, wherewith the Lord visits his? Yes, the greatest in the life, power, and glory of the Lord, have the greatest trials and exercises, which is to their advantage, as also for the good and benefit of others, and to the great honor and glory of the Lord. Oh! at all times, and in all conditions, take heed of a will, take heed of a wisdom, above the seed's will, and above the seed's wisdom.

Let the Lord alone be all in you, and make you every day what he pleases; and, in due time, you shall know a life, — even the seed's life, the Son's life, — whom all of the angels are to worship, — and the mystery of whose life the angels desire to look into, as it is revealed and brought forth! So, be still and quiet, and silent before the Lord; not putting up any request to the Father, nor cherishing any desire in you, but in the seed's lowly nature and purely springing life; and the Lord give you the clear discerning, in the lowly seed, of all that springs and arises in your heart.

You did read precious things of the seed when you were here, written outwardly; oh that you might read the same things, written inwardly in your own heart; which that you may do, become as a weaned child, not exercising yourself in things too high or too wonderful for you. Every secret thing, every spiritual mystery, but what God opens to you, is too high and wonderful for you. And if the Lord at any time open to you deep mysteries, fear before the Lord; and go no further into them than the Lord leads you. The error is still in the comprehending, knowing mind, but never in the lowly, weighty seed of life; — where the Lord God of my life more and more lead you, and counsel you to take up your dwelling place there, daily instructing you so to do. For the greatest, as well as the least, must be daily taught of the Lord, both in ascending and descending, or they will miss their way; yes, they must be daily taught of him to be silent before him, and know [what it is] to be still in him, or they will be apt to miss in either.

This from your friend,

I. P.

Amersham, Woodside, 4th of Fifth Month, 1679.

TO SARAH ELGAR

THE child which the Lord has taken from you was his own. He has done you no wrong, in calling it from you. Take heed of murmuring, take heed of discontent, take heed of any grief, but what truth allows you. You have yet one child left. The Lord may call for that too, if he please; or he may continue and bless it to you. Oh, mind a right frame of Spirit towards the Lord, in this your great affliction! If you mind God's truth in your heart, and wait to feel the seasoning thereof, that will bring you into, and preserve you in a right frame of spirit. The Lord will not condemn your love and tenderness to your child, or your tender remembrance of him; but still, in it be subject to the Lord, and let his will and disposal be bowed unto by you, and not the will of your nature above it. Retire out of the natural, into the spiritual, where you may feel the Lord your portion; so that now, in the needful time, you may day by day receive and enjoy satisfaction therein. Oh, wait to feel the Lord making your heart what he would have it to be, in this your deep and sore affliction!

I. P.

Nunnington, Sixth Month, 1679

Now, let the world see how you prize the truth, and what truth can do for you. Feed on it; do not feed on your affliction; and the life of truth will arise in you, and raise you up over it, to the honor of the

name of the Lord, and to the comfort of your own soul.

TO WILLIAM ROLLS

FRIEND,

David saw through the sacrifices and burnt offerings in his time; and the spiritual eye sees through all shadows to the substance, which have no place in the brightness of the day of God: and outward washing is no more than outward circumcision, — no more of a gospel nature, — nor can avail any more, but is of the nature of the things that were to be shaken and pass away; that the spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the things which cannot be shaken might remain.

I could say very much to every passage of your letter; but to what purpose would it be? The Lord give you a sense, where the true understanding is given, and teach you aright to wait for it; that you may receive it from him, and thereby discern the nature of that wisdom, from which God has hid the mystery in all ages and generations, and from which he hides it still; that so you may experimentally know what it is to become a fool in yourself for Christ's sake, that you may be wise in him; concerning which, it is easy to have many notions in the mind, but hard to come to the true experience of.

These are the breathings of my heart for you, in the flowings of my love; who desire that you may not seek after the knowledge of the Scriptures in that which cannot understand them; but may meet with the right key, and the right understanding, wherein your soul will be safe and happy; which is my heart's desire for you, who am a real friend and well-wisher to your soul in the Lord.

I. P.

TO THE POOR AMONG FRIENDS

Who are relieved by the charity and bowels of love, which God opens in other Friends towards them

O FRIENDS,

You ought deeply and often to consider of God's visiting you with his precious truth, whereto being faithful, you are sure to be happy forever; how hard soever it should go with you, and how strait soever your condition should be, in reference to the things of this world.

But you have not only this assurance and benefit by the truth, but you are also come to partake of a better provision, as to your necessities outwardly, than other poor meet with. For God himself takes care of you, in drawing the hearts of his children to consider of your needs, and make supply unto you; so that many of you are so provided for, as you had never like to have been while in this world, had it not been for the interest God gives you in the hearts of others, through and because of his truth. Surely this should not be forgotten by you, but daily acknowledged to the Lord, in the use and enjoyment of those things, which you ought to receive as from his hand, through those who minister to you in his name, and for his sake.

And take heed of murmuring, if the supply answer not any of your expectations; for if we wait upon the Lord, to be ordered and guided by him in this matter, and answerably witness his presence with us, and holy wisdom ordering us in these affairs; your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord. And if you watch narrowly over yourselves, you will find it is the unsubdued part, which is apt to be repining and murmuring; but that which is of the Lord, and eyes him, is that which is sensible of his goodness, and thankful to him for it. But if there be judged to be any neglect towards any, or any just cause of complaint; let it, in tenderness, meekness, and the fear of the Lord, be laid before us; and we will wait upon him to give it a due and full consideration, and do therein as the Lord shall open and guide our hearts. For great exercises of spirit do we meet with in these affairs, and great are our cries of spirit to the Lord, to guide and order us according to his will and holy counsel therein.

And dear Friends, wait to feel that which stays your minds on the Lord, and keeps your eye towards him; and take heed of judging us in things, wherein we truly desire to act singly towards the Lord, and of which we must give an account to him; and if you in any thing judge us, wherein our God justifies us, certainly the Lord will therein condemn you. Therefore be wary and watchful in this matter.

I. P.

TO SARAH BOND

DEAR SARAH,

I have had many thoughts of you in this my imprisonment; wherein I have seen in spirit your error and miscarriage, and a hope and expectation in your heart which will deceive you.

Oh, how much precious time have you lost! wherein you might have been traveling far on your journey, while you are disputing in your mind, and wandering in the deceitful reasonings of your heart. And indeed, it must not be, it must not be as you imagine; but you must begin low, and be glad of a little light to travel with out of the earthly nature, and be faithful thereunto; and in faithfulness expect additions of light, and so much power as may help you to rub on. And though you may be long low, and weak, and little, and ready to perish; yet in the humble and self-denying state, the Father will help you, and cause his life to shoot up in you, in the shooting up whereof will be your redemption.

But, oh hasten, oh hasten out of the earthly nature, while you have time, or any visitations from the Spirit of the Lord! and do not, in your wisdom, limit him, but accept what at present comes from him; for the flood is breaking out, and will swallow up and drown all that are not found in the ark. Oh! therefore enter, enter quickly; mind that which checks in your heart; mind also that which reasons against those checks, to hold you still in captivity, and to keep you from traveling out of the earthly nature, spirit, wisdom, and practices; and come out of the spirit and way of this world, that you may live, and not die. For none shall live, but those that walk in the way of life, and leave the paths and course of the dead, in which you are yet entangled. Oh that you might be loosed, and travel out from there, with a little light and a little help! and not limit the Holy One of Israel in your desires or expectations, but thankfully receive the smallest visitation that comes from him to your soul; for there is life and peace in it, and death and perplexity in turning from it. And this will not be your comfort or satisfaction hereafter, to have had a day of visitation and mercy from on high; but to have received the

visitation, and to have been turned in it, from the darkness of the earthly mind and nature, into the light of the living and redeemed souls, — this will be comfortable indeed!

And this is my tender counsel to you: wait for and gaspingly receive the checks of the Most High, and take heed of reasoning against them; but as that (though in a low and mean and despicable way to your wisdom) draws and leads you out of any earthly thought, word, custom, or practice, follow diligently; not reasoning against it, but waiting to have your reasonings subdued to the smallest motions and lowest guidance of life in you. For I know that life is near you, even the life that would effectually redeem you; but it is bowed down and held captive under the dominion of the earthly wisdom; and so your redemption (which is to be wrought out by it) sticks, and will stick, until your heart be persuaded to join to it and become subject, without reasoning, without consulting, without disputing. For I certainly know the light manifests in you; but the darkness puts off the present manifestation of the light, and expects another; and this is in the will of the flesh, which the Father will not answer; and in this will and expectation you will perish; but your help, life, and salvation are in being subject to the present manifestation of light, parting with and departing from what you already know to be of the earth, and not of God.

And in thus doing, more will be made manifest in the Lord's season, and power given to become a child, after some belief in the Father, and some entrance into the childlike nature; but the will and expectation of the flesh in you shall never be answered: — it has been long written in my heart concerning you, but I dare never utter it to you. Oh that it may be now uttered, to the melting and advantage of your heart! for, indeed, I love you, and have travailed for you, and desire the salvation of your soul, as of my own. Oh that you may be led out of that wisdom which destroys, into that which saves! and may there, in humility of heart, receive instruction daily, according to your need. But indeed, of a truth, you must come into and come under that which crucifies your nature and wisdom; and there (in the seasons of God's wisdom, who answers the desires of his own Spirit in the heart, but regards not the flesh) may you meet with life and power, but no where else.

I am your friend, and a dear lover of that in you which desires the Lord; and oh that that might come up in you, and be severed from the earth, that your soul may live!

I. P.

FOR MY DEAR FRIENDS IN THE TRUTH AT LEWES

THE God of truth plants his truth in the hearts of people, that it might grow there, and bring forth fruit to him. O my dear friends! feel it grow in every one of your hearts, and bringing forth the proper fruits of its growth to the Lord.

Mind what arises from the truth, what truth brings forth, and wait for and receive your nourishment from the Lord, that it may be brought forth in you. And that which the Lord has made barren (in you, who have experienced his righteous judgments), let it be kept so, by the same power which made it barren, that no more fruit may be brought forth to sin and unrighteousness, by any of you. Then shall you live the life of truth, and no life but the life of truth, and dwell and walk in the truth, than which there is no greater joy, delight, or peace to be desired or enjoyed.

O my dear friends! know and every day experience Enoch's life, — a being translated out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of the dear Son, and of walking with the Son in his kingdom; then you will walk with the Father also, and know the heavenly paths of life, joy, righteousness, and peace in the pure light of life, which is no less than a paradise to the renewed soul.

I would have preferred to have seen you together, had the Lord made way; but let me feel you in the hidden life, and meet you at my Father's throne, where let us beg of our God, what our souls and his whole flock stand in need of, praying for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem, unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hears our prayers; that we may daily see and feel the going on of the work of our God, in our hearts, and in the kingdoms of the world (which must become the Lord's and his Christ's), and may bless and magnify his name, who has power over all, and orders all for good to his chosen heritage.

This is the salutation of my love to you, which lay so upon me, that I could not pass it by, who am your friend, in the everlasting, unchangeable truth of our blessed God and Savior.

I. P.

TO _____

BECAUSE my not praying in my family, according to the custom of professors, seemed to be such a great stumbling-block to you, it sprang up in my heart to render you this account thereof.

I did formerly apply myself to pray to the Lord, morning and evening (besides other times), believing in my heart, that it was the will of the Lord I should so do. And this was my condition then: — sometimes I felt the living spring open, and the true child breathe towards the Father; at other times I felt a deadness, a dryness, a barrenness, and only a speaking and striving of the natural part, which I, even then, felt was not acceptable to the Lord, nor did profit my soul; but apprehending it to be a duty, I durst not but apply myself thereto.

Since that time, — since the Lord has again been pleased to raise up what he had formerly begotten in me, and begun to feed it, by the pure giving forth of that breath of life which begat it (which is the bread that comes down from heaven daily to it, as the Lord pleases freely to dispense it), — the Lord has shown me that prayer is his gift to the child which he begets and that it stands not in the will, or time, or understanding, or affectionate part of the creature, but in his own begetting, which he first breathes upon, and then it breathes again towards him: — and that he works this at his own pleasure, and no time can be set him when he shall breathe: or when he shall not breathe, and that when he breathes, then is the time of prayer, then is the time of moving towards him, and following him who draws. So that all my times, and all my duties, and all my graces, and all my hopes, and all my refreshments, and all my ordinances, are in his hand, who is the spring of my life, and conveys, preserves, and increases life of his own good pleasure.

I freely confess, all my religion stands in waiting on the Lord, for the riches of his Spirit, and in returning back to the Lord (by his own Spirit, and in the virtue of his own life), that which he pleases to bestow on me. And, I have no faith, no love, no hope. no peace, no joy, no ability to any thing, no

refreshment in any thing, but as I find his living breath beginning, his living breath continuing, his living breath answering, and performing what it calls for. So that I am become exceeding poor and miserable, save in what the Lord pleases to be to me by his own free grace, and for his own name's sake, and in rich mercy. And if I have tasted any thing of the Lord's goodness sweeter than ordinary, my heart is willing, so far as the Lord pleases, faithfully to point any others to the same spring; and not discourage or witness against the least simplicity, and true desire after God, in them. But where they have lost the true living child, and another thing is got up in its stead (which, though it may bear its image to the eye of flesh, yet is not the same thing in the sight of God), and where this nourishes itself by praying, reading, meditating, or any other such like thing, feeding the carnal part with such a kind of knowledge from Scriptures, as the natural understanding may gather and grow rich by; this, in love and faithfulness to the Lord and to souls, I cannot but testify against, wherever I find it, as the Lord draws forth my spirit to bear its testimony.

And this I know, from the Lord, to be the general state of professors at this day. The Spirit of the Lord is departed from them, and they are joined to another spirit, as deeply and as generally as ever the Jews were; and that their prayers and reading of the Scriptures, and preaching, and duties, and ordinances are as loathsome to the soul of the Lord, as ever the Jews' incense and sacrifices were. And this is the word of the Lord concerning them. You must come out of your knowledge, into the feeling of an inward principle of life, if ever you be restored to the true unity with God, and to the true enjoyment of him again. You must come out of the knowledge and wisdom you have gathered from the Scriptures, into a feeling of the thing there written of, as it pleases the Lord to open and reveal them in the hidden man of the heart.

This is it, you are to wait for from the Lord; and not to boast of your present state, as if you were not backslidden from him, and had not entered into league with another spirit; which keeps up the image of what the Spirit of the Lord once formed in you, but without the true, pure, fresh life.

From a faithful friend and lover of souls.

I. P.

TO E. TERRY

FRIEND,

If the Lord has extended favor to you and shown you mercy, I therein rejoice on your behalf.

Your desire, that what you wrote may be looked upon as nothing, and that no contest may be raised from it, I am content fully to answer you in; nor do I desire to have any advantage against you, nor are you at all disparaged in my thoughts by what you have written, but it is in my heart as nothing, and my love flows to you; for I take notice of your seriousness, and what I have unity with in this letter, and overlook the other.

As touching disputes, indeed, I have no love to them: Truth did not enter my heart that way, nor do I expect to propagate it in others that way; yet, sometimes a necessity is laid upon me, for the sake of

others. And truly, when I do feel a necessity, I do it in great fear; not trusting in my spear or bow, I mean in strong arguments or wise considerations, which I (of myself) can gather or comprehend; but I look up to the Lord for the guidance, help, and demonstration of his Spirit, that way may be made thereby in men's hearts for the pure seed to be reached to, wherein the true conviction, and thorough conversion of the soul to God is witnessed. I had far rather be feeling Christ's life, Spirit, and power in my own heart, than disputing with others about them.

Christians that truly fear the Lord, have a proportion of the primitive Spirit; and, if they could learn to watch and wait there, where God works the fear, they would daily receive more and more of it, and in it, understand more and more the true intent and preciousness of the words of the Holy Scriptures. He that will truly live to God, must hear wisdom's voice within, at home, in his own heart; and he that will have her words made known, and her spirit poured out to him, must turn at her reproof. Prov. 1:23. Indeed, I never knew, and am satisfied that none else can know, the preciousness of this lesson, till they are taught it of the Lord.

There is one thing more on my heart to express, occasioned by your last letter, which is this: I have more unity in my heart and spirit before the Lord, with the Puritan state, than with the churches and gatherings which men have built up and run into since. Indeed, men have enlarged their knowledge and comprehension of things; but that truth of heart, that love, that tenderness, that unity upon truth's account, which was then amongst them, many have made shipwreck of, and do not now know the state of their own souls, nor truth in the life and power of it. This principle of life and truth was near me, as well as others; yes, with me in that day; but I wandered from it into outward knowledge, and, with great seriousness, into a way of congregational worship, and thereby came to a great loss; and at length, for lack of the Lord's presence, power, and manifestation of his love, was sick at heart. But now, the Lord, in great love and tender mercy, having brought me back to the same principle, and fixed my spirit therein, I discern the truth and beauty of that former estate, with the several runnings out from it; and find what was true or false therein, discovered to me by the holy anointing, which appears and teaches in that principle. And, friend, it is not a notion of light, which my heart is engaged to testify to; but that which enlivens, that which opens, that which gives to see, that wherein the power of life is felt. For truly, in the opening of my heart by the pure power, was I taught to see and own the principle and seed of life, and to know its way of appearance; and so can faithfully and certainly testify, that that which is divine, spiritual, and heavenly, is nearer man than he is aware, as well as that which is earthly and selfish.

O friend! if you can not yet see and own the principle and seed of Christ's life and Spirit, nor discern his appearance therein; yet take heed of fighting against it; for, indeed, if you do, you fight against no less than the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

I. P.

TO A NEAR RELATIVE

DEAR _____,

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation; it is the glad tidings of freedom from sin, of putting off

the body of sin by the circumcision and baptism of the Spirit, of being delivered out of the hands of our spiritual enemies, that we may serve God (without fear of them any more), in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.

The ministers of the gospel are those, who, in the Spirit of Christ, by the gift and inspiration thereof, preach these tidings to the poor and needy, to the captives, to those that groan under the pressure of the body of corruption.

The gospel, through the great mercy of God, I have, at length, heard preached; and I have not heard man, but the voice of my Beloved; whose voice is welcome to me, though in the meanest boy, or most contemptible female. For in Christ, there is neither male nor female; nor should his Spirit, which is not limited to males, be quenched in any. And though you, through prejudice, call this speaking of the Spirit through servants and handmaids, prating, yet the Lord can forgive you; for surely, if you knew what you did herein, you would not thus offend the Lord; — extolling preaching by man's wisdom, from a minister made by man, for gospel preaching, and condemning the preaching of persons sent by God, in the immediate inspiration of his Spirit. I am confident, if, without prejudice, and in the fear of God, you did once hear such, you would not be able to forbear saying in your heart, It is the voice of God, of a truth. But that which has not the sheep's ear can never own the voice of the true Shepherd.

As for those whom you call ministers, if I should speak, concerning them, the very truth from the mouth of the Lord, you could not, in that state wherein you stand, receive it; yet am I far from accounting them the offscouring of the earth; for I look upon them as wise and knowing, and as of great beauty in the earthly learning and wisdom; but surely, not as having "the tongue of the learned," "to speak a word in season to him that is weary;" no, they are men unlearned in this kind of learning, and such as toss and tear and wrest the scripture, in their uncertain reasonings and guessings about the sense of it, and in the various doubtful interpretations they give.

And whereas I am blamed for not putting a difference between the profane and scandalous ministers, and the reverend and godly sort; my answer is, They are united in one ministry; and the question is not concerning the persons, but the ministry; in which they are one, — their call one, their maintenance one, their way of worship and preaching one, their standing and power of government one; which is not by the power and presence of the Spirit, but by the strength of the magistrate. But the true gospel and ministry is spiritual, and cannot stand nor be upheld by that which is carnal, neither in its call, maintenance, government, or what else belongs to it. When Christ came in the flesh, the words he pronounced were not so much against the profane and scandalous among the Scribes and Pharisees; but against those that appeared most strict, and were accounted among the Jews the most reverend and godly. And, were it not for the appearance of godliness in these men, the persecution of the present times had not been so hot, the good old cause so lost, and the work of reformation (inasmuch as relates to men) so overturned as at this day. O _____! there was once a good thing in various of them, which my soul would rejoice to see revived; but as the seat of government eat out the good that was in the bishops, so gaping after the seat of government has sunk the good thing in others also; and made their eye so dim, that they cannot see the mighty breakings forth of the Spirit of Christ in his people.

I. P.

TO RICHARD ROBERTS

R. R.

THOU did acquaint me that Timothy Fly, the Anabaptist teacher, did charge me with denying Christ's humanity, and also the blood of Christ, which was shed at Golgotha, without the gates of Jerusalem; and that I own no other Christ but what is within men.

Sure I am, that neither T. Fly, nor any other man, did ever hear me deny, that Christ, according to the flesh, was born of the Virgin Mary, or that that was his blood, which was shed without the gates of Jerusalem. And the Lord, who knows my heart, knows, that such a thing never was in my heart; no, I do greatly value that flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and witness forgiveness of sins and redemption through it. Yet, if I should say, I do not know nor partake of his flesh and blood in the mystery also, I should not be a faithful witness to the Lord. For there is the mystery of God and of Christ; and that is the soul's food which gives life to the soul, even the living bread and the living water. For there is living bread and living water; and the flesh and blood in the mystery, on which the soul feeds, is not inferior in nature and virtue to the bread and water. There is a knowing Christ after the flesh, and there is a knowing him after the Spirit, and a feeding on his Spirit and life; and this does not destroy his appearing in flesh, or the blessed ends thereof, but confirm and fulfill them.

The owning of Christ being inwardly in his saints, does not deny his appearing outwardly in the body prepared; unless T. F. can maintain this, that the same Christ that appeared outwardly cannot appear inwardly. "Know you not your own selves. how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?" 2 Cor. 13:5. "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin," etc. Rom. 8:10. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1:27. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him." Rev. 3:20. "I will come again," says Christ: You are now in pain, as a woman in travail, full of sorrow for the loss of my outward, bodily presence; but I will come to you again in spirit; see John 16 and John 14:17. "He," that "dwells with you, shall be in you:" and then, when the Bridegroom is inwardly and spiritually in you and with you, "your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you." John 16:22. And so, the apostles and primitive Christians did "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," 1 Peter 1:8, because of the spiritual appearance and presence of the Bridegroom. And yet, there is no other bridegroom, who now appears in spirit, or spiritually in the hearts of his, than He that once appeared in the prepared body, and did the Father's will therein.

I. P.

ADDRESSED TO THE INDEPENDENTS AT CANTERBURY

I HAVE been a seeker after God, and a worshipper of him from my childhood, according to the best of my understanding; and, at last, sat down in that way which is called Independency, believing it to be the way of the gospel, and entering into it with much fear and seeking of God. In which way, the Lord had regard to the uprightness and tenderness of heart, which he had formed in me.

But, at length, the Lord's hand fell upon me, breaking me all to pieces therein, as to my inward state;

for what cause, I had then no knowledge at all of; but mourned before him unutterably, night and day, and lay panting and languishing after him, who was the only Beloved of my soul. Many pitied me, but none could reach my state, but, after much serious discourse with me, greatly wondered: and some said, it was a prerogative case, and would, doubtless, end in good-will and mercy from the Lord to me. I parted from that people in great love and tenderness; they expecting my return to them again (the love between me and them being so exceeding great, and I having let in no prejudice against them), and I knowing nothing to the contrary.

But it pleased the Lord, after many years, when my hope nearly failed, to visit me in a wonderful manner, breaking my heart in pieces, giving me to feel his pure, living power, and the raising of his holy seed in my heart thereby; insomuch, that I cried out inwardly before him, "This is He, this is He whom I have sought after, and so much lacked! this is the pearl, this is the holy leaven! do what you will with me, afflict me how you will, and as long as you please, so that at length I may be joined with this, and become one with this!" So the eye of my understanding was from that day anointed, and I saw and felt the pure life of the Son made manifest in me; and the Father drew me to him, as to a living stone, and has built my soul upon him, and brought me to Mount Zion, and the holy city of our God; where the river of life sends forth its streams, which refresh and make glad the holy city, and all the tabernacles that are built on God's holy hill. And indeed, from this holy hill and city, the law and word of life does issue, and the inhabitants of the rock of life hear it, and are friends to the Bridegroom, and glad of the Bridegroom's voice, and follow the Lamb, the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, whithersoever he leads; who leads them into the pastures of life, and folds of pure rest, and gives them eternal life to feed on, and his peace and patience to possess their souls in.

O you Independents! whom I have loved above all people, and never had thoughts of rending from you, but was forcibly taken by the hand of the Lord out of your Society; yet not without a desire to return to you again, if the Lord pleased to make any way thereto; — I say, O you Independents, above all professions the one most dearly beloved by me! oh that you could hear the sensible, experienced testimony that is on my heart to you concerning my Beloved, concerning his appearance, concerning his church, concerning his way, his truth, his kingdom. It is nigher than you are aware, and above all that you can comprehend concerning it. Oh that you might inwardly know these things! Turn in, turn in: mind what stirs in your hearts; what moves against sin, what moves towards sin. The one is the Son's life, the Son's grace, the Son's Spirit; the other is the spirit and nature which is contrary thereto. If you could but come to the sense of this, and come to a true, inward silence, and waiting, and turning at the reproofs of heavenly wisdom, and know the heavenly drawings into that which is holy and living; you would soon find the Lord working in your hearts, to stop the issues of death, and to open the issues of life there; and you would find yourselves anointed daily by the Lord (for there is not a day but we need to see, nor a day but the Lord gives sight), and an understanding also would be given you to know Him that is true, and the "eternal life," 1 John 1:2, and an abiding in him that is true. And, abiding here, you cannot fail of receiving power (from him who ministers according to the power of the endless life), not only to overcome sin and your souls' enemies, but to become sons to God, with delight performing his will. And that yoke, which yokes down and subdues sin in you, will be easy, yes, the ease, pleasure, and joy of your souls.

The Lord open an ear in you to hear as the learned, that you may become experiencers and possessors of these things; for, of a truth, the Lord is arisen to shake terribly the earth, and to build up his Zion, and to give unto his people "a peaceable habitation and sure dwellings and quiet resting-places" upon

TO FRANCIS PORDAGE

FRIEND,

There is a mind, which can never know nor receive the things of God's kingdom; and yet, this mind is very busy in searching and inquiring after them.

The Scribes and Pharisees were still questioning Christ, and desiring satisfaction about the kingdom, and about his doctrine and miracles, and the practice of his disciples, but could never receive satisfaction; yet, the disciples themselves were many times afraid to ask Christ questions, there being a dread of God upon their spirits, and a limit to the knowing and inquiring part in them; for indeed, the true birth learns under the yoke.

This, therefore, is precious; to come to feel something to limit that mind, which is forward and inquisitive out of the true nature and sense, and to receive the yoke, and to be limited by it and famished; for famine, not food of life, is appointed for that mind and birth. It is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Now, this is precious and greatly needful: for a man to know, and discern, and watch against that wisdom and understanding in himself, which God will destroy and bring to nothing; for, to be sure, while he is learning and striving to know with that, God will never teach him, but rather hide the mystery of life and salvation from him. And what is all man's knowledge worth, that he learns of himself without God's teaching; and which he receives into that understanding which is to perish and be destroyed? In the new understanding, God sets up the true light; but in the other understanding, are false lights set up, which do not give a true distinction of good and evil, but they call good evil, and evil good, and put darkness for light, and light for darkness, and cannot do otherwise; because, the light in them is darkness, it not being the gift of grace whereby they see and judge, but a light of their own forming, according to their own comprehension of things, in the dark and false understanding.

Now, the Lord has taught us the difference between all these lights, and the light of his grace, which purely teaches, livingly teaches, not in the reasonings of the mind, but in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit in the soul and conscience. When we came to see in this light, we found, that which we had called good, according to our former apprehension of things, was not so in the true balance; and what we thought had pleased God, was abominable in his eyes. And truly, all that are not come to this light, they offer that which is abominable to God, and yet think it pleases him; and what a gross and dangerous mistake is this! indeed, all are no better than will-deeds, which are done out of the light, life, virtue, and power of God's Spirit. For the root must be good, or the fruit cannot be good. The mind must be renewed, or the knowledge is but old, dead, literal, and fleshly; such as the fleshly understanding comprehends and receives, which can neither know nor receive what is spiritual.

Truly, the Lord has led us a great way in our journey, and done great things inwardly for and in our spirits; yet, if we were not kept under the yoke, but that part in us had liberty to know, and live, and

act, and worship, we should yet perish, and be cut off from the land of the living.

I. P.

IN REPLY TO AN ANSWER OF I. H. TO SOMEWHAT WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF TRUTH

_____ INDEED, to speak properly, the church of the gospel, or new testament church, is invisible. The persons in whom the church is, are visible; yet the new testament church is not a society of men, but rather of the invisible life in men. It is a fellowship in the faith, in the Spirit, which is the bond of their unity and of their peace.

The life is breathed invisibly into the hidden man; John 3:8; it is there nourished and built up invisibly into a spiritual, invisible temple, house, or church; and in that is the unity and fellowship. So that the church is a mystery, and the fellowship a mystery, which is hid from every eye but the eye of life; and there is no having fellowship one with another, but by coming to that, and keeping in that, wherein is the fellowship. 1 John 1:7. It is of inward Jews the church is built; it is of such, God seeks to frame his new house of worship, under the gospel. John 4:23. Now, of such stones as these, the Lord builds up a temple for his Spirit to dwell in, a house for his life and presence to manifest itself in, — even a church for the living God. This building is by the Spirit, in the Spirit, and of that which is spiritual; this building is one with the foundation, and therefore is the pillar and ground of Truth, which none is but Christ, and that which is married to him, and so one with him. 1 Tim. 3:15. Consider the place well, and see whether it relate to that which you call the invisible, or to that which you call the visible church.

It is the candlestick in persons, that is the church; not any outward meeting of persons, or joining together by covenant, or receiving or practicing of ordinances, can make a church; but the eternal life in believers, formed by the Spirit into a candlestick, to hold the eternal lamp or light, with the everlasting oil of salvation. The light thus shining in this candlestick, continually refreshed by this oil, — here is a flourishing temple, wherever it is found; here is the church of the living God, here is the spouse married to the Lamb, her Husband. But grieve the Spirit, quench the Spirit, despise the prophesyings thereof, and light up a candle of the fleshly wisdom and knowledge of the things of God, instead of these, the oil soon fails; the oil failing, the lamp goes out; the lamp, or light, being gone out of the candlestick, the Lord soon removes the candlestick; and the candlestick being once removed, the very same persons may meet together often, and hold up the form, — performing things mentioned in the Scriptures concerning a church, and observing such things as they may call the institutions and ordinances thereof, — but they are far from continuing to be a church. Take away the faith, what is left of a Christian? and take away the candlestick, what is left of a church?

It is the Spirit alone that can square stones, and fit them for building a church of; and he alone can build them up into a house, when he has squared them. Eph. 2:22. And after he has built, he can pull down again, and bring into a wilderness state; for there is a wilderness state of Christianity as well as a built state; Rev. 12:6, and as, in the built state, it is dangerous to be out of the church, so, in the wilderness state, it is dangerous remaining in that building which the Spirit of the Lord has forsaken. Now, if the Spirit be the builder, then, surely, he will take in no stones, but such as he has first squared

and fitted for the building. And after the church is built, it is he alone who adds to the church; who will be sure to add none, but those whom he has first converted. Acts 2:47.

The church is a body gathered in the Spirit, and watching to the Spirit; who is present there with his pure, searching, discerning eyes; so that nothing that is impure can enter (they watching to the Spirit, according to the order of the gospel), no, not one counterfeit Jew, no, nor so much as one false apostle, though they clothe themselves ever so like angels of light. Rev. 22. But if they be negligent, and from off the watch, not waiting for the guidance of the Spirit; then that which is corrupt may creep in, and endanger the body. Jude 4.

TO BRIDGET ATLEY

DEAR FRIEND,

I am sensible of your sore travail and deep distress, and how hard it is for you to meet with that which is comfortable and refreshing, and how easily again it is lost; and from where it arises, — even from the working of the enemy in a mystery of deceit in your heart; wherein you do not perceive nor suspect him, but swallow down his baits, and so he smites you with his hook, and thereby draws you back into the region of darkness; and then, enters that part in you which is in nature one with him, filling it with his wickedness; and then, laying loads of accusations upon you, as if they were true. These are not strange things to the travelers after the Lord, but such as are usually met with in the like cases: but if your eye were made single and opened by the Lord, you would see those baits, and turn from that, which you now so readily swallow down; and so avoid the stroke, and keep your station, in the light and mercy of the Lord. You must not look so much at the evil that is nigh, but rather at that which stands ready to pity and help, — and which has pitied and helped your distressed soul, and will pity and help it again. Why is there a mercy-seat, but for the sinner to look towards in time of need?

Neither must you hearken to the questionings of the insnaring questioner; but cleave to that which shuts them out, keeping to the sense of the love and mercy, when the Lord is kind and tender to you. When the enemy entered your habitation again, and broke your rest, peace, and enjoyment of the Lord; again, an earnest desire after cleansing arose in you; not from the life, but in the evil; this was also a means to rob you of that, which, in its abiding and powerful operation cleanses the heart; and here, you would be limiting the Lord in his dealings, who works according to the counsel of his own will, and visits when and where he pleases. And thus the enemy having caught you with his mysterious workings, he than draws you into the pit of darkness, where the remembrance of life, and the sense of mercy and love vanishes; and there is no help for you, by any thing you can do or think. But be patient, till the Lord's tender mercy and love visit you again; and then, look up to him against this and such like snares, which would come between you and the appearance of the Lord's love; that you may feel more of his abidings with you, and of the sweet effects thereof. For, these things are not to destroy you, but to teach you wisdom; which the Lord is able, through many exercises and sore trials, to bestow upon you; which my soul will exceedingly rejoice to hear the tidings of; that your heart may be rid of all that burdens, and filled with all it rightly desires after, in the proper season and goodness of the Lord; to whose wise ordering and tender mercy I commit you, remaining

Your faithful friend,

I. P.

TO ABRAHAM GRIMSDEN

FRIEND,

You have made some profession of truth, and at times come amongst us; but whether you have been changed thereby, and been faithful to the Lord in what has been made manifest to you, belongs unto you diligently to inquire. There is no safe dallying with truth. He that puts his hand to the plow, must not look back at any thing of this world; but take up the cross and follow Christ, in the single-hearted obedience, hating father, mother, goods, lands, wife, yes, all for His sake; or he is not worthy of Him. The good hand of the Lord is with his people, and he blesses them both inwardly and outwardly; and they that seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof, in the first place, have other things also added: but they that neglect the kingdom, and are unfaithful to truth, seeking the world before it, the hand of the Lord goes forth against them, and they many times, miss of that also of the world, which they seek and labor for.

Truth is honorable. Oh! take heed of bringing a reproach upon it, by pretending to it, and yet not being of it, in the pure sense and obedience, which it begets and brings forth in the hearts and lives of the faithful. But if any be careless and unfaithful to what they are convinced of, and so, for the present, bring a reproach upon God's truth, which is altogether innocent thereof; the Lord, in his due time, will wipe off that reproach from his truth and people; but the sorrow and burden will light upon themselves, which will be very bitter and heavy to them, in the day that the Lord shall visit them with his righteous judgments.

Oh, consider rightly and truly! It had been better for you, you had never known truth, nor been directed to the principle and path of righteousness; than, after direction thereto, to turn from the holy commandments, and deny obedience to the righteous One. The Lord give you true sense and repentance, if it be his holy pleasure, and raise you out of this world's spirit, to live to him in his own pure Spirit. It is easy to profess and make a show of truth, but hard to come into it. It is very hard to the earthly mind, to part with that which must be parted with for it, before the soul can come to possess and enjoy it. Profession of truth, without the life and power, is but a slippery place, which men may easily slide from; no, indeed, if men be not in the life and power, they can hardly be kept from that which will stain their profession. The Lord, who searches the heart, knows how it is with you: oh, consider your ways, and fear before him, and take heed of taking his name in vain, for he will not hold such guiltless!

I am, in this, faithful and friendly to your soul, desiring its eternal welfare, and that it may not forever perish from the presence and power of the Lord.

I. P.

TO _____

FRIEND,

God breathed into man the breath of life, and man thereby became a living soul to God, to whom by transgression he died. But Christ (who was before Abraham, and, in due time, took up that body prepared by the Father) is the resurrection and the life, who, from the father, breathes life into man again, and so he comes to live again. And man, being quickened by Christ, is to rise up from the dead, and travel with Christ into the land of the living. And Christ is all to the believers, in whom dwells all fulness; the circumcision is in him, the baptism in him, and the righteousness, rest, and peace also; yes, in him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and he is made of God, unto them that believe in him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Now, it is very precious to feel this; but of little value to imagine or comprehend apprehensions about this. For the end of words is to bring men to the thing; but the Scribes and Pharisees, by their apprehensions upon the words given forth by the Spirit, missed of the thing (though they thought they missed not, but were blessed in the knowledge of the law, and they that knew not the law were cursed): and the same spirit is alive in many that profess truth now, who, by their understanding of scripture words, are kept from the thing which the Scriptures testify of. What did Christ come in the flesh and suffer for, but to unite and reconcile to God? and what is the anti-christian way of erring from the truth, but to cry up the appearance of Christ in the flesh, his sufferings, resurrection, ascension, etc., in that spirit, wherein the true union and reconciliation is not witnessed? If we receive the light, and walk in the light, as God is in the light, then have we a share in his Son's death and atonement, and his blood cleanses from unrighteousness; but not otherwise.

Oh that all who truly desire salvation, might know the way here, and receive that from God, which cleanses and keeps clean! Amen.

I. P.

TO _____

FRIEND,

The Lord God on whom I wait, and whom I worship in spirit and truth, and whom it is my delight to serve and obey, has various times engaged my mind to write to you in true and tender love. There is something, also, on my heart at this time to you, concerning the state of the gospel in general, and in particular concerning the state and condition of those, who truly know and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of saints.

The state of the gospel in general, is a state of redemption and deliverance from the soul's enemies; of which redemption every soul partakes, according to its faith in and obedience to the Truth, and according to its growth in him who is true. The babes in Christ and little children, their sins are forgiven them for his name's sake. The young men have fought valiantly, and have overcome the wicked one. The old men, or elders in the truth, they are experienced in the heavenly wisdom and knowledge of Him who is from the beginning.

Now, there are some things which belong to all in general, or which are common to all, and something which is peculiar to each member in particular. These things, which belong to all in general, are very many; but it is only on my heart to mention to you at this time those few which the apostle recites together in Eph. 4:4-6, which indeed comprehend much; and he that knows and partakes of them, has also a share in, and benefit by, all the rest. First, he says, "There is one body." There is one head; and this one head has one body, of which all that are truly living are members. Secondly, "There is one Spirit," which quickens, keeps alive, and gives nourishment to, orders, comforts, defends this one body. Thirdly, "There is one hope of" their "calling;" for they are all called from the land of darkness, and out of the shadow and dominion of death, to travel towards an inheritance of light, and life everlasting. Fourthly, There is "one Lord," who has power over, and the rule and dominion of, this one body; to whom they are all to give an account daily of what they do, and at the last day, of what has been done in their body of flesh. Fifthly, There is "one faith," wherewith they all believe in, and draw virtue from, the head; which faith is the gift of God, and springs from the root of life in his Son, and is of another nature than that natural ability of believing, which is found in mankind. Sixthly, There is "one baptism," by the one Spirit; whereby all the true members are baptized into the one living body, and come to partake of the virtue, benefits, and privileges thereof. Lastly, There is "one God and Father of all," who begat them all, and is to be worshipped by them all, as their Lord and God; he being witnessed and experienced by them to be "above all, and through all, and in" them "all." This is the state in general, the gospel state, into which Christ gives his sheep – his Father's children – entrance; and it is a blessed thing to know and experience this state, that is, to have a real interest in, and really to partake of, these things.

The state of every one in particular is thus: — "Unto every one" in particular "is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Grace and truth comes by Jesus Christ; for the fulness is his, yes, he is the fulness; and of his fulness does he give a measure to each member in particular. Not to all a like proportion, but to every one some; as he pleases to distribute and proportion out the gift of his grace to them. For it is his own, and he may dispense his gifts and heavenly talents as he pleases; and according to the state of each in the body, and according to their work and service, so does he proportion out his gift of grace to them. Now, this is that which every one is to mind; even the grace given to them, their own gift from Christ, to grow in that, and to be what they are in that. He that has none of this grace, he is none of Christ's; and he that has received the grace, the free gift, he is to keep to the measure of it, in all he is and does.

Now, shall I say to you, feel my love in these lines? or shall I not rather say, feel the love of my God, who visits you yet again, and would not have you perish, in resisting his Holy Spirit, and slighting the grace and truth which is by Jesus Christ, which is now powerfully revealed in many hearts? Blessed be he who has visited his people with the horn of salvation.

I. P.

TO _____

O DEAR FRIEND!

The eternal love of my Father is to you; and, because he loves you, and would entirely enjoy you, therefore does he so grievously batter and break down that which stands in the way. What he is doing towards you, you can not know now, but you shall know hereafter. Only be still, and wait for the springing up of hope, in the seasons the Father sees necessary; that you may not faint under his hand, but be supported by his secret power, until his work be finished. The great thing necessary for you at present to know is the drawings of his Spirit; that you may not ignorantly withstand or neglect them, and protract your day of your redemption.

Oh! look not after great things: small breathings, small desires, after the Lord, if true and pure, are sweet beginnings of life. Take heed of despising "the day of small things," by looking after some great visitation, proportionable to your distress, according to your eye. No, you must become a child, you must lose your own will quite by degrees. You must wait for life to be measured out by the Father, and be content with what proportion, and at what time, he shall please to measure.

Oh! be little, be little; and then you will be content with little: and if you feel, now and then, a check or a secret smiting, — in that is the Father's love; be not over-wise nor over-eager, in your own willing, running, and desiring, and you may feel it so; and by degrees come to the knowledge of your Guide, who will lead you, step by step, in the path of life, and teach you to follow, and, in his own season, powerfully judge that which cannot nor will not follow. Be still, and wait for light and strength; and desire not to know or comprehend, but to be known and comprehended in the love and life, which seeks out, gathers, and preserves the lost sheep.

I remain your dear friend, and a well-wisher to your soul, in the love of my Father.

I. P.

TO _____

DEAR FRIEND,

I received your letter kindly, and in the tenderness of love, which desires your enjoyment of the Lord in this world, and the eternal welfare of your soul with him forever.

It is a great matter, to have the mind rightly guided to that wherein God appears, that the soul may wait at the posts of wisdom, to hear wisdom's voice; and he that hears and observes wisdom's voice, what says wisdom concerning such a one? "I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." Prov. 1:23.

You have read in the Scriptures, of the kingdom of God, which, Christ told the Pharisees, was within them. He also, in parables, expressed what it was like; even like a grain of mustard seed, like a pearl of great price, like a lost groat, or piece of silver, like a treasure hid in a field, like leaven, etc. Now, oh that you might come to the discerning of this. Is there any such thing in you? Surely, there is. Do you know it? are you in union with it? is it grown and enlarged in you? is there room made for it, and does it overspread your heart? Oh that it were thus with you!

Whereas you say, The covenant, the new covenant, is contained in the Scriptures; that expression of

yours is not clear, and to the nature of the thing. There are, indeed, descriptions of the covenant in the Scriptures; but the covenant itself as an agreement of life and peace, made with the soul in the Lord Jesus Christ, upon his believing in His power, and obeying His voice; according to that scripture, "Hear, and your souls shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isa. 55:3. Now, this is it the soul is to wait for; even to feel the power of life breaking the bonds of death, and opening the ear to the voice of God's Spirit, that it may receive the impressions thereof, and feel the new creation inwardly, the new heart, the new mind, the new law of life, written within by the finger of God's Spirit, even the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And then this law is the rule inwardly, as the outward law was the rule to the outward Jews.

You think me something too sharp and severe, in my sentence concerning the ministers [of the day]. I do not remember that passage. I have received great mercy, and I would not be sharp or severe towards any. If, therefore, any such thing was, be assured it was in faithfulness to the Lord. All sorts of Christians own Christ in words, but all do not distinguish, discern, [nor are] subject to, the appearances of his Spirit and power; but resist, gainsay, and oppose, through error and mistake at first, till at length they come to hardness. These are the builders who refuse the Corner-stone. The builders rejected Christ's appearance in flesh, in the days of his flesh; and the builders again refuse his appearance in Spirit, in this day of his Spirit. Oh that any who are tender among them might be sensible of it! that they might not draw down God's severity and sharpness upon their heads; which if they do, it is not our joy, but matter of grief to us. And, friend, the state of profession is not what it was, when you and I were acquainted; but a withered state in comparison of that. I can truly say, concerning many professors, Oh that I could find them to be now, what they were twenty years ago! They have got more head-knowledge; but that savor of life which then was in them is not now to be found among them. Truly, I speak not otherwise concerning them, but as I feel the Spirit of the Lord testifying in me; neither would I have mentioned this at this time, but for your sake. Whatever is of God in any, my heart cannot but own: but many take that to be of God (that fear, that faith, that love, those prayers, those hopes, that peace, that joy, etc.), which is not of him. Oh, how precious is that which truly and rightly distinguishes! "My sheep hear my voice." The voice of the Shepherd distinguishes ever deceit and every deceiver.

But whereas you say, The spirits are to be tried by the Scriptures; I have found it otherwise in my experience. The Scriptures may try words; but nothing can try spirits, but the Spirit. "I will know," said the apostle, "not the words of them that are puffed up, but the power." Deceivers may come with scripture words, but they cannot come with the true power. Therefore, the Apostle John, who bade the believers try the spirits, told them, they had an unction from the Holy One, and pointed them to the anointing. 1 John 2:20,27. But who can judge of this, but he that has the anointing, and is taught of the Lord to try things by it? he knows how it tries, and what a certain judgment it gives concerning the nature of things, and concerning every voice and every appearance. The Spirit of God searches all things, discerns all things, discovers all things, — every snare, every device of the enemy, the net spread ever so secretly; blessed are they, whose eyes are opened and kept open by him.

There was a time of great darkness befell me, wherein all that I had known and formerly experienced was hid from me; and I cried out, "I know not the Lord; and yet I cannot live without him. Oh! what shall I do?" etc. But I never denied Christ to be the way of salvation, in my deepest darkness and distress. And now at length, — blessed be the Lord! — I have lived to see the day, wherein he is made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to me; and I feel his blood sprinkled and

overflowing, which makes whiter than snow; and find him to be the mercy-seat, through whom I have access to God; and live by mercy and the deep compassions of God towards me, which, because they fail not, but are daily renewed upon me, therefore is my soul preserved in life before my God.

Oh, wait to know that wherein the Lord inwardly appears! and take up the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ to every thing that is contrary to God; that it all may be crucified in you, that your soul may live in the abundance of life and peace. God is not straitened to any of the children; oh that none of them may be straitened in their own bowels! And be not discouraged because of any weakness, or because of your age. What know you, what the Lord will do for you? Your weakness is not your disadvantage, but your advantage; for the weaker you are in yourself, the fitter are you to have Christ's power revealed and manifested in you. Only wait to know that wherein God appears in your heart, even the holy seed, the immortal seed of life; that that may be discerned, distinguished, and have scope in you; that it may spring up in your heart, and live in you, and gather you into itself, and leaven you all over with its nature; that you may be a new lump, and may walk before God, not in the oldness of your own literal knowledge or apprehensions of things, but in the newness of his Spirit.

The Lord appear to you, in the light and demonstration of his Spirit in your heart and conscience, touch you, quicken you, lead you, guide and make you sensible of every appearance of his; that no motion or drawing of his Spirit may be quenched in you, nor any motion of the contrary spirit, under any deceivableness, hearkened to; that you may travel faithfully, and come to the end of your travels with joy and full peace, reaping the sheaves in life everlasting, of all that you have sown to the Spirit.

This is the earnest and single desire of my soul for you, who am your true and faithful friend, and a hearty well-wisher to you and yours.

I. P.

TO RUTH PALMER

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Whose love I am sensible of, and whom I entirely wish well unto, and desire for you, that you may purchase and possess the pearl of price; and so know and enjoy Christ Jesus, the Lord, as that you may witness him to be eternal life to your soul.

I received a letter from you, which occasions this my writing to you. It is precious, indeed, to have the Spirit of God witness to us, that our sins are pardoned. And they who are truly pardoned, to whom the Spirit so witnesses, receive the Spirit; indeed, all that are Christians receive the Spirit; for he that has not the Spirit of Christ, is none of His. And where the Spirit is, there is He who has power over sin, who delights to exercise his power in mortifying and subduing sin, and in reigning and triumphing over it. Now, they that have received the Spirit, are to live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit; and doing so, they cannot fulfill the lusts of the flesh, nor love the world, nor the things of the world, nor fashion themselves according to it; but are redeemed out of it, in heart, spirit, life, and conduct, up to God. O my friend! let no religion satisfy you, but that which brings you here, and which brings forth this fruit in you. We must needs own Christ to be the spring, and that we can do nothing without him,

but only by, and in, and through him; because we daily experience it to be so.

As touching election, we do believe it, according as the Lord has taught us, and as the Scriptures express it: but such an election as shuts out any from the salvation God has prepared for the sons of men, we cannot own; because the Scriptures expressly testify that God "would have all to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth." Yes, also, we know it to be his nature. It is the nature of the destroyer to destroy, — he would have none saved; but it is the nature of God, the Savior, to save, — he would have none perish. But as there is a making the calling and election sure, so there is first a coming into the calling, and into the election. Now, the election cannot perish, no, the elect seed cannot be deceived. And, as we are chosen in him, and come into him (out of darkness into his marvelous light, out of death into his life), so we must abide in him: and the promise is to him that continues unto the end. And Christ said to the church of Ephesus, "Remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else, etc.: and mind, what a state they fell from, and how far they were fallen, when so severely threatened. It was not wholly; it was but from the first love and first works; and yet, if they repented not, how great was their danger.

As for that place of Rom. 11, it is manifest that there is an election, and that this election is not of works, but of grace. Yet, there must be a hearing of the voice; "Today," said the apostle, "if you will hear his voice;" and so, there must be a coming to Christ, and an abiding in him, and a walking in the strait way; for it is the way God chooses. God has chosen Christ, and the soul in him; and the message is to invite to come to him, and abide in him to the end. And the condemnation is upon rejecting him, and the salvation, to them, that receive him, — which is not of man's self neither, but men are made willing so to do, in the day of God's power; and the power is not far from, or lacking to any, in the way that the Lord has appointed; though there are also the aboundings of love, mercy, and power according to his pleasure. The falling away is, not because persons were not elected, but because they let in that which is contrary to the election, and cleave to it. So there is a "heart of unbelief," in which men depart from the living God, and make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience; and the ground of their falling is, their hearkening not to the Lord, but to the voice and temptations of the enemy. There are called, and faithful, and chosen. These are states, to be come into and abode in. Many may be called, who never come to be faithful, nor chosen. To witness the peculiar choice of God, this is precious: — and then, not to be content with a touch of the calling, or a touch of the election, but to "make" them "sure." There is no choosing but in the seed. Make sure of that seed, and you makes both your "calling and election sure." For indeed, "many are called, but few chosen." And yet, when a man comes thus far, so as to know himself chosen, is he quite out of danger? Did not Paul know his election sure? yet, was he not afterwards careful to keep that under and in subjection, which was to be kept under and in subjection? "lest," says he, "when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."

You say, Whom God once loves, he loves to the end. Did he not once love all men, even the whole world? Did he not manifest it, in sending his Son for them? And they that come into his Son, they come into his love; and they that come into his love, must continue in his love and in his goodness. For, it is not persons ("God is no respecter of persons"), but the seed, God loves. "In your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed;" and, in that seed, they are loved, and continuing there, they continue in the love. It is true, God's grace appears, and thereby many are gathered. And when any fall, the grace of God appears again, and thereby many are restored. But if any be hardened by "the deceitfulness of sin," that they hearken not to the voice of grace, when it comes to restore, are they restored by it? And God's compassions failed not to Israel of old, nor to Israel now; yet, were none

consumed then, who, though they came out of Egypt, yet rebelled, and lusted, and tempted Christ, etc., and so were destroyed of the destroyer? And so, do none make shipwreck of faith now, whereby the standing is? as the apostle expresses, Rom. 11:19-22. Read, and consider. And the apostle, in the sense of things, cries, "Oh, the depth!" etc. Love in severity, mercy in severity! If it be stopped one way, it will break forth more abundantly in another way. And, "who has known the mind of the Lord," or given him counsel, which way he should manage his love and mercy? as in ver. 33-34 of that 11th chapter. Indeed, all the salvation is to be ascribed to God, and is ascribed to God by all that receive salvation from him; but still, God saves in the way he has appointed (in coming into the way, in abiding in the way, in walking in the way), — there, alone is safety; but out of it, death and destruction forever.

All our best righteousness is as filthy rags, it is true; but the gift of God is not as filthy rags, the righteousness of his Son revealed in the heart, is not as filthy rags. The pure offerings and incense, which are offered up to God in the times of the gospel, are not as filthy rags. See Mal. 1:11; and consider, whether he that offers up to God the male, offers up a corrupt thing, a filthy rag, or no, ver. 14. Oh, what a state of blindness are many in, that they cannot distinguish between what is of themselves, and what is of God in them: and so avoid offering up the corrupt thing, and offer up that which is holy and pure, even the holy sacrifice, with the holy fire, upon the altar of God! Consider 3rd ch. 3rd verse of Malachi; and tell me, if you know, what an offering in righteousness is, whether it be as filthy rags, or no. Consider that place, John 3:21. "He that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." And what are those deeds, that are wrought in God? Is not God holy and pure? And is any thing wrought in him, but what is holy and pure? And mind that place, where the prophet speaks, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," etc. Mind ver. 5, and ver. 6, of Isa. 64, and see if they be not two different states? None of those, whose righteousness was as filthy rags, called upon the name of the Lord, ver. 7. Did not the prophet call on the name of the Lord? The prophet there represents the state of backsliding Israel, that did not remember God in his ways, nor, through faith, work righteousness, as some others did; ver. 5, all their offerings, all their sacrifices out of the faith, were as filthy rags, as the cutting off a dog's neck, etc.; but the offering of Abel, and the sacrifice of the righteous were not so, in any age or generation. Therefore, we should wait rightly to distinguish things, and not jumble the precious and the vile together, as if they were all one.

As for method of speaking, I have none of my own, but wait for the method and words, which God's wisdom teaches. Indeed, when I speak of the light, and the life, and the power, I do mean Christ Jesus, who is the light, life, and power; but it is a great matter, to come to know him so revealed in the heart; for where he is so revealed, darkness, and death, and the power of Satan, are scattered and put to flight by him. Yes, Satan falls like lightning before the power of his kingdom, where it is revealed.

This is a blessed experience; and these know Christ indeed. The Lord grant that you may so do! which is the hearty desire of your soul's true and faithful friend,

I. P.

TO JOSEPH WRIGHT

I ENTREAT your son to acquaint my brother Arthur, that I took very kindly, and was very glad of, his

affectionate expressions towards me; having been something jealous, that though my religion had enlarged my love towards him, yet his religion might have diminished his to me. I bless the Lord on his behalf that he enjoys his health so well; and for myself, though I have been exceedingly weakly formerly, yet the inward life and comfort, which the Lord daily pleases to administer to me, increases the health and strength of my natural man, beyond my expectation; blessed be my tender and merciful Father, who has visited one so distressed, miserable, and helpless as I was, for so many years!

And whereas he says, he is like me in speech, but most unlike me in opinion; I pray tell him from me, that my religion does not lie in opinion, but in that which puts an end to opinion. I was weary and sick at heart of opinions; and had not the Lord brought that to my hand which my soul lacked, I had never meddled with religion more. But as I felt that in my heart which was evil and not of God, so the Lord God of my life pointed me to that of him in my heart which was of another nature, teaching me to wait for and know his appearance there; in subjection whereto, I experience him stronger than the strong man that was there before; and by his power, he has separated me from that within, which separated me from him before; and thus being separated, truly I feel union with him, and his blessed presence every day; which, what it is unto me, my tongue cannot utter.

I could be glad, if the Lord saw good, that I might see my brother before I die; and if I did see him, I should not be quarreling with him about his religion, but embrace him in brotherly love, and in the fear of the Lord. As for his being a Papist, or an arch-Papist, that does not damp my tender affection to him. If he be a Papist, I had rather have him a serious than a loose Papist. If he has met with any thing of that which brings forth a holy living in him, he has so far met with something of my religion, which teaches to order the conduct aright, in the light, and by the spirit and power of the Lord Jesus. My religion is not a new thing, though newly revealed more fully than in many foregoing ages; but consists in that which was long before Popery was, and will be when Popery shall be no more. And he that would rightly know the true church, must know the living stones whereof the true church is built, against which the gates of hell cannot possibly prevail. Oh, the daily joy of my heart, in feeling my living membership in this church! where the true "gold," the "white raiment," the pure "eye-salve" (with which the eye, being anointed, sees aright), are received and enjoyed inwardly, by such as the world knows not, but despises: blessed be the name of the Lord!

I desire my sincere, entire affection, as in God's sight, may be remembered to my dear brother.

I. P.

THE END