

THE ORIGINAL AND PRESENT STATE OF MAN

BRIEFLY CONSIDERED

**WHEREIN ARE SHOWN:
THE NATURE OF HIS FALL, AND THE NECESSITY, MEANS,
AND MANNER OF HIS RESTORATION, THROUGH THE
SACRIFICE OF CHRIST, AND THE SENSIBLE OPERATION OF
THAT DIVINE SPIRIT OF GRACE AND TRUTH,
HELD FORTH TO THE WORLD BY THE PEOPLE CALLED
QUAKERS.**

BY JOSEPH PHIPPS

EDITED BY JASON R. HENDERSON

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by contacting:**

Market Street Fellowship
981 W. Market Street Akron, Ohio 44313
email: MSFPrinting@gmail.com
phone: 330-419-1527

www.marketstreetfellowship.com

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FORWARD

In 1767, a book was published by Samuel Newton advancing many sentiments critical of the Society of Friends, and more particularly attacking the principles propounded in Robert Barclay's *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*. In response to this publication, Joseph Phipps took up the pen in 1773 to clear the Society from many unjust and untrue charges, and to defend the truths of the gospel as set forth by early Friends. His refutation, which he entitled *The Original and Present State of Man*, was thorough and convincing, clarifying many of the leading principles of the Quakers, and exposing and countering the various errors of his opponent.

This edition of *The Original and Present State of Man*, is an attempt to retain and carefully modernize the chief doctrinal parts of the original work, while removing a multitude of unnecessary citations and wordy exchanges between the two authors. Because much of Phipps' original publication was written in the form of a point-by-point rebuttal of Newton's criticisms, I have taken significant liberties in editing and organizing the material so that his arguments are presented smoothly and clearly to the modern reader. The unedited version is available in *Friend's Library*, volume 10.

Jason Henderson
October 2016

CHAPTER I
THE DEATH OF THE IMMORTAL SOUL

In the beginning God created all things good. Being inherently and immutably good Himself, every creation of His must necessarily be so, according to their several kinds in which He created them. As man was entirely made by Him, so he must have been made entirely good. His nature was clear of all impurity, and free from all defect and disorder. His faculties were perfect, though limited to their proper sphere, and every part of his composition was constituted in its due rectitude. The body was placed in subservience to his rational spirit or soul (which is the more noble and excellent part, created for immortality); and this was placed in subjection to the guidance of its Creator.

The human faculties were originally clear, unprejudiced, and fit to receive impressions. Since man could not have brought any real knowledge into the world with him, all knowledge must either have been immediately communicated to him by his Maker, or afterwards acquired by himself through observation and experience. The latter took time to acquire, but he no doubt found himself immediately endowed with a sufficient understanding of himself

and his Creator as related to both his present duty and happiness.

Not only was man supplied with a measure of light and understanding, but he was doubtless empowered to act according to it, otherwise his knowledge would have been given to him in vain. Yet, though he most certainly was enabled to obey, what followed demonstrated that he was placed by God into a state of probation, else he would not have been held guilty for his failure; for his Maker could surely have fixed him in a state of immutable virtue and goodness, had He so desired.

The omniscient Creator no doubt foresaw what a subtle adversary man would have to encounter, and so furnished him with means sufficient to discover his snares and resist his assaults. If Satan was allowed to use his subtlety and influence to deceive him, surely man was not only warned, but also endowed with sufficient divine light and power to withstand his attempts, as he kept watchful unto his Maker (for nothing short of the divine nature can enable any intelligent creature to resist temptation and act according to the divine will.)

God created man for the purpose of His own glory; and in order to glorify Him, and to partake of His glory, man must walk in conformity to His will. But man can neither rightly know His will, nor constantly perform it, merely by the strength of his own faculties. Therefore, the first man must necessarily have been assisted by the Spirit of God, and enabled to perform His will in such a way as to glorify his Creator and answer the end for his creation. Hence it is concluded that Adam was first created a natural man, and then rendered a spiritual one by the quickening power of

the Spirit of Christ— for “the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.”¹ This spiritual life is the true life, and the proper element in which immortal souls are to live and move.

Thus the parents of mankind, in their original and uncorrupted state, were fit temples for the Holy Spirit to dwell in. They were “partakers of the divine nature,”² recipients of the breath of the power of God, the pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty. It was undoubtedly in the light of this pure influence that Adam had such an intuitive discerning of the creation as enabled him to give names to all creatures according to their several natures. For we read, “the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.”³

Under this heavenly endowment, the holy impression of the divine image clearly appeared in the first of mankind —“In the image of God created He them.”⁴

Now, had man kept in faithful obedience to his heavenly Guide, and rejected the efforts of the tempter, he might undoubtedly, in due time, have grown to a degree of establishment beyond all possibility of falling. But not continuing in a state of watchfulness, and (contrary to the warning which was given him) turning his attention towards the temptation, he dropped his guard, and let go that Spirit wherein his life and strength lay. Indeed, he fell

¹ 1 Corinthians 15:45

² 2 Peter 1:4

³ Genesis 2:19

⁴ Genesis 1:27

from it and from all its advantages, out of the liberty of the sons of God, into the bondage of corruption—a sure introduction into misery. (For as holiness and happiness are inseparably united, so sin and misery are indivisibly connected.)

To suppose that the almighty Author of all good created man with a moral *necessity* to transgress upon the appearance of temptation, is an imagination too injurious to the divine character to be admitted. Our first parents were unquestionably enabled by their Maker to abide in watchfulness, which would have allowed them to experience preservation. Their defection from this was certainly not of Him, but of themselves. Had their failure been through the Lord's will, or by the intentional design of their circumstances so that sin must inevitably have followed, He could not consistently have punished them for it as being contrary to His will.

A dangerous fondness for becoming knowledgeable in hurtful and unnecessary things seems to have had an early entrance into the human mind. "In the day you eat, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."⁵ By the suggestion of this flattering falsehood, Eve was deceived. Knowing nothing but good, she might have remained happy; but experiencing evil, she became otherwise.

This sort of knowledge is as opposite to that of divine wisdom as darkness is to light. It is certain the omniscient God knows both good and evil, but He knows the first by unchangeable possession and perfect enjoyment, and the last He beholds with abhorrence, in eternal opposition to,

⁵ Genesis 3:5

and infinite distance from, the purity of His nature. Yet with sinful man the case is the reverse: evil has immediate possession of him, and good is out of his reach. Without divine mercy, he must remain completely wretched. This is the necessary consequence of that boasted knowledge of the world which men acquire by tasting the deadly and poisonous sweets of temptation.

The consequences of this failure immediately affected the actual transgressors, and remotely influenced all their posterity. Adam and Eve lost the bright impression of the divine image, and all the joys attending it. Having forfeited the immediate indwelling and pure influence of God's Holy Spirit, they lost that divine likeness wherein they had enjoyed internal light, life, love, goodness, righteousness, holiness, and happiness. That all-present Spirit of power, truth, and virtue, which in their original state had been their covering and comforter, now disunited from them through transgression, and became their accuser and convict.

Having departed from under a due and constant subjection to the mind and Spirit of his Creator, the will of man separated from the will of God, and became *self-will*. And by his unfaithful self-gratification, and letting in the suggestion of the tempter, man's chief love turned from his Maker to himself. In this way, inordinate self-love and self-will originated in man, which always stand in a will separate from the will of God, and a spirit contrary to His Holy Spirit. Moreover, this separation opened an easy road of access for the evil spirit to influence the human mind towards exterior objects, and rendered them the perpetual subjects of temptation. Giving way to carnal inclinations,

man became carnally-minded; and “to be carnally minded is death.”⁶

When the Sovereign Legislator first gave a positive command to Adam, He pronounced immediate death upon him in the case of transgression; “In the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.”⁷ This seems to imply a much deeper and more important meaning than what relates to the natural body; a meaning more immediately affecting the rational soul, namely: the privation of a life which before transgression it happily enjoyed, and which, by disobedience, it must certainly lose.

What then is the proper life of the soul? And what is the death of a soul, seeing it does forever exist? Merely *to exist* cannot be the life intended. The true life of a soul must be to live in that life which exists only in the divine nature, and which is not to be enjoyed except by partaking of the divine nature; i.e. to live in the Spirit of Him who is the life which the Evangelist declares to be the true light of men. This supernatural, spiritual, heavenly power and virtue of the great Illuminator and Quickener, is the true life of the immortal spirit of man; and the total lack or deprivation thereof, is its death.

Turning from this life to embrace temptation, our first parents did surely deviate from, and die in spirit to, that divine life by which they had been quickened. For, “It is the Spirit that gives life;”⁸ and when life departs, death ensues naturally. As the body dies when deprived of its natural life, so the soul is left in a state of spiritual death when that

⁶ Romans 8:6

⁷ Genesis 2:17

⁸ John 6:63

The Death of the Immortal Soul

which is its proper life departs from it; save this difference—that the deceased body remains wholly insensible, but the soul, in its state of death, still exists under the unavoidable sense of its guilt and misery.

CHAPTER 2

THE CREATURE SUBJECTED TO VANITY

It appears from holy Writ, that previous to our own actual offenses, we are all naturally affected by the transgression of our first parents. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned.”¹ This is not to be understood of the death of the body only; for indeed all come into the world in the image of the earthly man, and void of the quickening and sensible influence of divine life.

This being true, there appears no necessity to conclude that we all come into the world justly obnoxious to divine vengeance for an offense committed by our primogenitors before we came into the world. With what propriety can an infant, incapable of committing any crime, be treated as an offender? Scripture positively assures us, “God’s ways are equal,”² and “The soul that sins, it shall die,” and “Not the son for the fault of the father,”³ etc. Whatever Adam’s posterity lost through him, that and more they gain in Christ; and undoubtedly His mercy and goodness, and the extent

¹ Romans 5:12

² Ezequiel 18:25, 29

³ Ezequiel 18:20

of His propitiation, are as applicable to infants, who have not personally offended, as to adults who have.

The immortal, reasonable soul of man, in every individual, appears to be the immediate production of its Creator; for the prophet Zechariah, speaking of the great acts of God in creation, asserts, that “He forms the spirit of man within him.”⁴ And in Eccles. 12:7, we read that upon the death of the body, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” Therefore, the soul itself,⁵ receiving its existence immediately from the perfection of unchangeable purity, can have no original impurity or corruption in it. However, being immediately and intimately connected with a natural body, and unable to withstand the passions of a carnal nature, the soul is liable to be so influenced by them as to partake with them in their sensual indulgences. In this state the descendants of Adam come into the world, destitute of that divine life from which Adam fell.

Whatever were the peculiarities attending the fall of the first man and woman, this is certain—that their progeny do not come into the world in that same state of brightness in which they were first created. It cannot escape the notice of those who have had the care of infants, that the earliest exertions observable in them evidently arise from the powers of carnal desire and passion, and that these are prone to increase in them, and to predominate as they grow up. Indeed, what effort and attention are required to keep children out of unruliness and intemperance as they advance to a youth’s state! How eagerly they

⁴ Zechariah 12:1

⁵ i.e. as a created vessel for a nature.

permit inordinate desire to govern their rational faculties! And what pains are necessary (through a careful and virtuous education) merely to regulate or mitigate these natural tendencies. Doubtless they could never be truly subdued and ruled without the operation of a superior principle.

Previous to the reception of any knowledge, the soul is joined to the body by the power of its Creator, who saw fit it should be so. “For,” says the apostle, “the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected it in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”⁶ The rational soul is here intended by the term “creature,” and properly designates the man. Herein lies the true distinction between the human species and creatures of inferior kinds.

This soul is not handed down with the body from parents to children, being an indivisible, immaterial substance which cannot be generated by man. The soul of the child was never in the parent, and therefore could never sin in him, nor derive guilt from his transgression. Neither can guilt accrue to it merely from its being joined to a physical body descended from him, for this junction is the act of the Creator. To account a child guilty, or worthy of punishment, merely for an offense committed by its parents, before it could have any consciousness of being, is inconsistent with both justice and mercy. Therefore, though lacking spiritual life, no infant is born with guilt upon its head.⁷

⁶ Romans 8:20-21

⁷ Note by Joseph Phipps—Respecting little children who are taken away before they have personally offended, they cannot in equity be chargeable, but may with just confidence be resigned as per-

The Creature Subjected to Vanity

Nevertheless, in addition to our natural alienation from, and ignorance of, the internal life of God in our fallen state, it must be acknowledged that all who have arrived to such a degree of maturity as to be capable of receiving a right understanding, and of distinguishing the inward admonitions of Truth in their conscience, have also increased and strengthened the bonds of corruption upon themselves, in different degrees, by a repeated, and often habitual indulgence of the carnal part, contrary to the sense of duty received. These have more deeply entered into the dark region of the shadow of death through their own trespasses and sins. Thus, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”⁸

fectly safe in the arms of their Savior who declared, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

⁸ Romans 3:23

CHAPTER 3
THE OFFER OF PERFECT REDEMPTION

Whatever we may have derived from our parents, we certainly accumulate to ourselves additional corruption. “All flesh has corrupted their way upon the earth.”¹ Every adult person, in his common natural state, must, upon serious reflection, find in himself a proneness to the gratification of self, an eager inclination at times to forbidden pleasure, an aversion to piety and holy living, a consciousness of guilt, and a fearful apprehension of the approach of death. Men generally confess they have erred and strayed, like lost sheep, from the wholesome paths of virtue and duty; and that their frailty is such that it is an easy thing to fall in with temptation, but a hard (if not impossible) thing to effectually resist it. Indeed, even the high rewards promised to virtue and a good life, and the sore punishments connected to vice and folly, are altogether insufficient to retain men in the practice of the former, or to enable them to conquer the force of their inclination to the latter.

This clearly demonstrates the corruption of their nature. Christ said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the

¹ Genesis 6:12

The Offer of Perfect Redemption

mouth speaks;² and so man finds that his outward practice arises from whatever lodges and governs within. The corruption in the heart affects all actions, manners, and language. From here springs all immorality in conduct, all profane and untrue speeches, and all desperate attempts to gratify the pride and folly of vain minds. As the origin of evil in man resulted from turning his attention and desire from the Creator to the creature (thus dividing his will from the will of God, and his spirit from the Spirit of God), so the continuation of evil in man is by the continuance of this separation, and it must abide so long as that separation remains. In this situation, commonly called the *state of nature*, we are both unfit for, and unable to enter the heavenly kingdom, which admits nothing sinful or unclean.

It is therefore absolutely necessary that man should be made holy, in order to be happy. Holiness cannot unite with unholiness; nor can ability arise from perfect weakness. If pollution could cleanse itself, if evil could produce good, if death could bring forth life, then man, thus corrupted, debilitated, and deadened, might be able to reform, quicken, and restore himself. But it is not in the power of man to extricate himself from the bonds of sin and death. Therefore, as sin separates man from his Maker, man must be separated from sin, or he cannot be reconciled and united to Him. Without restoration to a state of holiness, he can never enjoy the felicity belonging to that state; for, “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”³

How then shall corrupt man become holy? How shall

² Luke 6:45

³ Hebrews 12:14

he, in a state of utter incapacity, enter into warfare against his many and mighty adversaries which beset him within and without? What ability has he to fight an enemy who has already enchained him? Indeed, a power too strong for man has got possession; and so it must be a superior power that liberates, rescues, and restores him. Who is sufficient for these things? None but man's omnipotent Creator is able to unbind and extricate him. But alas, Adam departed from His will, transgressed His law, disobeyed His command, and committed a great offense.

Yet, behold the astonishing compassion and kindness of infinite Goodness! An all-sufficient means was provided for the redemption both of the actual offenders and all their progeny. The eternal Word, the Son, the Lamb of God Almighty, demonstrated the greatness of divine love and mercy, *first* by concurring with the Father to yield Himself up in due time to take the nature of man upon Him, and, by resigning it to suffering and death, to make it a propitiation for the whole species; and *second*, by immediately, and all along, affording "a manifestation of His Holy Spirit to every man to profit withal,"⁴ in order to affect their present deliverance from the power of sin, and their everlasting salvation from the certain effect of abiding in sin, namely, the second death.

That man should, of himself, empower himself to live in the constant practice of crossing his natural inclinations and propensities, is a wild presumption; but that an infinitely good Spirit, being more powerful than all of man's enemies, should so influence, incline, and enable him, is highly reasonable to believe, because it is absolutely neces-

⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:7

sary. The possibility of man's purification and sanctification by the Holy Spirit cannot reasonably be doubted, since the omnipotent One is certainly more able to cleanse, than the creaturely, corrupt, and fallen powers of darkness are able to defile. If the sovereign Lord did not intend that man should be made holy, He would not require it; nor would He require it without affording him the assistance necessary to accomplish it, for He demands no impossibilities.

Now, that He *does* require it, the sacred writings sufficiently bear witness. "God," says an apostolic writer, "has not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness."⁵ And, "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word," or the purifying efficacy of the Holy Word, or Spirit, which cleanses the soul as water does the body, "so that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."⁶ Elsewhere, he writes, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."⁷ In still another place, he gives this exhortation: "Abstain from all appearance of evil,"—then proceeds—"And may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And to encourage them to seek it and hope for it, he immediately assures them,

⁵ 1 Thessalonians 4:7

⁶ Ephesians 5:25-27

⁷ 2 Corinthians 7:1

“Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it.”⁸

Vain is the imaginary pretense that Christ has paid the whole price for us, by which we may stand fully acquitted in the sight of God and have complete redemption in Him, *without* sanctification in ourselves. For, were this the real truth, then Christ paid the price of redemption so that man might continue in a state of pollution, and practice evil with security, or be justified in breaking the known commands of God, serving Satan during his whole term of life. Contrary to this, the apostolic doctrine is, “He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness.”⁹ And “He died for all, that they who live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them.”¹⁰ And “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein.”¹¹ And “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.”¹² For “What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end, everlasting life.”¹³

It is true, the apostle says, “By one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”¹⁴ But this does not imply that His sacrifice perfected those who never

⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5:22-24

⁹ 1 Peter 2:24

¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 5:15

¹¹ Romans 6:2

¹² Romans 6:12

¹³ Romans 6:22-23

¹⁴ Hebrews 10:14

come to be sanctified. Here it can mean no more than that those who have so experienced the effectual operation of divine grace, as to become sanctified, have remission by that one offering for the sins which were committed before their sanctification, thus perfecting their redemption. For sin once committed cannot be undone. Our Savior, therefore, by His sacrifice, manifested the mercy, love, and kindness of God, being, “set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”¹⁵ Herein it is shown, that a door of reconciliation is opened to all men; but those who, through unbelief and disobedience to divine grace, never experience the work of sanctification, deprive themselves of this unspeakable advantage; for it is through sanctification that any come effectually to enjoy the benefit of the sacrifice of Christ.

That outward offering of Christ for “all men,”¹⁶ manifested the love of God towards all, and shows that He stands ready to pardon past transgression in all who sincerely accept His terms of true repentance and reformation. But our soul’s salvation is not completed by that single act only, nor is the work of redemption finished for us without us. Though Christ died for us, that we might be brought unto glory, yet we are not actually purified, fitted for, and introduced into the kingdom by the one outward offering. The way to reconciliation was indeed opened by the death of Christ; but we are not saved by His life till we livingly experience the work of salvation in our own particulars. Indeed we must “receive with meekness the

¹⁵ Romans 3:25

¹⁶ Romans 5:18, 6:10; 1 Tim 4:10

implanted Word, which is able to save our souls,”¹⁷ and learn to “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”¹⁸ “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”¹⁹

Perfect redemption then consists, *first*, in paying the price of ransom; and *second*, in bringing out of bondage, and setting the prisoner at liberty. Our Savior paid the first by His suffering and sacrifice, and He performs the last by the effectual operation of His Spirit in the hearts of those who receive Him and resign wholly to Him.²⁰

None have cause to murmur at, or complain against, the dispensations of their benevolent Creator; for in Christ He has rendered to every child of Adam a full equivalent for the loss sustained through his unhappy fall. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”²¹

God so loved the whole of His rational creation, that He gave all an opportunity of being saved through believ-

¹⁷ James 1:21

¹⁸ Philippians 2:12

¹⁹ Romans 5:10

²⁰ Editor's Note: That this is the doctrine of the apostle appears in his letter to the Ephesians, where they are first told, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin;” (Eph. 1:7) and then, but a few verses later, they are commended to the “Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” (Eph. 1:14)

²¹ John 3:16

The Offer of Perfect Redemption

ing. If any do not so embrace it, their refusal is the cause of their condemnation, and not the lack of God's love, nor the opportunity to accept and receive the benefit of it. This the four following verses plainly declare:

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believes on Him is not condemned; but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that does evil, hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.²²

It is not reasonable to conclude that the whole world can mean less than the whole human species. The apostle Peter says,

For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who secretly shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.²³

This Scripture indicates that Christ died not only for those who come to be saved, but also for those who bring

²² John 3:17-20

²³ 2 Peter 1:21 – 2:1, emphasis mine

destruction upon themselves; otherwise it could not be said that, by His sacrifice, He “bought,” or paid the price of redemption, conditionally for them as well as others. But that He bought even those who deny Him, and who thereby occasion their own destruction, is also clearly asserted in the following Scriptures: “He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man;”²⁴ and that “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”²⁵

It is always necessary that the means be adequate to the end. Therefore, since all men in all nations and in every generation stand in equal relation to their Creator, and are naturally in absolute need of His help in order to know purification and salvation, so the means afforded for this purpose must be universal and able to reach all. There must be a gift of real and powerful holiness and goodness that is able to change the condition of man from evil to good. It must be omnipotent, to enable him to overcome his adversaries—the world, the flesh, and the devil. Nothing but a Spirit superior to all these can effectually cleanse the soul, and operate to the expulsion and exclusion of those subtle and powerful enemies which continually seek to hold men in the bondage of corruption. Therefore, nothing but God’s holy, universal, almighty Spirit can effect this necessary alteration in man, rectify the disorder sin has introduced into his nature, and raise him up from a state of spiritual death, by producing a new and heavenly birth of divine life in him. By the work of this Spirit alone, man can

²⁴ Hebrews 2:9

²⁵ 1 John 2:2

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be “created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works,”²⁶ and restored to the image of God in righteousness and true holiness.²⁷

²⁶ Ephesians 2:10

²⁷ Ephesians 4:24

CHAPTER 4

THE APPEARANCE OF CHRIST IN THE HEART

All exterior forms and ceremonies, however mistakenly exalted or celebrated amongst mankind, are but outward and visible signs, and altogether ineffectual towards any real change or reformation of the person. The vital part of man's religion and duty stands, principally, in a right attention to, and a faithful obedience of, the manifestation of the Spirit of Christ in the heart and conscience. He who pays due and constant regard to this, is in his measure a follower of Christ, and has, in some degree, the reality of Christianity in him—irregardless of his system of religious profession or his location in the world. For who is a servant of Christ but he that willingly obeys Him? And if he who acts according to Christ's verbal commands is a follower, is he not also a follower who lacks the knowledge of these written precepts, but who willingly follows the leadings of His Spirit?

Of this Spirit the truly virtuous and religious amongst the Gentiles were, in some degree, partakers; "For," says holy Writ, "when the Gentiles who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; who show the work of

the law written in their hearts; their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing them.”¹ The words ‘by nature’ here, I apprehend, are not to be understood as if the apostle intended the Gentiles became virtuous by any goodness in their *fallen* nature, which must be the same as all other men’s. The context shows he was here distinguishing between those who enjoyed the ministration of the Mosaic law, and those who did not. He uses the expression ‘by nature’ in the same sense as if he had said, ‘without an education under the law,’ and proceeds to show that, though they had it not, yet they practiced the substance intended by the law. This in no way implies that their hearts *were* their law, but rather (as the apostle explains it) that the work of the law was *written* in their hearts. Though they were without the law of Moses, they were not without law to God. For, by receiving, retaining, and submitting to the divine impressions in their consciences, they were under the law of Christ, or subject to the manifestation of His Spirit in their hearts; and in proportion to their obedience, they were partakers of the nature of the Holy Spirit within them.

It is by the internal operation of *this* nature that they became reformed in heart and rectified in life and practice (to whatever degree they were); or as the text has it, were enabled “to do the things contained in the law.” Originally disordered and depraved, their own nature as men could never have led and empowered them to this; for it is prone to evil, and true reformation and religion do not arise from that corrupt ground. Indeed, all that is good, pure, righteous, and true comes not by anything in man’s nature, but

¹ Romans 2:14-15

by grace. These are the fruits of that good Seed universally sown in every heart by the great and good Sower, who casts seed onto all types of ground for that purpose. Were it not for the light and power communicated by this internal Holy Spirit, man could only have proceeded in the increase of corruption, godlessness, and misery—as appears too evidently by the conduct of those who disregard it. It is therefore not by following their *own* nature, but by obedience to the inward law of the divine nature written in the heart, that the conscientiously virtuous amongst the Gentiles were enabled to perform the things (i.e. the just morals) contained in the Mosaic law. In this way they did evidence, in their measures, the effectual operation and authority of the divine Lawgiver within them.

The Gentiles, therefore, partaking of the law written in the heart, cannot properly be said to have been excluded from all share in the gospel. For the gospel, taken in its full extent, is the revelation of the love and mercy, and the offer and operation of the grace of God through Christ to fallen man in his natural and corruptible state, in order to bring about his restoration and salvation. It is not limited to the mere tidings; but, in addition to the words goes much deeper, and essentially consists of the thing declared by them, namely, *the power of God administered for the salvation of the soul*. By receiving and yielding to this, the outward coming of Christ is rendered truly and fully effectual to each individual. Those who believe in and obey Him in His inward and spiritual manifestations (by which the gospel “is preached in every creature under heaven”²), may come to be partakers of His life, and be saved by Him from

² Colossians 1:23, Literal Translation;

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the second death of eternal misery, even if they be providentially incapacitated to know the external history of His incarnation, death, resurrection, etc.

That virtuous and devout Gentiles were approved of God, appears in the case of Cornelius; for we find that even before his reception of historical and verbal Christianity, his sincere devotion and reverence towards his Creator, and charitable acts to the needy, “came up for a memorial before God.”³ Moreover, the Lord now taught Peter (verse 15) that the Gentiles He had thus cleansed were no more to be esteemed common or unclean than the believing Jews, and gave clearly to perceive, “that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that fears Him and works righteousness, is accepted with Him.”⁴ Hence it appears, that those who conscientiously obey the spiritual manifestations of Christ in them, are internally (though not necessarily by outward profession) His disciples and followers, and truly believe in Him so far as He is revealed to them; for obedience is the certain proof of a right faith.

I have no doubt that those in any part of the globe, who, because of inescapable obstacles, have not the opportunity to hear of historical Christianity, in their obedience to the spiritual appearance of Christ in their hearts, are accepted, and partake of the benefits of Christ’s death. Why should they not be as capable of receiving the advantage of the sacrifice of Christ, as they are the disadvantage of the fall of Adam, when they are equally strangers to the history of both? But certainly, those to whom the sacred writings are providentially communicated are under dou-

³ Acts 10:4

⁴ Acts 10:34-35

ble obligation, since they are favored with the additional advantage of the historical account and written revelation of God to man. And surely it will tend to their greater condemnation if these believe not unto obedience. For, irregardless of how strongly and strictly they profess the written letter, they are but imperfect, superficial, ineffectual believers, who hold to the external part and experience not the internal. These are Christians in name, but not in deed and in truth. It is essential for us who have the Scriptures to believe both in the outward coming, and in the inward ministration of our Savior; resigning all to Him, and trusting in Him with that “faith which is of the operation of God,”⁵ which works by love to the purification of the heart, and is the saving faith of the gospel.

Complete Christianity has both an inside and an outside—a profession or bodily appearance, and a life and virtue, which is like a soul to that body. Those who are in possession of both are complete Christians. Those who have the inward part without the outward, though incomplete in that respect, will, in the sight of perfect equity, certainly be preferred to such as have the outward without the inward. And indeed, in the case of those who have the history, and profess the Christian religion, yet walk contrary to its requirings, I believe it would be better for them in the end were they able to change conditions with those conscientious Gentiles who had not the Scriptures. Let such as these duly consider the following text. “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel; and I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in

⁵ Colossians 2:12

the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom,” (who are children by education only) “shall be cast out into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”⁶

Real Christianity consists not in the outward profession of any framed articles or beliefs, nor in the practice of signs and ceremonies, however they may be displayed with pomp and zeal, or whatever significance may be attributed to them by their supporters. Form and profession do not make a real Christian, but rather *the putting on of a new nature*. “They that are Christ’s, have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts,”⁷ and, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new, and all things are of God.”⁸ The necessity of true regeneration, the power by which it is effected, and the cooperation of God and man therein, are all included in this text: “If you live after the flesh, you shall die; but if you, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.”⁹

This new birth is not brought forth in man imperceptibly. The new man is “renewed in knowledge,”¹⁰ in certain and sensible experience. The soul in whom this is going forward has an internal sense of it through its whole progress, and must keep a steady eye thereunto that it may continue to go forward. “We all,” says the apostle, “with

⁶ Matthew 8:10-12

⁷ Galatians 5:24

⁸ 2 Corinthians 5:17-18

⁹ Romans 8:13-14

¹⁰ Colossians 3:10

open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”¹¹ By looking at the deceitful beauty of temptation, man falls into and grows in sin. But by keeping a steadfast eye inwardly unto Christ in spirit, with humble resignation to Him and earnest desire after Him, man finds preservation, and gradually advances from one degree of grace to another. This continues until he really experiences a renewal of the divine likeness upon his soul, and an inward translation out of sin, darkness, and death, into divine light, life and holiness; and thereby a change from anxiety and misery to peace and felicity.

The natural man may polish and adorn himself with a variety of literature, arts, and breeding; but even in his best accomplishments, he is but the natural man still—a man whom the apostle declares, “receives not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them.”¹² This is the natural condition of all men before the work of renovation is begun in them. Therefore, seeing all stand in need of divine grace to effect this, and knowing that “God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth,”¹³ so it is that “the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us”—by its convictions —“that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.”¹⁴ Thus, “The Mighty One, God the Lord, has spoken and called the earth, from the rising of the sun to its going

¹¹ 2 Corinthians 3:18

¹² 1 Corinthians 2:14

¹³ 1 Timothy 2:4

¹⁴ Titus 2:11

down.”¹⁵ Indeed, the writings of the prophets and the apostles have never reached as universally among mankind as this grace and power of God.

Christ was given “as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles”...and “as God’s salvation to the ends of the earth.”¹⁶ Not only does He offer His grace universally and individually, but He even “waits to be gracious.”¹⁷ “Behold,” says He, “I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.”¹⁸ When “Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, ‘Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.’”¹⁹ This is Christ in Spirit, who proclaims, “He that has an ear let him hear.”²⁰

Question: But if man in his fallen state is dead, how can the dead hear?

Answer: When the Savior called, “Lazarus, come forth!”²¹ the dead man was quickened and immediately obeyed. The voice of Him who is a “life-giving Spirit”²² has life-giving power. “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead

¹⁵ Psalm 50:1

¹⁶ Isaiah 42:6, 49:6

¹⁷ Isaiah 30:18

¹⁸ Revelation 3:20

¹⁹ John 14:22-23

²⁰ Mark 4:9, 23; 7:16, etc.

²¹ John 11:43

²² 1 Corinthians 15:45

shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.”²³

Question: What is meant by His standing at the door?

Answer: His wonderful condescension, patience, and long forbearance, in waiting upon the soul of man for an entrance. Christ desires that all men be prevailed upon to willingly open their hearts to their Redeemer.

Question: How does Christ in Spirit knock, or call?

Answer: By influencing the soul in its seasons of quiet and stillness, so as to stir up inclinations and desires towards what is good and true; and at other times, by distressing the soul with the painful sensations of guilt and remorse for its sinful pursuits and practices.

Question: How shall man open to Him and receive Him?

Answer: By resigning his attachment to self, and the propensities and pursuits of his carnal senses, and humbly adhering to the voice, or present manifestations of the Spirit.

Question: How does the Lord come in and sup with man, and make him a partaker of His supper?

Answer: When the Spirit of Christ is received by the soul in faith, love, and due submission, He proceeds by degrees to set it at liberty from the bondage and influence of corruption; for, “where the Spirit of the Lord is”—in experience and possession—“there is liberty.”²⁴ And when Christ

²³ John 5:25

²⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:17

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has brought the soul into a proper degree of purification, He sheds abroad the comfort of His love into it, and makes it a partaker of the communion of saints, which is inward and spiritual. This is the true supper of the Lord. He who partakes of this, discerns and tastes the Lord's spiritual body, and experiences it to be food indeed, and His blood to be drink indeed.

CHAPTER 5
A BIRTH OF DIVINE LIFE IN THE SOUL

Mankind is not left to Satan, nor to his own lusts, nor to live without God in the world. A way is cast up. A means is provided. God has sown a divine witness in the heart of each individual, which will truly manifest right and wrong in the consciences of those who faithfully attend to it, affording both light and power to set them free from the mists of prejudice and lies, and becoming to them a safe conductor, and an able supporter in the paths of righteousness and truth. What other instructor is equal to this most intimate witness? A monitor so near, so constant, so faithful, so infallible! Indeed, this is the great new covenant privilege of every man—to hear the gospel preached day by day in his own heart, without money and without price, yet with certainty.

Now, is it reasonable to conclude, that this kind, true, and penetrating discerner, should be less than divine? Can any person, upon serious consideration, imagine this to be the nature of the fallen man himself? Is it possible that a nature so corrupt and clouded, should so clearly and instantly distinguish between good and evil? And would

the heart of man (which is declared by inspired Scripture to be “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”¹) so faithfully reprove itself? Would that which delights in its own indulgence, and is impatient of restraint, act as a daily control against its own inclinations? Is it the property of evil to do good?

Now consider: that which is natural leads according to nature; that which is spiritual according to the Spirit. These are distinguished in Scripture by the terms flesh and spirit, and are truly said to war against each other in man. As sin wars against the Spirit to destroy the soul, so the Spirit wars against sin to save the soul. Now, you who depreciate and revile this inward witness instead of embracing it in humility and thankfulness, let me present the following question: While you confess it distinguishes right from wrong in your own breasts by its approbation of the first and condemnation of the last, can you thus acknowledge it to be infallibly good, and at the same time attribute it to yourselves? “I know,” says Paul, “that in me, that is in my flesh,” or belonging to my nature, “dwells no good thing.”² Is your nature in a better condition than his was? Is there any good thing in yours, though there was none in his? He confessed he had none as man. I presume you have no more than he had. From where, then, comes this quick and righteous discriminator that appears in your consciences? You will not say it is of Satan; it must therefore either be of man or of God. For the reasons above mentioned, it cannot be of man; it must therefore be of God. Wonderful is the mercy, and great the advantage to

¹ Jeremiah 17:9

² Romans 7:18

every man, that God himself, according to the Scriptures, thus condescends to be the Teacher of His people, by the manifestation of His Spirit in every heart. Certainly, this inward witness ought to be accepted and observed with the greatest reverence and thankfulness.

The operation and increase of this living Spirit becomes a new life in and to the obedient soul, quickening and refreshing it with a sense of divine love, strength, and comfort. This life, being begotten and brought forth by the Holy Spirit in the willing mind, is called a *birth* of the Spirit; and seeing that our first parents were favored with this spiritual birth immediately upon their creation, but lost it by disobedience, the renewal of it has been termed *regeneration* and *renovation*, or the birth of divine life renewed in man. Being inheritors of spiritual death in Adam, or in the fallen state and nature, we can only be born again to life in Jesus Christ by the power and virtue of His Holy Spirit, who is the resurrection and the life.

Every reproductive power brings forth its own likeness—the evil spirit an evil birth, and the good spirit a birth corresponding to its own goodness. And as every natural birth allows for a growth, so does this spiritual birth in the soul. Our Savior represents its gradual progress with the analogies of the increase of the mustard seed, the process of leaven, the springing up of living water unto everlasting life, etc. The apostles Peter and John also show that there are several gradations experienced amongst believers, using the metaphors of new-born babes, children, young men, and fathers, and surely even the state of fathers allows for continual advances, as Paul himself bore witness. For though Paul truly asserted that the law of the

Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had set him free from the law of sin and death, yet he was sensible of higher degrees of attainment still before him, and after nearly thirty years in the apostleship he makes this acknowledgment—“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”³

Those who consider the necessity of man’s being regenerated, transformed, and guided by the Spirit of his Maker an insult to human reason, give great dishonor to Supreme wisdom, goodness, and power. The dignity of human nature does not at all consist in self-sufficiency. The most exalted of angelic beings neither wills nor acts independent of their Creator; much less man, who in his primitive purity was “made lower than the angels.”⁴ Indeed, man stands in continual need of divine help; and his true dignity consists in his being capable of *consciously receiving* that assistance, and of thereby having access to, and preservation in, a blessed union and communion with his Maker. It is no disparagement to an inferior to be directed and guided by a Superior Being; especially by the supreme Lord, and sole Author of all existence! Endowed with His Spirit, in any degree, the creature is raised above the highest elevation of its own nature; and the more it is clothed with Him, the more it is dignified and exalted.

³ Philippians 3:12-14

⁴ Psalm 8:5

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Truly, it is only when the Sun of Righteousness sheds forth His life-giving beams upon the spirit of man, that the poor worm is made able to take wing and mount above his earthly limits, towards the regions celestial.

CHAPTER 6
REGENERATION—A DISCERNIBLE EXPERIENCE

Now, man, what is the great business of your life in this world, but to return to the paradise of God, and to secure an everlasting inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fades not away? To accomplish this, you must be stripped of all that makes you unfit for an entrance. Whatever has been the cause of exclusion must be removed. Whatever can have no place or habitation there, must be separated from you, or you cannot be admitted. "That which restrains will restrain till it be taken out of the way."¹ Whatever you have in you or about you that you are attached to in consequence of the fall—all separate self and the carnal mind—must be resigned, or you can never know a restoration. The gospel axe, the power of the Spirit of God, must be laid to the root of the tree of corruption in you, that it may be uprooted, and the Vine of life implanted in its place. Then the implanted Word, which is able to regenerate and save the soul, may flourish and bring forth its heavenly fruits where the sinful nature has long spread its poisonous products in the heart. From this alone arises all true happiness in the creature, and living

¹ 2 Thessalonians 2:7

praises to the eternal Author of salvation.

The necessity of regeneration was not only preached to the people in the primitive times, but was actually experienced by the believers. We have a clear and significant instance in 1 Cor. 6: 9-11; “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” Here the apostle plainly testifies that some of the Corinthian brethren, who had been of polluted hearts and vicious lives, were become regenerated, made clean and holy; and he shows that this great change in them was wrought in the name (or power) of the Lord Jesus, which he explains to be by the Spirit of our God. The apostle Peter concurs with Paul in bearing the like testimony—“Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren; see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which lives and abides forever.”² Many other texts might be added to the same purpose.

The apostle particularly shows the nature and manner of this work in the 7th and 8th chapters of Romans, which, for lack of a real experience, many have been led to imagine were intended by him to be descriptive of his own con-

² 1 Peter 1:22-23

dition at the time he wrote them. Nevertheless, it is manifest that these chapters comprehend diverse, and even contrary conditions, which he and others had experienced in their Christian progress, and which it was impossible he should be in at one and the same time, namely: a state of darkness and a state of light; a state of uncleanness and a state of purity; a state of bondage and a state of liberty; a state of life and a state of death.

In chapter 7:5, he says, “For when we were in the flesh,”—under the dominion of the carnal nature—“the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.” Here he refers back to that state of sin and death they had formerly been enslaved in, but were now past, as fully appears by the succeeding verse, which says, “But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.” In verse 7, he returns to the former state again, and becomes more particular: “I had not known sin,” says he, “but by the law.” Before he became sensibly convicted in his own conscience, where a sense of the requirement of God was opened to him, he remained in his first state of natural blindness, yet knew it not to be such, despite his learned education and legal strictness. Though “dead” as to any sense of divine life, yet he was “alive” in the spirit of the world. “For,” says he, “I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.” Now opposed by the appearance and internal administration of the spiritual law, which brought true conviction, the sinful nature was freshly excited by the power of evil, and sprung up as with new life

and vigor to obstruct his escape from it; “for without the law sin was dead.” That is to say, the nature of sin remained quiet and undisturbed, enjoying its indulgence without interruption, until the law of life was administered against it. Then “the commandment which was ordained to life, I found,” by its resistance of that nature, “to be unto death. For sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me,” or darkened me, and brought a sense of death over me.

Sin seems to have deceived him at first into a belief that the law brought forth death, because he felt a sense of death ensue upon the convictions of this law. But, in truth, death is the fruit of sin, which is condemned by the law. So he says, “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid!”³ Rather, he found it was that which so violently opposed the law that produced death, and occasioned the condemnation of the law to come upon him, which uncovered this death in him. This was permitted that “sin might appear sin,” and that by the convicting force of the commandment it might become “exceedingly sinful” in his view, and be held by him in abhorrence.

He then feelingly expresses the trapped situation of this convicted, but unchanged state, vs. 14—“The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand.” I am convinced it is evil, and would gladly be delivered from it; but despite my convictions, I am under its power, and unable to extricate myself. “For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil which I will not to do, that I do.” Yet, in patient submission

³ Romans 7:12-13

and fervent cleaving to God, some consolation and understanding attends this awakened condition; “For if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man; but I see another law”—or power—“in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law”—or power—“of sin which is in my members.” Thus prevented from what I love, and taken captive by what I hate, what a miserable slavery I am in! “O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

In conclusion, he proceeds to show that, though this had once been his condition, he now experienced perfect deliverance from all the perplexing and afflicting circumstances, and the several exercising states he had formerly passed through. “There is therefore,” says he, “now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” (though previously there clearly was) “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has set me free from the law of sin and death.”⁴ This again testifies his deliverance, and corresponds to the verse previously cited, “Now we have been delivered from the law,” which condemns for sin; “having died to what we were held by [i.e. the sinful nature], so that we should serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” Col. 1:13-14 is in agreement with these Scriptures: “Giving thanks unto the Father, who has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”

⁴ Romans 8:1-2

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In the passages above cited from Romans 7 and 8, the experienced apostle evidently includes a representation of three very different conditions, showing their course of progress and their differences one from another. First, a natural, blind, and un-convicted state, which is that of darkness and death, corresponding to the original chaos before light was brought forth. Second, a state of illumination and discovery, of conviction and internal warfare, with a view to complete conversion. This state partakes of a mixture, where light and darkness are in the act of separation, like that in Gen. 1:3-5. Third, a state of redemption from the power of sin, through purification, and a translation into the spiritual kingdom of Christ. This is the state of the perfect Christian, and completes the new creation, wherein everything takes its due place and moves in its proper order.

I now appeal to the reader—is it not an absurdity to imagine that these three diverse, and in some respects contrary, states should all subsist together in the same person at the same time? In this short section of his letter (containing a brief but comprehensive sketch of the work of the new-birth), the apostle shows the young in the faith what different states they have to pass through in their preparatory travel, and also reminds the truly regenerate what they have already witnessed, in the words of his own experience. He describes the various steps and principal leadings of the Holy Spirit, till by its effectual operation the soul is rendered a new creature, and an entrance is abundantly supplied into the kingdom of God; which, being inward and spiritual, is entered by an inward and spiritual way.

Hence it is clear, that a man may acquire all the learning, and receive all the degrees that schools and colleges can bestow, with all the authority men can afford him, and may also be strict in the practice of all the forms and exteriors of religion, and yet remain a natural man still. Indeed, such things can bring him no nearer to true regeneration than he was at the moment of his natural birth; for the new-birth is the work of the Holy Spirit alone. Nothing but the Spirit of holiness can make a man holy; for nothing can communicate or impart what it does not have. Nothing can set men free from the power of sin (and its wages of death) but the law or power of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, individually administered. This Holy Spirit—which turns sinners into saints by a real purification, and renders them new creatures, as to their inward state—is the soul's true light and leader. By its immediate manifestations in the heart, the Spirit becomes the primary guide of life and conduct, and also frequently brings Scripture truths to remembrance, opening their meaning profitably to the understandings, and influencing the mind and heart to live in accordance to God's revealed truth.

It is evident that the apostle, in the foregoing scriptures, describes diverse changes of condition which, through the operation and effect of the Holy Spirit, he had certainly known and sensibly felt. Nevertheless, there are many in Christendom, even amongst the leaders of the people, who discount all such inward and individual experiences of the Spirit as enthusiasm or distempered fancy. Alas, these make a show of knowledge by talking about the things of God, but are without any right understanding of them; for truly the pomp of natural learning and the orna-

ment of eloquence have no more concord with the Truth than does the pride of life. These things belong to the wisdom of this world, by which God is not to be known; “For the world, by its wisdom, knew not God,”⁵ nor the things of God. All the knowledge of the natural man, the man whose nature remains unchanged (whether called Pagan, Jew, or Christian, and whether his knowledge be called philosophy or divinity), is but the ineffectual wisdom and head-knowledge of this world; it is not the wisdom from above by which alone God, and the things of God, are known and experienced. God’s wisdom is out of the reach of man’s arts, languages, and sciences, and is discovered only by the manifestation of the Spirit of Christ in the heart,—“In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”⁶

Yet though the world, through all its admired and celebrated wisdom, does not know God, there is a wisdom communicated to man by which He is known. “For God,” says holy Writ, “who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face”—or inward appearance—“of Jesus Christ.”⁷ The apostle adds, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”⁸ This luminous and excellent power operates upon the humble, thankful recipient so as to open an understanding of what he reads, both in Scripture and in other experiential writings, often

⁵ 1 Corinthians 1:21

⁶ Colossians 2:3

⁷ 2 Corinthians 4:6

⁸ 2 Corinthians 4:7

giving him to *feel* what he reads, and to reap its improving effects. But he who rejects the means can never attain the end. He who refuses or flees from the light of life when it offers itself to him by reproof and conviction (not believing it to be of God, nor receiving it as such), stops its operation, and prevents it from opening to him and enlarging in him. The unbelieving heart shuts up its own way, and therefore remains insensible of the internal power of the Savior.

What man upon earth can say he has not had convictions? And who can have a sense of them and not distinguish them from the efforts of his own reason, not distinguish the Reprover from the reproved? Unfelt convictions are impossibilities. Can the work of renovation be known without any perception of its progress? Did the apostle Paul so feelingly describe the painful states he had travelled through, and the opposing powers engaged within him, without ever having a certain sense of them? Are his Christian experiences to be treated as the mere product of an enthusiastic or distempered fancy? How could a person witness repentance unto life, remission of sins, and “times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,”⁹ without an inward sense of them? Were all the cries, the pantings and thirstings after the divine presence uttered by the sacred writers without a deep sense of their lack? And were all their triumphant rejoicings in the consolation of His presence expressed under a total insensibility of it? Were the fruits of the Spirit and the comforts of the Holy Ghost unfelt by those who enjoyed them? Who can affirm these absurdities? To where can such blind leaders bring their

⁹ Acts 3:19

blind followers? Those who turn their backs on the light must walk in darkness. It is the sole property of the Spirit of Christ, the Light of men, to make true discoveries to the soul, both respecting itself and everything else that concerns it. Hence He is rightly called the “Sun of Righteousness”¹⁰—for He is the same thing to the soul of man that the sun in the firmament is to the body. The one is the light without, the other the light within.

It is the unbelieving and unrenewed man, unacquainted with the effectual operation of this heavenly Spirit, that unknowingly rejects and disparages it, and thereby contributes to keep both himself and others in blindness concerning it, and prejudice against it. “The natural man,” says the apostle, “receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”¹¹ ‘What?’ says the mighty man of reason, ‘Must I put out my eyes in order to see? Must I lay aside and renounce my reason to obtain a better understanding? It is impossible and preposterous!’ No, it is not *right* reason that is objected to and advised against; for right reason is true, and ever corresponds with the inward motions of the Spirit of Truth. However, it evidently appears (from the various biases, presuppositions, weaknesses, and irreconcilable differences among men) that *human* reason is often far from being agreeable to *right* reason. What is cautioned against, therefore, is the setting up of human reason above its due place in religion, making it the leader instead of the follower of revelation, the teacher instead of the learner,

¹⁰ Malachi 4:2

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 2:14

and esteeming it with any kind of self-sufficiency, independent of the direction and help of God's Holy Spirit.

As the light of the sun is so perfectly dispensed by sovereign wisdom in such a way that does not blind men's eyes, but rather assists in the proper use of them; so too divine illumination and influence is administered by the same wisdom, in such due degrees, that it neither banishes man's reason, nor deprives it of its utility, but restores it to its proper use in religion by dispelling the fogs of prejudice and passion, giving it a clear sense of duty, and furnishing ability to perform it. The holy men of God were not deprived of their understandings when they spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Rather, they found their understanding illuminated and highly improved by it. They were not used by the Spirit as senseless machines or irrational vegetables, unaware of the virtue arising in and empowering them. Their faculties were brightened and raised to a higher pitch of usefulness than could ever have been experienced while unassisted by the power of divine grace. With good reason, therefore, has one of the inspired writers given this necessary exhortation: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding."¹² And he further says, "He that trusts in his own heart, is a fool."¹³

¹² Proverbs 3:5

¹³ Proverb 28:26

CHAPTER 7
THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE
IN CHRIST JESUS

Though many are taught to imagine an importance and an efficacy in various outward ceremonies, signs, and shadows of the legal dispensation, it is nevertheless certain that, “In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works by love.”¹ Indeed, neither the practice, nor the neglect, of forms and rituals avails anything with God—though the former may unprofitably busy those who practice them, and dangerously deceive them so as to place confidence either in their own performances, or in those of their leaders.

The religion of the true Christian consists not in outward form, but in substance, and arises not from the activity of human reason, imagination, or opinion, but from the heart-felt sensation of divine love in the Light of life. Its foundation is no less than the immediate administration of God’s Holy Spirit to the spirit of man. This Spirit shows unto man God’s thoughts about him, and reveals who and what the Lord is, so far as concerns the believer. It opens the understanding and directs the duty of the obedient; “For the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who

¹ Galatians 5:6

walks to direct his own steps.”² It is the light of the Lamb which shows the way of salvation, the one great Light appointed to rule the day (or spiritual dispensation) of Christianity, in which those who are saved must walk.

Men in their natural state may, by reading and study, collect an abundance of notions concerning the Supreme Being; but even as light reveals all things, and yet cannot be really known except by its own appearance, so God (who, in the most perfect sense, is light) can only be truly known by His own immediate manifestation. What men normally call the knowledge of God is but a series of notions concerning His essence, His attributes, and His providence. But what our Savior called the knowledge of God, is the *real experiential sense of His life*. “This is eternal life, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”³ To truly know Him is to participate in the quickening sense of His life, through the communicated influence of His eternal Spirit. Thus the true knowledge of God is a partaking of the new covenant, or true gospel dispensation; for therein it is declared, “They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.”⁴

Accordingly, the truly living Christian has a certain sense of divine life in his own breast, which affords him instruction, strength, and comfort, in such a manner that he waits in faithfulness upon it, and is under no absolute necessity to lean upon the teachings of other men. However, when teachers come in a degree of the same life, he

² Jeremiah 10:23

³ John 17:3

⁴ Jeremiah 31:34

feels them and accepts them as instrumentally from God. This life of God in Christ is the very soul of Christianity, without which the best forms and highest professions are but as undesirable members of a dead body.

“He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son of God has not life.”⁵ “Because I live,” He says, “you shall live also. In that day, you shall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”⁶ It is because He lives, and communicates of His life to His spiritual followers, that they live also. Of these the true church—the adopted body of Christ under all denominations—is composed. These alone are His peculiar heritage and priesthood.

The body of Christ is a living body, rendered such by the inspiration of His life. He Himself is the life common to all His true members, and by His vital influence He communicates a living sense of truth to them, inclines them to Himself, and inspires them both with the desire and the power of obedience. And as these advance in faithfulness, He favors them with increasing tastes of divine grace and love, the sweet savor of the holy anointing, and the indwelling virtue and glory of His heavenly presence. “There is one body, and one Spirit.”⁷ If there was not one and the same Spirit throughout the whole church, it could not be one body, nor a living body. “The body of Christ cannot live but by the Spirit of Christ,” says Augustine. He who partakes not of the same Spirit with the Head, is no true member of the body. His spiritual influence is the pre-

⁵ 1 John 5:12

⁶ John 14:19-20

⁷ Ephesians 4:4

scious blood or spring of life which renders all His members living. And He who gives life, gives also a sense of that life, which life is “hidden with Christ in God”⁸—hidden from the knowledge of those who remain unquickened by it; and from this arises all their opposition to it.

We are all by nature strangers to this divine life, and we cannot by any means obtain it for ourselves. It is not of man’s acquirement, but of God’s communication; thus it is as far out of the reach of the most learned as it is the most illiterate. It is hidden from the wise and prudent in their own eyes, and revealed to those who are as babes to the world’s wisdom. It is not the high and learned, but the low and humble that God teaches, and the meek that He guides in the paths of truth and judgment. Everyone’s eye, therefore, ought to be turned humbly to God alone, and not to be fixed upon the wise, the scribes, and the disputers of this world; for God has, by the powerful simplicity and purity of His gospel dispensation, “made foolish the wisdom of this world.”⁹ Yet so fond is the world of its own wisdom, that it has, in great measure, pulled down the cross of Christ, together with true spiritual religion, and erected and supported the present idol in its place. Before this image the world has bowed down, and indeed it has been a means to blind, ensnare, and deceive its worshippers, whose faith stands in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God.

From a due consideration of the exalted purpose for man’s creation, as well as the debased and corrupt state of mankind since the fall, it must evidently appear that *true*

⁸ Colossians 3:3

⁹ 1 Corinthians 1:20

regeneration has ever been the one thing needful—a work essential for all to experience. And as the birth of the Spirit cannot be brought forth by anything but the Spirit, so its growth and accomplishment must also be preserved by the Spirit. Hence the abiding, or indwelling of the Spirit, is of absolute necessity to the regenerate, that as their souls are quickened into the divine life by it, they may continue to live, move, and have their being as Christians therein, and be sustained in a spiritual union and blessed communion with their Maker.

The essence of true religion has ever been the same, primarily consisting in the life of God being raised up, and the love of God shed abroad in the heart, operating therein unto true renovation, and towards every virtuous and benevolent fruit. Whatever externals or ceremonies that have, at various times, been super-added by divine direction or command, were not intended to alter or unsettle men from due and constant attention to vital, spiritual religion. It was only as man became greatly degenerated from the inward and spiritual, and darkened concerning it, that the merciful Creator was pleased (by means suited to their estranged and carnal condition) to point it out to them and lead them by signs and symbols towards it. Thus the Mosaic law was not meant to be the whole of religion to the Israelites, or to supersede the internal religion of Abraham, but only to be as “a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ”¹⁰ in Spirit, in whom all is included and fulfilled, and whose presence was then with the faithful in Israel, who had spiritual communion with Him. For, according to Scripture, “They did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink

¹⁰ Galatians 3:24

the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ.”¹¹

It is a vain thing to imagine that religion ever wholly consisted in outward modes or forms, or that the Lord at any time dispensed with the inward substance for the sake of the outward shadow. No; He is God and changes not. His law is His own Spirit of eternal perfection. The different modifications that God has used among men in points of religion have been occasioned by the different alterations in the conditions of mankind. The all-wise God has directed some for a time, in condescension, to outward shadows and ceremonies for the good end above-mentioned; and men have invented and added an abundance more, according to their own carnal misapprehensions of spiritual things, or to advance their own sinister purposes. But exterior forms are but temporary matters; they are not the essence of true Christianity. The great Author of Christianity represents it as “a well of water in man springing up into everlasting life.”¹² It arises from a living, abiding, increasing Spirit in man, which is of a pure and heavenly nature. As this is cordially embraced, it enlarges in the soul, expels the works and power of darkness, and produces its own genuine fruits of humility, self-denial, patience, righteousness, holiness, meekness, gentleness, temperance, goodness, brotherly-kindness, love, resignation to God, and trust in Him alone. It derives its origin from heaven, and leads back to heaven, carrying the soul out of all formalities and false rests, up to the Supreme good Himself. It breaks down all self-will, and brings into

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 10:4

¹² John 4:14

perfect resignation to the divine will. In this humble and contrite frame (and in no other) we can sincerely and truly say, “Your kingdom come; Your will be done!”¹³ For while our wills stand in separation from the will of God, we cannot address Him in these terms with propriety, or in Spirit and truth.

Now, the pride of man is naturally hostile to this abased and broken condition. It knows not how to submit to be nothing, or to think itself nothing, though indeed it is worse than nothing. It would eagerly set up and exalt itself as possessing importance, estimation, and merit of its own; yet all its pretenses are false and vain. In truth, man is nothing but what God has made him, and possesses nothing but what God affords him. He is wholly God’s, and not his own, and is therefore bound in duty to walk in obedience to Him every moment of his life, which is given him for that purpose. And seeing that man has fallen short of his duty, and has sinned against his Creator by disobedience, it is not in his power, by anything he can perform, to merit heaven, or to purchase remission for himself. He can neither undo what he has done, nor render to his Maker an equivalent for the trespasses he has committed against Him. But such is the merciful goodness, and free grace of God towards His helpless creatures, that He offers both forgiveness and felicity upon the most reasonable terms. To the “willing and obedient,”¹⁴ to him “who is faithful unto death,”¹⁵ to “him that overcomes”¹⁶ (through the power of the Spirit), are the promises of eternal life. Upon the foun-

¹³ Matthew 6:10

¹⁴ Isaiah 1:19

¹⁵ Revelation 2:10

¹⁶ Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7

dation of these free and voluntary offers of divine goodness, and man's compliance with the conditions, stands his right of entry. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life, and may enter through the gates into the city."¹⁷

In Scripture, the laws and requirements of God to man are often called covenants. The man in covenant with God owes his very being, and all the good he receives, spiritual and temporal, to his Maker, to whom he stands indebted for all. God, therefore, has an unquestionable right to claim all of man's affection, gratitude, and obedience, and more especially since all of His dealings contribute to man's everlasting advantage. There is also an internal, spiritual covenant—a divine connection or union—which the heart of man comes to feel as he grows in faithfulness to his Creator. This is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which sets the soul free from the bonds of sin and death, and unites it to its Savior in the powerful covenant of divine love. By this, through faith, the soul becomes engrafted into Christ, and by obedience it remains in Him as a branch in the vine; for "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."¹⁸ Of this vital union regenerate souls have a certain awareness and understanding in proportion to their progress. "Hereby know we that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit."¹⁹—"By this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us."²⁰ Hence it is clear, that the gift of the Spirit communicates this understanding to the soul.

¹⁷ Revelation 22:14

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 6:17

¹⁹ 1 John 4:13

²⁰ 1 John 3:24

CHAPTER 8

INTERNAL AND ETERNAL RELIGION

Evident tokens of internal religion, and the immediate manifestations of the Spirit for that end, appear throughout both the Old Testament and the New.¹ Before the flood, the old world was favored with the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, as is implied in Gen. 6:3, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man,”—or rather “in man,” as the Hebrew ought to be rendered. And indeed, where else could the Spirit properly be said to strive with man other than in the soul, where the seat of man’s corruption is, and where all suggestions of evil are applied? And to what end should the Spirit strive with them, but to bring them to repentance and reformation, and to the experience of the kingdom, or ruling power of God in them.

¹ Editor’s Note: Though Early Quakers maintained that a measure of the Spirit was at work in seeking hearts ever since the fall of mankind, they nevertheless held that a greater and fuller endowment of the Spirit was “poured out upon all flesh” in the New Covenant. William Penn explains that the Spirit “was more sparingly communicated in former dispensations,” but, beginning at Pentecost, “the light that shined but dimly before, [was made to] shine out of the darkness, and the Day-star began to rise in the hearts of believers, giving unto them the knowledge of God in the face, or appearance, of His Son, Jesus Christ.” (*A Brief Account of the Rise and Progress of the People Called Quakers*, Chap. 1)

Renovation of the heart by the Holy Spirit, and the genuine fruits of repentance towards God, faith in Him, and obedience to Him, was also the principal and essential part of religion, even among the Israelites. In Deut. 30:10, Moses shows the conditions upon the performance of which they should be entitled to the promises—"If you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." These are the terms: First, that they should keep the law; this was the external and legal part of their duty, consisting largely in figures and testimonies of inward, spiritual religion. Second, that they should turn their whole hearts and souls to God; this was the internal and evangelical part of their covenant. Moses does not leave them in a state of uncertainty, but proceeds to show them to what their inward attention should be turned. "For," says he, "this commandment which I command you this day,"—or that which I command you to turn your heart unto—"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 that you should say, 'Who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it."²

The apostle explains this passage in Rom. 10:6-8, "The righteousness which is of faith speaks in this way, 'Do not say in your heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to

² Deuteronomy 30:11-14

bring Christ down from above); or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead).’ But what does it say? ‘The Word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart.’ That is, the Word of faith which we preach.”³ By this explanation of the apostle it appears: *First*, that in addition to the written law,⁴ Moses then preached to Israel the same Word of faith which Paul and his evangelical brethren did. *Second*, that this Word is Christ Himself in Spirit, calling for attention and obedience in the heart (or conscience) of man, in order to effect his restoration and salvation. And *third*, that this refers not to location or time, but is an inward visitation of the Savior of mankind by His Spirit in the heart.

The Word of faith is the Word of truth, the Word of the everlasting gospel, and not a composition of letters. The term *word*, like many other terms, is used in various senses, such as a speech or saying, a report, a command, an exhortation, instruction, etc, all of these being composed of words. And even as men use words to convey their sense or meaning one to another, so God conveys His sense to men by Christ, who is peculiarly and emphatically called in Scripture the Word of God. Moreover, just as words are received from the mouths of others by hearing, so the manner by which the soul receives internal understanding, reproof, etc. from the Holy Spirit, is metaphorically called hearing, or “the hearing of faith.”⁵ Thus faith, which is the

³ Romans 10:6-8

⁴ See Deuteronomy 29:1 where it is said, “These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.” (emphasis mine)

⁵ Galatians 3:2, 5

gift of God, is said to “come by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”⁶ That is to say (as I apprehend), that the internal sense itself is opened in the soul by the Spirit of Christ, and truth is there communicated by the same Spirit.

Hence we see that the Divine charge given to the Jews consisted not in the outward, written law only; nor were they kept in ignorance of inward, spiritual religion, or of a future state of rewards and punishments. For, if it were so, to what purpose did Moses press the consideration of their latter end upon them with so much fervency? “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!”⁷ Or, why would he command their attention to the living Word of faith (Christ in the heart), as well as to the written code? He was an eminently inspired prophet, and well knew that salvation comes by Christ alone, and that His inward spiritual law is as preferable to the exterior one as the substance is to the shadow. Obedience to the outward, temporal law, had outward and temporal promises; but obedience to the inward, spiritual law has promises of an internal and eternal nature. By the works of the first no man could be justified; but by the operation of the last, sanctification is wrought, and salvation experienced. Indeed, Moses was a type of Christ, and the temporal law, with its temporal rewards, was a type of the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and its eternal recompense.

But it may be asked: if the spiritual law was always afforded, what occasion was there for the addition of tem-

⁶ Romans 10:17

⁷ Deuteronomy 32:29

poral statutes? I answer, first: the Israelites, by living under servitude to a most superstitious and idolatrous people, had become prone to superstition and idolatry themselves. “They were mingled among the heathen,” says the Psalmist, “and learned their works; and they served their idols, which were a snare unto them.”⁸ Out of this idolatry they were to be brought, and by their obedience to the only true God, they were to become an example to the nations around them, to influence their return as well. Though all had the Word near in the heart, yet having lost the right sense of what it is, “the law was added because of their transgression”⁹ and corruption, till the coming of Christ in the flesh. Seeing that their deep and habitual attachment to the forms and superstitions of paganism would not admit a full and immediate deliverance, divine wisdom condescended to meet them in the state they were in, and to proceed gradually with them, allowing some forms and ceremonies which “were copies of the heavenly things.”¹⁰ Thus He made the outward law a temporary instrument to bring them gradually towards that perfect religion which He intended (in due season) to introduce and set up in its purity, for all men to come into and walk in.

In the mean time, the sovereign wisdom was pleased to sound an alarm, and set up a banner before the rest of mankind through His involvement with the descendants of Israel. He wrought wonders for their deliverance and support, and besides the many excellent moral precepts, He dispensed to them “the form of knowledge and truth in the

⁸ Psalm 106:35-36

⁹ Galatians 3:19

¹⁰ Hebrews 9:23

law,”¹¹ which symbolically denoted the nature and manner of redemption and salvation through His Son by many significant types, allegories, and similitudes. These external representations were wisely adapted to a dark and superstitious people, and were intended to serve as a schoolmaster to lead them gradually to Christ; that is, to the knowledge of Christ—both in His outward appearance as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind, and in His inward appearance as the hope of glory and the true sanctifier and Savior of men. For though they were all “baptized unto Moses in the cloud,”—or dipped into his exterior dispensation as under a veil—yet the spiritually-minded among them were enabled to penetrate through the veil to the internal reality, and as before observed, “did all eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.”¹²

Still further to assist them, divine Goodness at times inspired many of the most regenerate and devoted of both sexes with the spirit of prophecy, and engaged them to preach the necessity of true righteousness and holiness. These prophets often directed men to look *through* the figures and outward similitudes in the ceremonial law, unto the truth or substance signified by them. These plainly exhorted and pointed their hearers to an inward and spiritual religion, which indeed was the ultimate intent of the Mosaic, and every other dispensation of God to mankind. For the rituals of the law were not instituted to supersede,

¹¹ Romans 2:20

¹² 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

but rather to serve, as a pattern¹³ of “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.”¹⁴

I do not apprehend that “the mystery of godliness,”¹⁵ and its internal life and virtue, was ever intended by divine wisdom to be fully concealed from mankind, but instead was always held forth, though sometimes obscurely under types and shadows because of degenerate minds who were too much prepossessed and darkened to behold the splendor of the gospel in its clear manifestation. However, the spiritual and powerful gospel of our Lord was at last publicly and fully displayed (apart from ceremonial shadows), in the dawn of the Christian dispensation at the time of Pentecost, when the disciples, waiting together in obedience to the command of Christ, were baptized with His one true permanent baptism—that of the Holy Spirit—which fulfills and supersedes all other baptisms, and remains the standing ordinance of God to His church forever. Then, by revelation, the mystery was conspicuously and powerfully disclosed; “which,” says the apostle, “in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as,”—or in the same degree—“it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the gentiles should be fellow-heirs of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.”¹⁶ “For now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.”¹⁷

¹³ Exodus 25:9, 40; 26:30; Numbers 8:4; Acts 7:44; Hebrews 8:5

¹⁴ Romans 8:2

¹⁵ 1 Timothy 3:16

¹⁶ Ephesians 3:5-6

¹⁷ Romans 3:21

The law witnessed to the gospel: *First*, by its various offerings and sacrifices, pointing out, and keeping in remembrance, that the Messiah should come in the flesh in order “to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”¹⁸ This was the real purpose of the sin and trespass offerings; for, “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.”¹⁹ No, these pointed forward to the precious blood of Christ, both bodily and spiritually; who, “by one offering has perfected forever those that are being sanctified”²⁰—thereby fulfilling and ending all legal sacrifices. *Secondly*, the law witnessed to the gospel by its various sprinklings, washings, and purifications, which had no more efficacy towards the removal of sin and guilt than the blood of bulls and goats. These were appointed to denote the necessity of real holiness, and to signify the spiritual administration of Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us, not only from guilt and condemnation, but also from all inward corruption, and to “purify for Himself His own special people, zealous of good works.”²¹ This He does by the “washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.”²²

The prophets witnessed to the gospel: *First*, by their predictive declarations concerning the coming, sufferings, and offices of the Messiah; and *second*, by instructing the people in the necessity of internal, substantial, effectual religion—preferring it above the written law, even during

¹⁸ Hebrews 9:26

¹⁹ Hebrews 10:4

²⁰ Hebrews 10:14

²¹ Titus 2:14

²² Titus 3:5

the time that the law stood in force. Samuel said, "To obey is better than sacrifice."²³ Hosea, "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."²⁴ David acknowledges to the Lord, "You do not desire sacrifice, otherwise would I give it; You delight not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. These, O God, You will not despise."²⁵ In his moving address to the Almighty (verse 6) he says, "You desire truth in the inward parts;" and in verse 10 he prays, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." Micah queries, "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or 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?" And then he answers; "He has showed you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you; but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"²⁶ Moses exhorted the children of Israel to "circumcise the foreskin of their heart;"²⁷ and told them, "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul."²⁸ Here Moses showed them that, though they had received the outward sign of circumcision, still the reality that God most required was that of the heart, in the Spirit, which is the inward work of regeneration. This is the Christian circumcision of which the apostle speaks—"He is not a

²³ 1 Samuel 15:22

²⁴ Hosea 6:6

²⁵ Psalm 51:16-17

²⁶ Micah 6:7-8

²⁷ Deuteronomy 10:16

²⁸ Deuteronomy 30:6

Internal and Eternal Religion

Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is of the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit and not in the letter.”²⁹ He also observes to the Colossians, that in Christ they were circumcised, “with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.”³⁰ Thus it is evident that a true knowledge and love of God, and a change from sin to holiness by the internal circumcision of the Spirit, was both taught and pressed upon the Jews as the true objective, without which the observance of the law would avail them very little. Indeed, the prophet Isaiah plainly shows that the latter without the former rendered the practice of the law (though divinely instituted) abominable even to its Institutor.³¹

²⁹ Romans 2:28-29

³⁰ Colossians 2:11

³¹ See Isaiah 1:11-14; 66:3

CHAPTER 9
THE PURE ADMINISTRATION
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When the time came wherein the Lord saw fit to call the degenerate world out from the corruptions in which it had immersed itself, He raised up the children of Israel as an example to the rest of mankind by a public manifestation of His own righteous dominion. He brought them out of their Egyptian bondage by a high hand, and through many admirable strokes of His power. He then instituted the Mosaic law, which, being the introduction of a new form of Theocracy, unknown to the world, it was necessarily attended by such extraordinary marks of Divine authority as might sufficiently authenticate and enforce it as coming from the Creator. He therefore, on that great occasion, appeared to the Israelites in a manner corresponding to His Almighty sovereignty, ushering in His covenant with the most dreadful and astonishing tokens of terror—with thunderings and lightnings, blackness, darkness, and tempest, the mountain flaming with fire, the alarming sound of the trumpet waxing louder and louder, and the voice of words so terrible, that not only the people, but the whole mountain quaked exceedingly. This was an obvious and

most solemn act of the Supreme Lawgiver of the universe, and no less authority than His own, could either abolish or alter it.

Therefore, when the period arrived wherein He saw fit to set aside and supersede His law of outward and carnal ordinances, by bringing forward into full view and sole obligation the substance pointed to by it (that is, His spiritual and more excellent covenant), it was necessary that it should appear to be done by clear demonstrations of the same sovereign authority.

Accordingly, the gracious dispensation of the gospel was introduced by evidences of divine authority equally extraordinary. Besides the numerous predictions of the prophets concerning the Messiah, the advent of His forerunner the Baptist, and the miraculous conception of our Savior by the blessed virgin, etc., there were many wonderful works performed by Him and great signs which accompanied the dawning of the new covenant. The veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom upon His giving up the Spirit, denoting the separation, conclusion, and passing away of all signs and ceremonies, and the unveiling of the substance in Spirit and truth. Consider also the unaccountable darkness at the time of His death, His astonishing resurrection, the bodies of buried saints which arose and went into the city, His visible ascension, attended with the glorious ministration of angels, etc. And after all this, at the time of the Jewish feast of Pentecost (annually observed in memorial of the giving forth of the law on Mount Sinai), the Holy Spirit was poured out upon apostles and disciples, male and female, being assembled together according to the Lord's command, as a demonstration of the com-

mencement of a spiritual covenant, without any mixture of legal or shadowy figures. This demonstration was two-fold: *first*, by the appearance of tongues of fire which sat upon each of them; and *second*, by filling their hearts with the Holy Spirit to such a degree that they began to speak with other tongues, or in other languages besides their own, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Endued with heavenly wisdom and power, and inflamed with divine love and fervor, they were now qualified to put in practice the commission before given (in a verbal manner) by the great Lord and Lawgiver. To many of them were likewise added the miraculous powers of healing all manner of diseases. The dumb were made to speak, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, the blind to see, demoniacs were dispossessed, and the dead were raised and restored to life.

Now, these extraordinary powers were neither conferred upon all, nor confined to the apostles only, but a measure of the same Spirit was communicated to every one of them, women as well as men (according to Peter's application of Joel's prophecy). They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, but differently gifted and qualified by it, for different services, according to the will and wisdom of the great Dispenser. "For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to

each one individually as He wills.”¹ Hence it appears, that what are commonly called miracles do not necessarily accompany all divine inspiration, but are one of several operations of the Spirit which are at times superadded. These may therefore either totally cease, when the occasions for which they were added are over, or continue to be used as it shall appear necessary to Divine wisdom.

When, therefore, the gospel was so far spread and established in the places then intended, so that the end for which those extraordinary powers were afforded was answered, they were largely withdrawn from the church, which was left, in the general, upon its proper and permanent foundation—the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit. No necessity, therefore, can be pleaded for the constant continuance of miraculous powers, or such a spirit of prophecy as signifies the foretelling of future events, but only of those supernatural influences of the Spirit which are necessary to enlighten, quicken, regenerate, sanctify, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit in man. These are indispensably necessary in every age, being of moral consideration, and immediately influential in the transformation and salvation of every man.

I believe some divine exertions of a miraculous nature have been evidenced, at times, under both old and new covenant administrations, as well as before them; either for the convincement of doubtful persons, or to give additional weight and authority to the ministry of some inspired servants of God, or to encourage and confirm them in their service. I doubt not but this has sometimes been the case ever since the first century, and may remain

¹ 1 Corinthians 12:8-11

so to the end of time; for neither the power nor goodness of the Almighty has changed. Yet I am also of the opinion, that miraculous appearances have been less public, and more sparingly afforded, since the first century than before it, which may be in part due to the spiritual declension of the professing churches. I also believe, according to the prophetic declarations of the apostles, that under the declined and darkened state of both teachers and hearers, many strange signs and lying wonders have been, and still may be, allowed to be imposed upon a gullible and disobedient people by false pretenders, for the support and spread of their corrupt interests.

Seeing that no further change of dispensations is ever to be made, nor any other doctrine to be preached but that of our Savior and His apostles (which, upon its commencement, received a miraculous confirmation sufficient for its lasting establishment), people are not now to expect or call for miracles from those who preach the Christian doctrine. Instead, all are to turn to, and attend upon that divine Spirit, pointed out by the Scriptures, which is manifested in the breast of each individual—the ministration of Christ in Spirit. This will give the sincere and humble recipient a more clear and particular demonstration than all outward signs and tokens could do; for the powers from which outward miracles proceed may be disputed, but the internal evidence of the light of Christ, the Life of men, when rightly waited for and adhered to, leaves no doubt in the mind concerning its divine nature and authority.

But to return to the ministration of the gospel, the apostle shows (2 Cor. 3) that it far excels that of the law, and that its excellency stands in its spirituality. Having

spoken of the law in verse 7, he adds “How will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.” Why is the gospel thus preeminent above the law, seeing that the law was a divine institution? Principally, because the gospel is not an outward code as the law was, but an *inward law of life*, “written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone, but in fleshy tablets of the heart;”² and because it makes “able ministers, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”³

No man can be a true Christian without the Spirit of Christ; for, “If any man has not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”⁴ Every Christian ought to experience the indwelling of the Spirit. “Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which you have from God, and you are not your own.”⁵ It is requisite to every Christian that he should know the Spirit to be his guide and leader; for, only “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.”⁶ No man can be a sheep of Christ without a distinguishing sense of the Spirit of Christ. “I am the good shepherd, and I know My sheep, and am known by My own... My sheep hear my voice, and I know

² 2 Corinthians 3:3

³ 2 Corinthians 3:6

⁴ Romans 8:9

⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:19

⁶ Romans 8:14

them, and they follow me... The sheep follow Him, for they know His voice, and a stranger they will not follow.”⁷ The voice of Christ is the manifestation of His Spirit to the soul.

Without being born again of the Spirit, no man can enter the kingdom of God. This is as necessary for us now as it ever was to the primitive believers. Surely it is no more in our ability to regenerate and prepare ourselves for the kingdom than it was in theirs. No powers, natural or acquired, in our unregenerate state, are sufficient for so great a purpose, nor could they enable us truly to say (with the people of God in former times), “Lord, You will establish peace for us; for You have wrought all our works in us.”⁸

Without the Spirit, no man can be a minister of the Spirit. The apostolic direction is, “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.”⁹ Every true believer and faithful follower of Christ in the apostolic age received a measure of the same Holy Spirit which the prophets and apostles did, though in lesser degrees; “For,” says Paul, “by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, we have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”¹⁰ Sharing this one Spirit rendered them one body, and joined them to the

⁷ John 10:14, 27, 5

⁸ Isaiah 26:12

⁹ 1 Peter 4:11

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 12:13

one living Head. "There is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."¹¹ Thus, according to the several measures allotted them, they were all partakers of the same Holy Spirit; and as it was then, so it is now, and ever must be in the true, spiritual church of Jesus Christ.

The gospel sun arose in great splendor, yet it did not appear to any in its full brightness all at once. The openings of truth in the minds of the primitive Christians (apostles as well as others) were gradual. As they advanced forward in the new nature, they came to see further and further. For a time, they occasionally circumcised, entered into vows, anointed with oil, baptized with John's baptism, etc., all of which were of an external and legal nature. Indeed, at first, they did not even perceive that the Holy Spirit was to be given to Gentiles as well as to Jews, though Joel had plainly prophesied it should be poured out upon all flesh. But afterwards, as they followed Christ in the regeneration, they were led beyond the first initiatory mixture of things. In time they came to see clearly how the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles as well as Jews, and declared that "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation."¹² They found that "the anointing from the Holy One"¹³ is altogether sufficient to give instruction and true judgment; and they understood that "the baptism which saves" is not that which reaches only to the flesh, but rather that of the Spirit, which bap-

¹¹ Ephesians 4:4-6

¹² Galatians 6:15

¹³ 1 John 2:20

tizes the heart, and produces “the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Christ,”¹⁴ or by His spiritual arising in the soul.

It is no uncommon thing to hear the apostolic age called the infancy of Christianity; and as it was in point of time, so it also was with respect to the temporary continuation of a few exterior ceremonies and shadows. These were not immediately seen through, and afterwards were retained for a season in condescension to those new believers who had been so much attached to symbolic practices that they could not quickly be brought to disuse them. Yet as they grew in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Spirit was at work in them to “take away the first and establish the second,”¹⁵ “removing those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.”¹⁶

In great contrast to this, many of the present leaders and rulers in churches professing the Christian name, seem to imagine that, though the assistance of the Holy Spirit was necessary to the introduction and support of Christianity in primitive times, there is no need of it now. The church, it is believed, has so matured by man’s wisdom and learning (which had no share in its origin) that it is fully capable of going alone. Thus the church has, in great measure, become another thing, and stands upon another foundation than formerly. Though it still calls Christ its head, and accounts itself His body, it receives no immediate direction from Him, nor feels the circulation of His

¹⁴ 1 Peter 3:21

¹⁵ Hebrews 10:9

¹⁶ Hebrews 12:27

blood, which is the life and virtue of all true religion. So the church today deservedly incurs the reproof of the apostle implied in this question, "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?"¹⁷ In truth, it too evidently appears that the generality of professed Christian churches, instead of having advanced to maturity in Christianity, are in a great decline and apostasy from that state; otherwise they could not be so insensible, nor dare appear so opposite to the life of religion as to reject or belittle the most vital part of it, treating it as extinct, unnecessary, or at least imperceptible. Surely a church in this condition is properly entitled to that address of the Spirit given to the degenerate church of Sardis; "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."¹⁸ Nevertheless, though this seems to be too generally the case, I hope, and verily believe, that there are many living and sensible members of the body of Christ within those churches.

The vitality and glory of Christianity lies in the pure administration of the Holy Spirit, without any veil of legal or ritual shadows. School learning is but a human accomplishment; and though very useful as a servant, is no real part of Christianity. Neither the acquirements of the college, nor the formalities of human authority, can furnish that humility which fits the heart for God's teaching. Weak humans, possessed of arts and languages, are puffed up with a conceit of superiority which leads away from self-denial and the daily cross, into pride and self-sufficiency. These, instead of waiting for and depending upon the wis-

¹⁷ Galatians 3:3

¹⁸ Revelation 3:1

dom and power of God, grow into a confidence in the wisdom of this world, and a satisfaction with the repetition of external forms and ordinances. On the other hand, those that “worship God in Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus,” put “no confidence in the flesh.”¹⁹ And why? Because “it is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing.”²⁰ Therefore, whosoever denies that the Holy Spirit and its internal operations are now to be sensibly experienced, only demonstrates their own insensibility of it. The true people of God in all ages have declared their own undoubted sense of divine illumination and empowering; and the apostles testify unanimously that they had a clear, distinguishing sense of the Holy Spirit in its manifold operations. As it was then, so it is now, and must remain as long as men are upon earth.

The same inward work of God is absolutely necessary in every man, and a corresponding sense of it (in measure) is clear and certain to all who experience regeneration. Just as sure as no man can obtain true happiness outside of God’s kingdom, nor enter the kingdom without being born of the Spirit, neither is the work of the new birth wrought imperceptibly in any soul. Whatever secret or unknown means men might imagine or allege, an insensible operation of the Holy Spirit is not regeneration; it is mere deception. The Spirit of God, whether it operate by words and instruments, or without them, always comes in power—a power which gives an undeniable sense which is perfectly distinct from, and above, all other powers, and which manifests a brightness that, at times, far exceeds all

¹⁹ Philippians 3:3

²⁰ John 6:63

The Pure Administration of the Holy Spirit

natural lights, even as the radiant sun exceeds the faint glimmer of a glow-worm. This Holy Spirit of divine light and power of life, is the great, fundamental principle of the reproached Quakers, and the only true saving principle for all mankind. It is Christ in Spirit, “a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and God’s salvation to the ends of the earth;”²¹ who always became, and stands always ready to become, the “author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him.”²²

²¹ Isaiah 49:6

²² Hebrews 5:9

CHAPTER 10
THE OPERATION OF DIVINE GRACE

Having endeavored plainly to show forth something of the fall of man, and the necessity and means of his restoration to God, I shall now proceed to take particular notice of some common errors and misunderstandings, beginning with the notions of individual predestination and the operation of divine grace.

Though man cannot take a single step towards his salvation without the assistance of the grace of God as the first and continual enabling cause (both of the will and the deed), it does not necessarily follow (as some reformers have insisted) that God is therefore the author of salvation to some, and the author of destruction to others. The truth of this matter, as clearly laid forth in Scripture, is as follows: 1. That man has no ability to save himself, nor is he naturally in a state of equal freedom to do good or evil at his pleasure, nor is he in possession of that faith which is necessary to his salvation. 2. That the Redeemer affords a manifestation of His Spirit to the soul of every man, by which, at seasons, He checks man's corrupt inclinations, stops them in their tracks, and puts it in man's power to

reflect upon his present condition, and yield to the operation of this inward Spirit. If he does not resist, but rather stands in submission, the Spirit then takes further hold of him, giving him ability to believe, to unite with, and to abide in the Spirit's operation upon him. In this situation, he feels strength and comfort spring up from the Seed (or measure of grace) which increases his faith and trust therein, and gradually enables and engages him to become active—that is, to join heartily in concurrence with its operations, and to proceed from faith to faith, and from one degree of grace to another. This progresses until the soul comes to know and experience a veritable new birth of the Spirit, participating (in measure) in the glorious light, life, and nature of the heavenly kingdom.

God has made man a reasonable creature, and therefore requires a willing obedience of him—"If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land."¹ Can we think that He places good and evil, life and death before men (as the sacred records testify), and calls them repeatedly to choose life and good, and yet does not enable them so to do? Indeed, every divine precept, every exhortation, every command, every warning, implies a liberty afforded to comply or refuse; to obey, or disobey. However, if God repeatedly visits all with the reaches of His grace, and continues time after time to convict, persuade, and woo (as the Scriptures declare) that He may prevail upon man to come to repentance, does He not go as far as possible without violating the rational liberty He affords? Let man but yield obedience to His convictions, and then see if he can charge his Creator with partiality, or with hard usage. It is the

¹ Isaiah 1:19

unprofitable and lazy servant that makes such charges against his Master.

Education and tradition do certainly prepossess individuals, and give a bias to the mind against every doctrine different from those it has been taught. Nevertheless, the divine light, at times, darts in upon the soul unaware, as quick as lightning, and penetrates through all darkness and every false color, disturbing it in its polluted rests and carnal gratifications, showing its bondage under them, and inspiring a secret wish and sigh to be delivered. This, being an opening of divine light upon the mind, is called *the day of God's visitation*,² the time of grace unto man, wherein life and death are distinguished in him. At this time, man is not only given liberty to choose life (which he could not do before), but he is also given a corresponding measure of ability to love and cleave to the grace that visits him, and thereby to come to repentance and salvation. For this grace is the Spirit of the Savior, and so brings the power of salvation with it, as the apostle says, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."³

These merciful visitations of divine grace are often repeated, by night as well as by day. "God," says inspired Elihu, "speaks once, yes twice, yet man perceives it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon man, while slumbering upon their bed. Then He

² Luke 19:44; 1 Peter 2:12

³ Titus 2:11-13

opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction, that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.”⁴ He then proceeds to show how the Lord operates upon the submissive soul in the work of repentance and mortification, and what the result shall be. Afterwards, he summarizes with these words, “He looks upon men, and if any say, ‘I have sinned, and perverted what was right, and it profited me not,’ He will redeem his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, God works all these things oftentimes with man, to bring his soul back from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of life.”⁵

Indeed, the great Father of mercies is pleased to continue his gracious visitations from on high to backsliding men, until they have become so determined in wickedness, and so habitually united to its servitude, that like the servants in Exodus 21:5-6, they will not be freed from it. Then night comes upon them, and the day of their visitation ceases; for God will not always strive with those who have been long and often reproved, and yet still stiffen their necks. No, after long forbearance, He withdraws the reaches of His merciful loving-kindness, and allows them to incur that dreadful sentence, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.”⁶

When persons are thus judicially hardened, and given up to their own hearts’ lusts and beloved delusions, and are left in a state of insensibility to the divine Spirit, they may blindly mistake their condition for one of peace and security. To such as these, the conscience becomes obscured—

⁴ Job 33:14-16

⁵ Job 33:27-30

⁶ Revelation 22:11

like a book shut up which they cannot read. But in the day of the righteous retribution of the great Judge of the living and dead, this hidden volume will again be unfolded by Him who opens and none can shut, and a righteous distribution will be made to everyone according to what is written therein. This will prove either a book of life or a book of death to every man—"eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath."⁷

We therefore rationally conclude, that God does not only set good and evil before man in their right distinctions, but at the same time, enables him to choose which he will follow. Furthermore, God stirs up and assists man to desire after true happiness, and as the heart abides in this desire, He empowers man to strive, press, and wrestle effectually for deliverance and preservation.

The inmost motions of the human will are impossible to discern without the light of God's Spirit, and from lack of discernment, some have taken occasion to charge God as the one responsible for the various responses of mankind to the visitations of divine grace, rendering Him the primary author of man's evil, rebellion, and damnation. But is it not absurd to suppose that God would voluntarily produce what is contrary to His nature? Is not all sin a transgression of God's will, and all vice contrary to His nature? How then could these be produced by an act of His will, or be the genuine fruit of His power, either mediately or immediately? Can a right understanding lead any man to

⁷ Romans 2:7-8

think that the will of God is, at any time, contrary to His nature? From purity, goodness, and virtue, no impurity, vice, or evil could naturally arise.

But some Scriptures have been objected, such as, "It is impossible but that offenses will come." True; but from where do they come? Not from God, but from that root of corruption which has entered and overspread the world. While this corrupt root remains, offenses will naturally spring up from it; and the same text pronounces, "Woe unto him through whom they come."⁸ But the Lord says "I create evil;"⁹ and the prophet says, "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord has not done it?"¹⁰ Moral evil is not intended here, but rather the natural evil and calamity of pain and distress, through hostility, sickness, famine, etc., which are the judgments of God upon men for disobedience and for the commission of moral evil.

Therefore, according to my apprehension, sin consists in the creature's preferring the indulgence of its depraved nature over the obedience of divine grace; which indulgence leads to the abuse of that grace, and so to think, speak, and act against the manifest will of its Creator. Now, that some obey, and others refuse obedience to the manifestations of divine grace, is certainly true; but we believe the cause of this difference is not of God, but entirely owing to the individual. Indeed, there is no difficulty in supposing that the same nature should have different effects in subjects who are in different conditions. For it is evident to every man's observation, that the beams of the

⁸ Luke 17:1

⁹ Isaiah 45:7

¹⁰ Amos 3:6

sun will both soften tar and harden clay. These contrary effects arise not from a difference in the sun's rays, but from a difference in the disposition of tar and clay to receive them. In a like manner, I apprehend, the Holy Spirit operates differently on different persons by reason of their different states and dispositions to receive His influences. Let him that doubts this inquire in his own conscience, and the faithful witness there (by its condemnations for evil) will plainly show that the fault is his own. What man is there upon earth who has not been struck with guilt and remorse? Or who has not felt at times inclinations and dispositions excited in him towards virtue and a good life? And having followed this guide, has he not found peace in his obedience? But having turned from it to pursue something of a contrary nature, has he not incurred trouble and condemnation? Can a reasonable creature need further proofs that both the convicting reproofs and comforts are the internal, immediate judgments of a just, good, powerful, omnipresent, omniscient Spirit? And for what end does God thus attend every soul of man, but that all may come to repentance and experience salvation?

So then, the first moving, true, and proper cause of man's salvation is the goodness and love of God to him, and the essential means by which He effects salvation, is the operation of His own Holy Spirit on the soul of man, often directly, and sometimes making use of a secondary means, such as preaching, reading the Scriptures and other good books, pious conversation, worship, mercies, distresses, etc. But it is God, by His own Holy Spirit, who works all good in man, both as to the will and the deed. It is by grace we are saved, through faith, or in the way of

faith. This faith works by the love of God¹¹ to the purifying of the heart,¹² and the production of good works.¹³ These works are the genuine fruits of true faith, and inseparable from it: therefore without works we cannot be saved.¹⁴ Yet it is not *by* the works that we are saved, as the cause of salvation to us, but by grace (which is their root), and the faith, by which we believe in God, open to and receive Him, cleave to Him, trust in Him, and so lay hold of eternal life.

This faith is not our faculty, but rather the gift of God to us.¹⁵ It comes by grace, the free grace of God, who is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”¹⁶ He whose works are evil, has not this saving faith, regardless what doctrines or notions he believes. For where true faith is, it necessarily produces good works. Indeed, this root is never without its fruits. “Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works,”¹⁷ says the apostle James. Nevertheless, these works do not *merit* salvation, for they are not to be attributed to us, but wholly to Him who, through His grace, has brought us into the blessed state of living faith wherein they are produced. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,

¹¹ Galatians 5:6

¹² Acts 15:9

¹³ James 2:14-26

¹⁴ James 2:24

¹⁵ Hebrews 12:1, 2 Peter 1:1, Philippians 1:29

¹⁶ 2 Peter 3:9

¹⁷ James 2:18

which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”¹⁸

All the souls that God has made are equally His, and He whose mercies are over all His works, overlooks none of His creatures in the distribution of His mercies. He withholds His talents from none, but dispenses them in different portions to different persons. To one He gives five talents; to a second, two; to a third, one; but to each is given a divine manifestation sufficient to operate to his salvation, if believed in and obeyed. The Creator justly requires an increase corresponding to the measure He affords; and as He perfectly knows to what degree of improvement each might have attained, He will finally judge all according to their increase, their negligence, or their total rejection of the talent received.

Through a misapprehension of the second commandment, the people of Israel, in Ezekiel’s time, had espoused a notion that the children were punished for the sins of their parents, so that it had become a proverb among them, “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.” The prophet, therefore, was particularly commissioned to declare God’s immutable will in opposition to this: “As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins shall die.”¹⁹ “The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the

¹⁸ Ephesians 2:8-10

¹⁹ Ezekiel 18:3-4

wicked shall be upon himself.”²⁰ “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not fair.’ Hear now, O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair? When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies. Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive. Because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.”²¹ “Therefore, I will judge you, house of Israel, everyone according to his ways, says the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so that iniquity shall not be your ruin.”²² The prophet repeats more to the same purpose, both in this chapter, and in the 33rd. “As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’”²³ “Yet the children of your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not fair.’ But it is their way which is not fair! When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die because of it. But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it.”²⁴ Now, it is manifest that the death spoken of in these Scriptures is not the common death of the body;

²⁰ Ezekiel 18:20

²¹ Ezekiel 18:25-28

²² Ezekiel 18:30

²³ Ezekiel 33:11

²⁴ Ezekiel 33:17-19

for in that respect, the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked. Surely the death mentioned here refers to the everlasting and unhappy state of souls who go out of time into eternity without repentance and regeneration.

From all these express declarations, it is evident that the Almighty “does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;”²⁵ and that He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,”²⁶ desiring “all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”²⁷ These are all plain manifestations of the mind of God on this point, and ought to be decisive. The sins of men are placed to the account of their own will, and not to the will of God. “For why should you die, O house of Israel?”²⁸ And indeed, it is clear He does all that can be done by fair means to prevent it. By that pressing repetition, “Turn you, turn you from your evil ways,” it is manifest how He puts it in the power of men to turn from them. Who then can justify their perverseness, or in any way charge their sin, either immediately or remotely, to His account? Men are not destroyed through any malevolence in their Creator, but instead are saved by His grace, which He dispenses to all from that unparalleled benevolence which arises purely from His infinite goodness. Sinful man has nothing to offer. God, therefore, will have mercy because He will have mercy. Yes, because He is full of mercy, He will dispense it to His helpless and unworthy creatures. “I,” says the Lord to the repenting sinner, “even

²⁵ Lamentations 3:3

²⁶ 2 Peter 3:9

²⁷ 1 Timothy 2:4

²⁸ Ezekiel 18:31, 33:11

I am He that blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins.”²⁹

Various texts and portions of Scripture have been pressed and used to ascribe a cruel partiality to our Creator and Benefactor. We are told that He ordered the obstinacy of Pharaoh, the sin and folly of Sihon, and the kings of Canaan, the treacherous rebellion of Zedekiah against the king of Babylon, the ravages of Nebuchadnezzar, etc. But properly considered, this was an ordering of punishment for sin, and not an ordering of sin for punishment. The Lord hardens none till they have hardened themselves past all probability of repentance, and then He leaves them to the disorder of their own beloved lusts and vices. And what are considered to be unrighteous ravages, though really such in the committers of them, are, respecting the Almighty, the righteous execution of His justice against those who have filled up their measure of iniquity, and abused His gracious goodness and long forbearance towards them until He sees fit no longer to continue it to them. Thus He punishes the settled wickedness of some by the wickedness of their enemies, which He permits to be turned upon them. But afterwards He proceeds in like manner with those who were His instruments of chastisement, when they also have filled up their measure.

The divine Being is but one essence, perfectly pure and simple. He is one eternal, immutable power, making and supporting all other beings, and operating variously according to the state of His subjects, but never contrarily towards subjects in the same condition. As all souls are equally His immediate creation, no just reason can be

²⁹ Isaiah 43:25

advanced why He, who is righteous in all His ways, and holy or merciful in all His works, should deal so unequally with them as to predetermine some to eternal happiness, and others to inevitable misery. Oh, His mercies are over all, and to all, with a just and gracious intent towards all! The gracious Redeemer purchased gifts of grace for those who prove rebellious, as well as for others, and all are visited with a manifestation of His Spirit that they may profit by it. And though men do lapse from the visiting power, and often turn from the assistance afforded them, still He follows them, time after time, in long forbearance, and often revisits them of His freely abounding grace and mercy, that they may be prevailed upon to come to repentance and be saved. The condemnation of men, according to our Savior, is not the fruit of any previous decree, for “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”³⁰

³⁰ John 3:19

CHAPTER 11
THE SCRIPTURES AND THE SPIRIT

With respect to the Scriptures, we are so far from lessening them or opposing the true sense of them, that we verily believe, and sincerely assert, that the Holy Spirit, in whatever degree of illumination it appears, can never contradict them. It is the private or particular interpretations of man, without divine illumination, that we object to, as being insufficient to give the true meaning of disputed Scriptures. Besides man's natural inability, his various prejudices, prevailing passions, different interests, and diverse leaders, all contribute to give different, and sometimes opposite interpretations of the sacred text. Many have the words of the Spirit in Scripture, who have not the mind of the Spirit in their hearts.

Without divine illumination, man does not have sufficient ability to ascertain the genuine sense of doubtful and disputed texts, which are very numerous. Indeed, the great diversity in interpretation by persons of apparently equal sincerity, and of the best natural and acquired abilities, under the same, as well as different denominations, plainly indicates how the assistance of the divine Author Himself is imperative for the right understanding of them. I have

previously shown how man's reason is too much clouded and biased by his passions and prepossessions to be justly called *right* reason, for it often manifests a great diversity concerning spiritual matters, and even an instability in the same person. Right reason is truth, unchangeably the same and incapable of error, and therefore exists only in the divine nature, which man must, in measure, become a partaker of, in order to rectify his fallen and fallible reason.

Neither nature nor education can give a man the sense of the Holy Spirit, nor interpret the Spirit's expressions with certainty. It is therefore truly asserted, not only by the Quakers, but also by an abundance of distinguished writers of various professions, ancient and modern, that the internal illumination of God's Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary to every man, in order to rightly understand the Scriptures.

Now, many press their own particular opinion of parts of Scripture as the true intention of the Holy Spirit, though they deny a sense of the Holy Spirit's illumination in their hearts. But why should any credit be given to their assertions, seeing there is such a diversity of other opinions? They allege, 'the Scripture is infallible!' I grant it; but how is its true meaning to be infallibly conveyed to every reader? By human study and instruction? That has led into all the differences and disagreements about it! The plain truth of the matter is that nothing but the Spirit of divine Wisdom, from which the Scripture came, can give the genuine sense of it. For, "No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God."¹ What is the infallibility of Scripture to one who knows not the infallible Teacher of it? If all

¹ 1 Corinthians 2:11

who had the Scriptures knew this Teacher, none could misunderstand, or differ with each other about them. Yet it is too manifest, by the differences among Christians, that they *do* misunderstand them. Such confusion is not to be imputed to any defect in the sacred writings, but to the common unfitness of men's understandings to discover the right sense of God's words. What then is able to open the Scriptures to man's capacity besides the Holy Spirit? The question is not whether the Scriptures, as written by divine inspiration, are infallibly correct. No doubt they are. The question is whether everyone that reads them is infallibly able to understand them? Some suggest that, if the Scriptures cannot be understood without the Spirit, they are given in vain. But this is to contradict the Scriptures themselves, which plainly declare that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."² The words of the apostle are clear in this regard: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."³

Scripture doctrines are of various kinds. They exhibit just morals and benevolent conduct in a manner superior to the best ethical writers in all ages and nations. These are generally and justly accepted to be of natural, universal,

² 1 Corinthians 12:7

³ 1 Corinthians 2:12-14

and unalterable obligation, and are sufficiently plain and clear to the common understanding of every man. But matters relating to faith and worship, having gone through many circumstantial additions and alterations, according to the different dispensations of divine Wisdom, have not been so clear to men's understandings, nor have men been so united in judgment concerning them as in the case of moral duties. Ever since the collected publication of the New Testament, differences in opinion about true meaning, especially in matters of faith, have subsisted and abounded; and what can determine these differences? The learned scholar A. says a particular text means such and such. The learned scholar B. insists it is to be understood in a different, perhaps contrary sense. They appeal to the context and yet remain equally different in opinion, and certain of being in the right. They move from text to text, and from critic to commentator, till they have exhausted everyone they can find or force to their purpose, and still remain equally, if not more in discord than at the beginning. What is left them to determine the matter? Will churches or councils do it? They jangle from year to year, or from age to age, and leave the difference as wide as they found it. The true sense still remains only with the divine Author of the disputed texts, and He alone is able to communicate it. Alas, this case has subsisted for a great many centuries, and must always continue while men prefer their own prejudices, imaginations, and reasonings, to the internal leadings of the Spirit of Truth.

We hold the Scriptures to be the governing and guiding rule to all that have them, so far as they have a right understanding of them; but we cannot affirm they are the sole,

the primary, and the universal director of mankind in matters of religious duty for the following reasons: 1. They are not the *sole* director because the Spirit of God in the heart and conscience of man is also an undeniable director. 2. They are not the *primary* director, because the illumination of the Holy Spirit that gave them forth is necessary to open the true sense of many parts of them, about which the apprehensions of men so much differ. The Spirit from which the Scriptures came, being their origin, is therefore primary to them; and since the Spirit alone can unveil the meaning of His words, the words are therefore secondary to the Spirit, as an instrument in His hand. 3. They are not the *universal* director, because it is not probable that one in ten, if one in twenty, of mankind, have ever had the opportunity of possessing them. Seeing therefore this is the case, they cannot properly be pronounced the complete, adequate, universal rule of mankind.

We therefore esteem the Scriptures the secondary rule or guide of Christians, which have been divinely communicated for the use of all to whom they may come. And since they are intrinsically superior in excellence to all other writings, we prefer them above all others, and we as gratefully and comfortably use them as any Christians upon earth, verily believing that they “were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.”⁴ We do not depreciate the Scriptures, but indeed hold them in their proper place, as superior to all works of men, but subordinate to their Supreme Communicator and only sure Expounder. For the Holy Spirit is necessary for the right use of them, as an agent

⁴ Romans 15:4

with an instrument; and what is an instrument without a hand to guide and enforce it? And which is superior, the agent or the instrument? The Holy Spirit is the original wisdom from which the Scriptures came, and the sole power that can open them and give their right effect. The Spirit of Truth is given to guide into all truth, and is the only thing that can do it, being consequently the Supreme Guide afforded to mankind.

It is both unwarrantable and irrational to assert that anything could act as the sole, or primary director, when the Spirit of God is communicated for that purpose. The same passages of Scripture appear as differently to each person as their understanding differs one from another. Human understanding, therefore, must be rectified, to enable them to see those truths in the same light. The Rectifier is the Spirit of Truth, who alone can unite men in a true sense. We hesitate not to call the Scriptures collectively a divine rule; but we object to calling them *the* rule of faith and practice, lest this should imply we look for nothing further to be our guide or leader. The Scriptures themselves abundantly testify that there is something superior to them, which all ought to look for and attend unto. That something is the Holy Spirit of the Supreme Legislator of men, the Spirit of the Author of the sacred writings. And it is in and by His light and power that the Scriptures are made instrumentally useful and adequate to the purposes intended by them. Like a good sundial, they are true and perfect according to their purpose and kind, that is, as writings. However, they may justly bear the same motto with the sundial—*Non sine lunine* (that is, ‘Nothing without light’). For as a sundial without the rays of the sun-

beams has no proper use, neither does an ambiguous passage of Scripture infallibly communicate the mind of the Holy Spirit to different understandings, except the luminous beams of the Sun of Righteousness uncover it to the attentive mind.

Our opposers call the Scriptures the *primary* rule. We confess it is the primary *written* rule, and in all disputes between them and us, we abide by its decision, according to our understanding of the meaning of it, which they profess to do likewise by theirs. In all public differences therefore we refer intentionally to the same rule with them. But we also have both plain Scripture and experience to support our belief that, with respect to the particular duty of individuals, everyone has in his own breast a nearer and more certain rule or guide of conscience than the Scriptures, namely—"the manifestation of the Spirit given to every man to profit withal."⁵ And when this guide is duly observed, it gives both a right interpretation of Scripture (so far as is necessary), as well as a sense of each particular person's duty. Indeed, when a person feels the faithful witness of God in his conscience condemning him for what is wrong, and approving him for what is right, does he not find it to speak more clearly, particularly, and convincingly to his case and state than what he can read in the words of Scripture? And will he then conclude that this truly discerning witness is less than that Spirit of Truth, or Comforter, which "convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment?"⁶ But alas, in those who regard not this heavenly witness, I have observed that every man's opinion

⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:7

⁶ John 16:8

of Scripture is his Scripture, and when he proposes his opponent shall be determined by Scripture, he means according to his own apprehension of its meaning.

When Christ, after His resurrection, “opened the understandings of his disciples that they might understand the Scriptures,”⁷ was not the divine illumination in their understandings a more clear, certain, and superior evidence of their meaning, than all their reading and study could have afforded them without such illumination? Has mankind become so much more wise and perceptive that they now have no need of His assistance to open their understandings? Is their school and college learning so perfect as to render God’s illumination quite needless? Are the innumerable clashings and janglings of the book-learned priests and teachers about the meaning of Scripture a proof of the unity of their sentiments? Oh consider, how can they claim Scripture as the final and certain criterion, when it is precisely the meaning of Scripture which gives rise to all uncertainty and difference? It is therefore certain that, without divine illumination, every reader of sacred text accepts whatever meaning his presuppositions make for him, which is the cause of the innumerable differences amongst professing Christians.

⁷ Luke 24:45

CHAPTER 12
THE PURIFYING POWER OF THE GOSPEL

I judge this a proper opportunity to caution against the corrupt and dangerous positions that some have publicly avowed respecting true righteousness and sanctification. Many have plainly taught or implied:

1. That man, at the same time he is actually unrighteous in himself, is righteous in Christ. That is, he is not what he is in reality, but what he persuades himself to be, by a false imagination concerning the sacrifice of Christ. These are like “that generation who are pure in their own eyes, yet are not washed from their filthiness.”¹
2. That the supreme Being of immutable truth looks upon man in a false light, esteeming him pure, while he knows him to be sinful and corrupt.
3. That Christ, the Truth, is something of a false medium, showing the states of men contrary to what they are in reality.
4. That man can be the servant of Christ while he is

¹ Proverbs 30:12

under the influence of antichrist; that he is holy by imputation, even while he is ruled by the author of pollution, the adversary of all holiness; and that he is acting in the will of God while he is doing the works of the devil.

Much to the contrary we read, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”²

It is a vain delusion for any to expect that purity in the highest perfection should unite with them while they remain in the very cause of separation from Him. Sin made the separation at first, and the continuance of it maintains the separation. If it be asked—Did not Christ die to reconcile sinners to God? I answer: Yes; but not to reconcile God to sin, nor to save sin. He suffered not to purchase a license for sinners to continue as such, but to open the way for them to come to repentance, through the gift of grace procured by Him. “For,” says he, “Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.”³ He came not to uphold, but “to destroy the works of the devil,”⁴ which include all manner of sin and corruption. “Do you not know” says the man of God, “that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”⁵ The notion

² Romans 6:16

³ Luke 13:3, 5

⁴ 1 John 3:8

⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

of imputed righteousness to such as remain in the commission of these evils is therefore a vain and pernicious error. We must die to sin, or we cannot live to God; and in proportion as we die to sin, we live in Christ, and no further. We must put on Christ, by true faith and obedience, which are never separate—for it is a false faith which abides in disobedience. “Faith without works is dead,”⁶ says the servant of Christ; and “Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”⁷

The gospel not only forbids the outward acts of sin, but also subdues the inward desire and motion towards it. The law says, ‘Thou shalt not kill; nor commit adultery; nor swear falsely, etc.’ The gospel commands, ‘Give no place to anger; you shall not lust; swear not at all, etc.’ In this manner the gospel does not destroy the moral law, but rather fulfills it, taking away the seat of sin, and laying the axe of the Spirit to the root of corruption. Can a reasonable man imagine that the everlasting Source of wisdom and might is at a loss how to expel Satan’s kingdom in man while he lives upon the earth? Or do they think God is pleased with man’s offenses against His purity and goodness, and willing that Satan should reign over His creatures to the last moment of their lives? Would it not be more to God’s glory to deliver from the present reign of sin, saving from evil and misery both here and hereafter, rather than only to save from future wretchedness? Is an incomplete deliverance preferable or more glorious than that which is perfect? When doctrines contrary to purification of heart and holiness of life are actively propagated amongst professing

⁶ James 2:26

⁷ James 2:18

Christians, it behooves all to be alarmed and fearful, lest by giving them place in their minds, they become blinded through the deceitfulness of sin. Indeed, this will land them at last in a fool's paradise, instead of in the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, into which "nothing that defiles, that works abomination, or makes a lie, shall by any means enter."⁸

The apostle Peter spoke of a faith that "purifies the heart,"⁹ and what this true gospel faith is, we would do well to consider. As the entrance of the divine Word quickens the soul, so it first communicates a degree of faith by which it operates. For all true faith is the gift of God, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of faith, which is not a bare belief in the truths concerning Christ, but a faith in Him. Faith in Christ does not consist in giving credit or acceptance to narrations and doctrines, together with modes of practice framed by the wisdom of men. Truly, all this falls far short of the essential substance of faith. Gospel faith operating in man believes the truth of all that is revealed by the Spirit, both in the heart and in the Sacred Writings, because it feels the truth, savors it, and is one with it. It not only assents to the Scriptural accounts of the incarnation and whole process of Christ in Judea, but it also receives His internal appearance, consents to His inward operation, and concurs with it. That faith which stands wholly upon hearsay, tradition, reading, or imagination, is but a distant kind of ineffectual credence, which permits the soul to remain in the bondage of corruption. The wicked may go this far towards gospel faith, but true faith lays hold of and

⁸ Revelation 21:27

⁹ Acts 15:9

cleaves to the Spirit of Truth in its inward manifestations, wherein it stands, and whereby it grows, till the heart is purified, the world overcome, and salvation obtained.

Gospel faith is as a flame of pure love in the heart to God. It presses towards Him, pants after Him, resigns to Him, confides and lives in Him. "The mystery of faith is held in a pure conscience,"¹⁰ and in the effective power of the everlasting gospel. By this faith the Christian dispensation is often distinguished in Scripture from the exterior dispensation of the Mosaic law. Though the term faith is occasionally used by the penmen of Scripture in diverse (yet not contrary) senses, this seems to be the one standing faith mentioned in Ephesians 4:5, which faith is in Christ Jesus, and is the fruit of His grace and good Spirit in the heart. Through this alone the Scriptures become effectually instructive to the man of God, and helpful to the Christian in the way of life and salvation. This is the faith by which the members of Christ truly live and abide as such. Yes, faith is their invincible shield, and the knowledge of Christ in them is the proof of their possessing it.

Abundance could be said of the nature, power, and effects of this all-conquering faith, but I hope this will be sufficient to show that it arises not in man merely from the man. Though in its complete sense it includes a belief of all that is said about Christ, and by Christ, in Holy Writ; still it goes much deeper, taking its birth, and receiving its increase from the operation of the Holy Spirit, which works by it towards the sanctification of the heart and the production of every Christian virtue.

It is by continuing in this faith that man lays hold of

¹⁰ 1 Timothy 3:9

the hope of the gospel—a gospel that is *described* by the evangelical and apostolic writings, but *defined and experienced* as the “power of God unto salvation.”¹¹ Indeed, Christ Himself is called “the power of God,”¹² who spiritually and internally administers light and life to the souls of men. This spiritual and powerful administration is the essence of the gospel. Both Old and New Testaments bear testimony to the incarnation, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the real substance of the apostolic gospel does not consist of history and doctrine, but of the living and sensible operation of the power of God.

We read, that “Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel,”¹³ but what is this life and immortality that the gospel discovered? Did not mankind believe in a future state before the incarnation of Christ? Yes, certainly. Most Jews and Gentiles already believed and held the truth of it. What life and immortality then is that which is peculiar to the gospel, and which it is the particular property of the gospel to unveil? It consists not wholly in an explanation of the external procedure¹⁴ and doctrines of our Lord, but chiefly in that spiritual gift He procured for us through His sufferings, which is the life and power that the immortal Spirit of God manifests in the believing and obedient soul—that is, the Spirit who quickens those who have been dead in trespasses and sins, and alienated from the life of God.

¹¹ Romans 1:16

¹² 1 Corinthians 1:24

¹³ 2 Timothy 1:10

¹⁴ By “procedure,” he means the full course of Christ’s birth, life, obedience, sufferings, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

The Purifying Power of the Gospel

The very core of the gospel is the issuing forth of this Spirit of life into the hearts of men. “Keep your heart with all diligence,” says the wise man, “for out of it are the issues of life.”¹⁵ Now, these issues of life arise *in* the heart of man, but not *from* the heart itself; for were it so, the heart or soul would be its own quickener and savior. But Christ alone is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life,”¹⁶ and therefore the issuings of life work in and through the heart by His Spirit. The divine influence of this Spirit is the true life of the soul, that which renders it living; and void of this it cannot be (in a gospel sense) considered a living soul. Though all souls endure to eternity, eternal duration is not eternal life. To exist without this life, is to be spiritually dead. It is therefore imperative that each soul wait for, feel after, and find this immortal life, and also learn to keep to it with all diligence, that it may experience the daily issues thereof for its comfort and preservation, as “a fountain of water springing up to everlasting life.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Proverbs 4:23

¹⁶ John 14:6

¹⁷ John 4:14

CHAPTER 13
SPIRITUAL WORSHIP AND REVELATION

It is true that we recommend silence and stillness in our religious assemblies; and seeing our manner of worship is misunderstood by many, and often treated with ridicule, I shall take this opportunity to offer some explanation of it. We look upon divine worship to be the most solemn act that man is capable of being engaged in; and in consideration of the high and inconceivable majesty of Almighty God, we think it our duty to approach Him with the greatest reverence. Every thinking person, who is in any degree sensible of the love and fear of God, must esteem it a serious thing to present himself to the special notice of the infinite, omnipresent, eternal Being. Under a sense of this, the wise man advises, “Walk prudently when you go to the house of God;”—or enter upon worship—“and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil. Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.”¹ This man well knew, as he expresses it, that both “the preparations of the heart in

¹ Ecclesiastes 5:1-2

man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord;”² and this accords with what our Savior says—“Without Me you can do nothing.”³ We, therefore, cannot perform divine worship acceptably but by His assistance. Indeed, this ability must be received in spirit; for the apostle says, “The Spirit also helps in our weaknesses; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.”⁴ This being as certainly our case as it was the case of the apostles and primitive believers, it is incumbent upon us to wait for that Spirit which is requisite to help our weaknesses in order to pray as we ought. No forms of devotion of men’s invention can take the place of the Spirit. The same apostle further says, “Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”⁵ Seeing, therefore, that both our help and our access is through the Spirit of Christ, the renewal of which is at His pleasure and not ours, we must necessarily wait for it.

Now, this waiting must be in stillness of mind from the common course of our own thoughts, from all wandering imaginations, and also in silence from the expression of words; for the utterance of words is not waiting, but acting. Words are necessary to convey the sense of one person to another, but it is not so with the Omniscient Being who is a universal Spirit, and everywhere Almighty, who therefore has no need either of the use of bodily organs, instruments, or the sound of words, to communicate with the spirit of man. If, in order to worship, the mind does not settle into

² Proverbs 16:1

³ John 15:5

⁴ Romans 8:26

⁵ Ephesians 2:18

stillness, the passions will be at work, which often agitate it into enthusiastic heats and vague imaginations. But in true stillness and singleness of soul towards God, these are silenced and subjected. The still small voice of the Inspirer of all good then comes to be heard, and the mind being closely engaged in attention thereunto, and answering it in faith and humble submission, feels divine life and love spring up. In this the soul receives ability to truly worship the great Author of its existence and the heavenly Supplier of its needs, with a devotion which no outward forms can reach.

This worship is not entered upon by totally laying aside our faculties, and falling into a senseless stupor, as some superficial observers have imagined, but by a real turning of the mind and heart, with an attention fixed singly and inwardly upon the only Object of all adoration, in patient yet fervent desire after Him. Thus, according to the Hebrew, the experienced Psalmist advises, “Be silent to the Lord, and wait patiently for him.”⁶ And respecting his own practice, he says, “Truly my soul is silent upon God,” adding this compelling reason, “from Him comes my salvation.”⁷ In verse 5 of the same Psalm he applies the exhortation to himself: “My soul, wait you only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” Great encouragement he had thus to wait, as appears in Psalm 40, where he says, “I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He has put a new song into my

⁶ Psalm 37:7 – Literal Translation of Hebrew

⁷ Psalm 62:1 – Literal Translation of Hebrew

mouth, even praise unto our God.”⁸

Jeremiah bears testimony to the same practical and profitable doctrine: “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and keep silent, because God has laid it on him.”⁹ Silent waiting was in practice among the prophets and those that attended them, as appears in the prophecy of Ezekiel. We find the spirit of the prophet was engaged in divine vision, while the elders of Judah sat before him, as it is described beginning in the first verse of the eighth chapter. During the time of this vision, it cannot be supposed that he was either speaking to them, or they to him, or to each other. This was not a singular instance of their meeting together this way, for it was the manner of God’s people to thus congregate with the prophets, as the following censure indicates: “They come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them.”¹⁰

In this solemn practice, we have often been thankfully enabled to acknowledge the truth of that gracious declaration of our Lord, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”¹¹ Here we have found the fulfilling of that promise, “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength,”¹² and the certainty of that assertion, “The Lord is good unto

⁸ Psalms 40:1-3

⁹ Lamentations 3:26-28

¹⁰ Ezekiel 33:31

¹¹ Matthew 18:20

¹² Isaiah 40:31

them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him;”¹³ and also the necessity and authority of that wise command, “Be still, and know that I am God.”¹⁴

Because this silent waiting appears to us to be indispensable, in the first place, for the worship of God in Spirit and truth, it is always our practice to begin meetings this way; for we believe the Lord ought to have the direction and attention of our hearts. And if He is pleased to influence anyone (under due preparation) to vocally appear, either by way of address to Himself in prayer, or to us in preaching, we never hinder such appearances, but rather silently assist them according to our measures. If it prove that none are so concerned to speak, we sit the time through in silence, wherein true inward worship is often experienced. However, we never appoint any meeting with intent that it shall be held throughout in silence, as some have mistakenly imagined; for our aim is to be led and guided by the good Spirit of God, and more especially in the solemn acts of divine worship. It would be a happy thing if all (among us as well as others) were so led by the Spirit, but the case appears otherwise with too many; for many sit unconcerned, in expectation of hearing vocal ministry instead of waiting upon God, and therefore often meet with disappointment. The apostle said in his age, “They are not all Israel, which are of Israel.”¹⁵ So we must also acknowledge that all who have descended from faithful ancestors are not themselves faithful; but the defect is in themselves, and not in the principle.

¹³ Lamentations 3:25

¹⁴ Psalm 46:10

¹⁵ Romans 9:6

It is true, we insist that the Spirit of Truth ought to be our, and every man's leader, and that this Spirit is an infallible guide, and that so far as anyone faithfully follows it, they are infallibly led, and no further. Yet we never did, nor do profess, that all in society with us are so led, or even sufficiently seek to be so. Nor was this the case among the primitive Christians themselves. Indeed, we well know, and freely acknowledge, that we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and that without repentance and regeneration, we must forever fall short of it. We are also sensible, that upon due confession, submission, and sincere obedience to the manifestations of Christ, the Light of men, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;"¹⁶ and if we "walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."¹⁷

But now, honest reader, could anything but either gross ignorance, envy, or malevolence, infer from our entire dependence upon the Spirit that we profess *ourselves* to be infallible? Yet, in this way our doctrines have been discolored by our adversaries from the very beginning, and our present opposers follow in the same track, repeatedly upbraiding us by this allegation. Nevertheless, even as "life is more than food, and the body more than clothing,"¹⁸ we profess that the immediate influence of the Spirit of Christ is greater than the Scriptures that testify of Him, as also any man's interpretation of them and prac-

¹⁶ 1 John 1:9

¹⁷ 1 John 1:7

¹⁸ Luke 12:23

tices taken from them. The original, essential, and primary guide, in all Christian life, ministry, and worship, is that revelation and empowering which comes immediately from the Spirit of God into a man's heart.

That many (who call themselves Christians) are unfamiliar with the openings and motions of the Holy Spirit is no argument against this doctrine, for it is the capacity of every created soul to be "led by the Spirit of God."¹⁹ For "if we live by the Spirit," says the apostle, we should also "walk by the Spirit,"²⁰ learning to "worship God in the Spirit,"²¹ "pray in the Spirit,"²² "love in the Spirit,"²³ "obey through the Spirit,"²⁴ etc.

In order to demonstrate this thing further, let me observe, that the soul of man has not only a faculty of understanding, by which it ordinarily thinks and unites, divides, compares, or forms ideas, but also a hidden power of internal sensation, or of perceiving spiritual objects by an inward and spiritual sense. Until the beams of divine light shine upon him, man necessarily remains entirely unacquainted with this sense, even as an unborn child remains unaware of its faculties of sight and hearing. For though a child may be completely formed in the womb, and possess every organ proper to bodily sensation, yet it is not empowered to exercise them, or even to know it has them, till it be brought forth into the medium necessary for the use of them, composed of the light and air of this

¹⁹ Romans 8:14

²⁰ Galatians 5:25

²¹ Philippians 3:3

²² Jude 1:20

²³ Colossians 1:8

²⁴ 1 Peter 1:22

world. Then it suddenly discovers the various senses and natural powers which, before its birth, it could neither have understood or used. In like manner, the natural man must be delivered out of his natural darkness, into the luminous and life-giving influence of that divine Word, or Spirit, which is most emphatically called the true light and life of men. Thus born of the Spirit into this proper medium of divine knowledge, the soul is made acquainted with that spiritual sense it could neither discover, nor believe pertained to it, while still in its natural state. This is not a new natural faculty added, but an inward power of the soul newly opened, and brought into its proper place and use. Words are inadequate to express this internal sense felt in the soul under divine influence. It cannot be clearly conveyed to the understanding of the unexperienced; for it is not an image, but a sensation, impossible to be conceived other than by its own impression. So true is that expression of the apostle, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him; but God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit."²⁵

It is upon this consideration that we insist upon divine light being an inward sensation which cannot be adequately communicated from one man to another by reasoning or verbal description. For if a person should give the most clear and lively description possible of the light of the sun to a man blind from his birth, it would only communicate an idea or notion of the light, but not the light itself. This might be called a revelation concerning the light, but it is not the revelation of the light itself. This no

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:9-10

man can receive except by his own immediate sensation. Divine revelation is a disclosure of something to the understanding by the Holy Spirit, which is not in the mind's own power to discover. The Holy Spirit does this in a variety of ways, such as: by unveiling itself by its own influence (in measure) upon the soul, and giving it an internal sense of its presence; or by giving the soul a clear sense of its own state and condition; or by opening the mind into the knowledge of the divine will concerning persons or things, or into a true sense of Scriptures, or a deeper understanding of doctrines than it could ever reach without divine illumination, etc. All of this is truly internal and immediate revelation. What is now commonly considered the only revelation still existing, and ever to exist—the Bible—should more correctly be called the *fruit* of revelation than the thing itself, for it is a scriptural record of things revealed. These writings were most certainly breathed by the Spirit unto those who directly received them; but the many and different interpretations of man put upon them, for many generations past, demonstrate that these words are not truly a revelation to those who mistake them; nor can they ever become such to man until he knows the holy Author to be their Interpreter. For, “no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”²⁶

Our Lord showed his disciples that the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, should not only bring to their remembrance what He had told them, show them things to come, and lead them into all truth, but it should likewise, “reprove the

²⁶ 2 Peter 1:20-21

world of sin, of righteousness, and also, of judgment.”²⁷ This divine Visitor can appear to the mind of man in words, or without words; by the sensations of compunction and remorse, in the sharpness of reproof, or in the healing touches of consolation; whether it manifests itself as light, or sheds abroad its life and love into the heart; whether it darts in upon it as lightning, or settles it in a holy serenity; whether it fills it with faith, or inflames it with zeal; in all these ways, seeing it proceeds not by a messenger, but by its own immediate communication to the rational soul of man, it is properly called internal immediate revelation. This divine Spirit is the living source of truth and virtue in man, without which all exterior laws and precepts would avail very little. And when, through faithfulness thereunto, the Spirit of God is enlarged and advanced over all else in the soul, it is found to be a sure foundation, which neither the wisdom of the wise, the reasoning of the confident, the juggling of the crafty, the derision of the reviler, the rage of the persecutor, nor even the gates of hell can prevail against.

²⁷ John 16:8

CHAPTER 14
THE SPIRIT, THE GOSPEL, AND THE KINGDOM

We believe that all men, at times, have felt the reprov-
ing witness of the Spirit of God in their consciences, which
gives them a convicting knowledge of Him; and if they con-
tinue to rebel against this light, they become progressively
darkened towards it. Job testifies, "There are those who
rebel against the light; they do not know its ways, nor
abide in its paths."¹ And Paul likewise says, "Not liking to
retain God in their knowledge," (showing that they had at
least some measure of it) "He gave them over to a repro-
bate mind."² Our principle teaches that "the grace of God
that brings salvation has appeared to all men,"³ first as a
convictor, or convincer of sin. Thus the Lord stands at the
door of man's heart and knocks for entrance, and if the
heart opens to Him, and abides in the ability that He fur-
nishes, sincerely desiring and seeking to obey His motions,
the Lord will, by due degrees, increase the operation of
grace therein, till it prove itself the power of God unto sal-
vation. Then, and not till then, does the mind become sen-

¹ Job 24:13

² Romans 1:28

³ Titus 2:11

sible of the saving knowledge of this divine Spirit. Yet, even before this, while the soul knew nothing more of it than merely its convictions, man could not be said to be totally ignorant of an internal, immediate sense of that grace which is saving, both in its nature and intention, though it was not endued with the true saving knowledge of it.

We have all along uniformly acknowledged, as fully as any professors of Christianity can do, that the gospel came in word as well as in power; but not in word only, but also in power, even in the power of the Holy Spirit. And we are sensible that this divine power, from which the words sprang, is the very essence of the gospel, and the words are but the outward expression, or exterior declaration, by which the power is preached and recommended. To this essential, internal grace, power, and Spirit of God, the apostles called and pressed their hearers, as well as to the belief in the outward coming and process⁴ of the Messiah then past. They taught them, that “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him, He shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.”⁵ This second appearance of Christ, we do not understand to mean His coming for judgment at the great day of general decision; for then He will come to determine the final state of both the righteous and unrighteous—not to salvation only, but to condemnation also. But this second appearance is unto the salvation of those who look for Him to that end. Accordingly, the apostle thus prays for the believers, “May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of

⁴ Phipps uses the word “process” in the same sense he used “procedure” above—meaning the full course of Christ’s birth, life, obedience, sufferings, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

⁵ Hebrews 9:28

God, and into the patient waiting for Christ;”⁶ and he describes the Corinthians as “waiting for the coming,” or renewed appearance, “of our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁷

Though our Savior empowers and employs His messengers to publicly declare His will, and to call people to the work of repentance and regeneration, He does not deputize them to do the work for Him. It is not the words that His messengers deliver, nor any human application of them, which can perform this great business of salvation. “Lord,” says the prophet, “You will ordain peace for us; for You also have wrought all our works in us.”⁸ The Spirit of the high and holy One is the true source and cause of all real good that is done, all real virtue that is wrought, either in the church in general, or any of its members. It is the Spirit that gives understanding, and unveils the knowledge of the things of God;⁹ quickens and makes alive,¹⁰ morti-

⁶ 2 Thessalonians 3:5 KJV

⁷ 1 Corinthians 1:7

⁸ Isaiah 26:12

⁹ “I said, days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding.” Job 32: 7-8 — “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.” 1 Cor. 2:9-11

¹⁰ “It is the Spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing.” John 6:63 — “The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” 2 Cor. 3:6 — “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” Rom. 8:11

The Spirit, the Gospel, and the Kingdom

fies,¹¹ circumcises,¹² baptizes,¹³ sanctifies,¹⁴ regenerates,¹⁵ sets free,¹⁶ strengthens, and enables to obey.¹⁷ In the Spirit is the true light,¹⁸ the life,¹⁹ the love,²⁰ the waiting,²¹ the walking,²² the fellowship,²³ and communion of the gospel.²⁴ In the Spirit is true prayer made,²⁵ access to the throne of

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- 11 "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Rom. 8:13
- 12 "Circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit, and not in the letter." Rom. 2:29
- 13 "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." 1 Cor. 12:13
- 14 "But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor. 6:11
- 15 "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit." John 3:5-6
- 16 "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." Rom. 8:2
- 17 "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might, by His Spirit, in the inner man." Eph. 3:16
- 18 "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. — That was the true light which enlightens every man that comes into the world." John 1:4, 9 — "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 4:6
- 19 "The Spirit gives life." 2 Cor. 3:6
- 20 "Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit." Col. 1:8
- 21 "We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness, by faith." Gal. 5:5
- 22 "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Gal. 5:25
- 23 "If any fellowship of the Spirit." Phil. 2:1
- 24 "Have been all made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:13
- 25 "The Spirit also helps our weaknesses, for we know not what we

grace opened,²⁶ and acceptable worship performed.²⁷ The Spirit is the covering of God's people,²⁸ their guide,²⁹ their leader,³⁰ their comforter,³¹ their seal,³² the inward earnest of an everlasting inheritance to them. In sum, the Spirit of God is the all-effective power and virtue of the gospel ministration, to which all the Scriptures here cited undeniably bear witness. In all these respects, the Holy Spirit operated mightily among the primitive believers, and we maintain that the same spiritual operations are necessary in this and every generation.

With regard to the gospel, we acknowledge that the word gospel, in an extended sense, may include both the history and the mystery, the outward and the inward process of our Savior; for the gospel comes not in word

should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit makes intercession for us, etc." Rom. 8:26

²⁶ "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." Eph. 6:18 — "Praying in the Holy Spirit." Jude 20

²⁷ "Through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father." Eph. 2:18

²⁸ "Woe to the rebellious children, that cover with a covering, but not of My Spirit." Isa. 30:1

²⁹ "When He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all Truth." John 16:13

³⁰ "If you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law." Gal. 5:18 — "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." Rom. 8:14

³¹ "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth." John 14:16-17

³² "God, who has also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 Cor. 1:22 "In whom, after you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Eph. 1:13 — "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed, unto the day of redemption." Eph. 4:30

only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit.³³ We believe this power of the Holy Ghost to be the internal, essential part, and the words the exterior declaration and expression of it. We admit the history deserves a share in the title, but it must not detract from the power, which is the life and reality of it, lest people be deceived into a belief that the gospel essentially consists of nothing but words.

We heartily acknowledge that the apostle's preached the gospel when, by inspiration, they declared the historical process of Christ; but we cannot concede that this comprehended the whole of their gospel. For we read in their writings that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and that it shines as a light in the heart to give the knowledge of the glory of God. The doctrines of the gospel are also called the gospel, and the preaching of them is termed preaching the gospel; but it is evident that neither the history nor the doctrines are the essence or substance of the thing. For in Galatians, after the apostle had said, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed;"³⁴ he then shows what he meant by the gospel they had received, "But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ... But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with

³³ 1 Thessalonians 1:5

³⁴ Galatians 1:9

flesh and blood.”³⁵ The gospel here intended is plainly the immediate revelation of the Son of God within him, and not the historical or doctrinal relation of things without him. Indeed, it is against the opposers of this internal, essential gospel—which is not of man, nor by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ within man—that the apostle twice pronounces anathema.

Paul preached the gospel “not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”³⁶ that the faith of his hearers might be fixed in this power of God, and not in the private interpretations of men’s wisdom. His fellow-laborers preached under the influence of the same divine power, which pricked their hearers in their heart; and so must all who ever truly preach the gospel. In coming to the Corinthians, the apostle declared he would “know not the words of them that are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.”³⁷ This everlasting power is the Spirit of the gospel, wherein it mainly and most essentially consists; and so Paul directs his readers to turn away from such who “have a form of godliness, but deny its power.”³⁸ To confine the whole of the gospel to mere historical tidings, or to reduce it into a bare report, is to exclude the powerful reality which gives deliverance, as though the report were the Savior, and the notion the salvation. This we cannot admit; for we know no Savior but Christ, nor any salvation without His power.

³⁵ Galatians 1:11-16

³⁶ 1 Corinthians 2:4

³⁷ 1 Corinthians 4:19-20

³⁸ 2 Timothy 3:5

Tertullian wrote to the same purpose fifteen hundred years ago. In his Apology, chapter 17 he says, "Surely the soul was before the letter, and the Word was before the book... And if you are disposed to understand, it is not the words of the book, but Christ himself, who is sent into the world, and who is the gospel." We likewise read in 2nd Corinthians, "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those [Literally 'veiled in those' Gr. *'en tois'*] who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."³⁹ Here the apostle teaches that the gospel they preached was Christ, showing His face, or manifesting Himself as the image of God in their hearts; and that this gospel was only hid, or obscured, in the minds of those, who through unbelief therein, or unfaithfulness thereto, had become blinded towards it, by him who is called the god of this world, because he is obeyed by those who walk according to the course of this world.

John the Evangelist asserts that Christ, the Logos or Word of God, is the only true light and life of men, and the source of all real knowledge of God that has ever been revealed to any people for the life and happiness of their souls. This accords with the prophecies of the gospel covenant: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and

³⁹ 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

write it in their hearts,” and “For they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.”⁴⁰ This could not intend the knowledge of Christ incarnate, for that appearance was external, in one nation only, and of short duration. Nor could it mean the knowledge of the Scriptures; for a man may know them from beginning to end, believe them to be true, form his practice according to his apprehensions of the sense of them, and yet not know the Lord. The Jews had the law, the prophets, and the Scriptures which existed in their time; yet the Almighty, by the mouth of the same prophet, declares, “My people are foolish, they have not known me.”⁴¹ Nor was it possible they should know Him without divine assistance; therefore he says, “I will give them a heart to know me.”⁴² And in Ezekiel, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you...I will put my Spirit within you.”⁴³

Thus, the gospel of God is to be received and known by the internal writing of the divine Word in the heart, which puts the law of light and life within man. Indeed, this is “the gospel of the kingdom of God”⁴⁴ which kingdom begins as a mustard seed, a pearl, a pinch of leaven, or a small stone “cut out of the mountain without hands,” but which becomes a great mountain, breaks in pieces and consumes all other kingdoms, and fills the earthly heart of man. This kingdom, Jesus said, “does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For

⁴⁰ Jeremiah 31:33, 34

⁴¹ Jeremiah 4:22

⁴² Jeremiah 24:7

⁴³ Ezekiel 36:26-27

⁴⁴ Mark 1:14

indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”⁴⁵ Some, to suit their purpose, choose to read these last words, “the kingdom of God is *among* you.” But this reading destroys the contrast that was evidently intended by our Savior, who was here answering a question put to Him by the Pharisees concerning their expectation of an outward kingdom. The Lord informs them that the kingdom of God is an inward kingdom, and here shows the difference between an outward and visible form (which men are capable to point out by their ‘lo here,’ and ‘lo there’) and His own internal, spiritual dominion. Furthermore, the word in the original Greek is *entos*, which properly signifies *within* or *inside*, and not *en* which can be rendered *in* or *among*.

If any ask, ‘What is the kingdom of heaven, or of God?’ I answer: Though He is indeed the Almighty Sovereign of the entire universe, yet His kingdom is more particularly that wherein He so completely governs as to be always cheerfully and perfectly obeyed; where He is the sole mover of all that is done; where He is glorified in all that is done, and where He communicates His own glory and felicity without mixture. This kingdom can neither be entered, nor even seen into by man, except through the new birth of the Holy Spirit, whereby the soul experiences a being born into it—a being delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the dear Son of God. By this alone the spirit of man enters the kingdom, and through faithfulness, is enabled to make advances therein while still in the body. This kingdom stands not in place, nor in any ‘here or there,’ and it is therefore vain to direct men to it by “lo here,” or “lo there.” Rather, it stands

⁴⁵ Luke 17:21

in an infinite and heavenly Spirit, life, and nature, wherein nothing impure can live or enter. It is the internal dominion, or ruling power of the Holy Spirit in men and angels. It is that pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty, which, entering into holy souls, makes them friends of God. In short, the kingdom of God is the dominion of the light and life of the Spirit of God. Whoever lives under the sensible influence and government of this, lives in the kingdom. This is the kingdom of the saints militant on earth, and of the saints triumphant in heaven, which is only experienced by the sanctified in Christ Jesus—in part while in this world, and in fulness in the world to come.