

WALK IN THE SPIRIT

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE GRACE THAT BRINGS SALVATION

BY

HUGH TURFORD

TO THE READER

Most men will acknowledge that the primitive churches to whom Paul wrote his epistles, exceeded in many respects the professors of Christianity in our present age; and good grounds they have so to believe. For the said apostle, in his epistles, told the Corinthians, that their “bodies were the temples of the Holy Spirit;”¹ he told the Ephesians that “they were fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;”² he told the Philippians that “their citizenship was in heaven;”³ he told the Colossians that “they were delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the dear Son of God;”⁴ he told the Hebrews that “they were come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.”⁵ And Peter, in his general epistle to the churches, told them that they were “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people.”⁶

But is this our state? Can we say, from a discernible feeling, that the Holy Spirit of God dwells in us? Or that our bodies are the temples in which we may behold His presence, feel His power, and fear, worship, and serve Him? Can we say that our citizenship is in heaven? That we are translated into the kingdom of the dear Son of God, and live under the scepter of His government? That we have come to the heavenly Jerusalem, where the great God is worshipped in Spirit and in truth? Or, are we rather strangers to all these things, and yet persuade ourselves that we are the people of God, and good Chris-

1 1 Corinthians 6:19
2 Ephesians 2:19
3 Philippians 3:20
4 Colossians 1:13
5 Hebrews 12:22
6 1 Peter 2:9

tians?

The primitive churches had the honorable name of saints; we often can give ourselves no better name than “miserable sinners;”⁷ and what is the reason? Most in the aforementioned churches, before their conversion, were but heathens; they were not born of Christian parents nor trained up in the Christian faith, as we think we are. And after conversion they had but little preaching in comparison to what we now have; neither were they so plentifully furnished with books as we are.

We cannot conclude that the kingdom of Christ that then appeared in power, did (as the natural sun sometimes does) show itself in a morning, and be seen no more all day; for the kingdom of Christ is an everlasting kingdom, and the new covenant that was made with the house of Jacob is an everlasting covenant. Neither may we conclude that God has withdrawn Himself from the children of men; for He never forsakes us, unless we first forsake Him.

The apostles foresaw that there would be a falling away from the grace in which many primitive Christians were established; which soon after their decease came to pass. But our preachers say, “The dark night of apostasy is over, and we live in gospel days again.” But if so, where are the fruits? We may, I confess, hear gospel words; but where is the gospel power by which believers come to be the sons of God, and to bear His image in righteousness? Why are we, who are called Christians, not grown to the stature of those who were born Heathens and brought up in blindness and ignorance? Why are we not sanctified, and made a holy people, as well as they? Why are our bodies not cleansed and made a habitation for the eternal Spirit as theirs were? Why is our citizenship not in heaven, or our lives at least more heavenly than they are? The reason to me is this: we have not built upon the same foundation that they built upon. For this we must understand—that the Heathen had not the Scriptures as we have, and so could not set up a “form of godliness”⁸ from them, as many have done since, made up of good words, calling it godliness, and resting in outward performances, without any true conversion or a sense of that inward life and power that the primitive Christians came to feel and find in themselves through faith, with the operation of the eternal quickening Spirit of Jesus Christ.

The Heathen, as well as others, were men and women of God’s creation (all nations being made of one blood), and so had in themselves, as everyone has,⁹ a seed of His kingdom (a measure of His Spirit, a heavenly talent or mina) along with the seed or spirit of the evil one. Thus they knew good as well as bad; light as well as darkness; something that reproveth them for sin, as well as something that tempted them to sin. And being, by the Apostle, turned from the darkness that was in them, to the light;¹⁰ from that which tempted them to sin, to that which convicted and reproveth them for sin, they cleaved thereunto, confided therein, and became followers thereof. And by cleaving to the good, they were delivered from evil; by following Christ’s light, they came to be translated out of the kingdom of darkness, and to

7 The Book of Common Prayer, of the Church of England

8 2 Timothy 3:5

9 See John 1:9, Titus 2:11, Romans 1:19, 2:15, John 3:19, John 16:8, Micah 6:8, Ecclesiastes 3:11.

10 Acts 26:18

have their citizenship in heaven, even while they were upon earth.

These built on a sure rock, a living foundation, on Christ as He was in all ages, and still is—on His spiritual appearance as the light of the world, and the life of righteousness. And taking His eternal Spirit in themselves for their guide, they turned away from whatever they were thereby convicted of and reprov'd for. Thus Esau (or the first nature) came to be supplanted, and He whose right it is to reign came to have the rule in them and the government over them. And as the darkness (that had eclipsed the brightness of the Sun of righteousness in them) came to be removed, they grew to have a clear discerning as to what was of God, and also what was selfish and so to be denied; and turning from every motion that was not of God, the body of sin was put to death, their insides became cleansed, and the whole lump became leavened. In this way, those who were carnal became spiritual, and this made them “God’s own special people.”¹¹

And did we but walk in their footsteps, we might rise to their attainment; but if we build on words, and outward services without Spirit and life, we can never arise. For, as Paul said in another case—that though we speak with the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, we become as sounding brass or a clanging symbol—so I say in this case, that though we hear the preaching of men and angels, and live continually under the sound of good words, but have no regard to that inward light which discovers the rising of evil motions, and bestows power from God to turn from them, we can never mortify sin, cleanse our souls, and become a holy people. The work of sanctification is inward, and is to be effected by inward means. Nothing but inward light can expel inward darkness; nothing less than eternal life can deliver our souls from the power of death.

But ever since men came to be persuaded that though they sow tares, they shall still reap wheat, and though they go down to the grave sinners, they shall still rise saints, and attain in another world what the primitive Christians attained in this world; since then, I say, the citizenship of Christians has not been in heaven, but in the earth. They have walked in darkness and not in the light; the god of this world has been served, and not the God of heaven. And what future happiness this can produce, let the wise in heart judge.

—Hugh Turford

WALK IN THE SPIRIT

Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, chapter 5:16, has this saying, “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” And, in his epistle to the Romans, chapter 8:13, he has this saying, “If you live after the flesh, you shall die; but if you, through the Spirit, put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live.” If ever scriptures were written for our learning, these scriptures were; for much may be learned from them. The end of preaching, both in our present age and in many ages past, has been that

¹¹ Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9

the sons and daughters of men might thereby learn to deny, turn from, and forsake every evil deed, and come to live a sober, righteous, godly life in this present world, that they might have peace with God in their own consciences here, and eternal life hereafter.

Now to effect this great work, in which thousands of laborers have for many years been employed, the apostle gives this short exhortation: “Walk in the Spirit,” affirming unto the Galatians, that if they walked in the Spirit, they should not fulfill the lusts of the flesh; they should not yield to evil motions, nor satisfy their carnal desires, which is the only way to put to death the deeds of the body and cure all spiritual infirmities. But this way of God’s salvation has been so long rejected, that few in our present age know *what* this Spirit is, *where* they may become acquaintance with it, or *how* they may walk in it. Therefore, in order that our understanding may be opened in this weighty concern, let us consider:

1. What Paul was, and how he came to be a gospel minister.
2. What the people were to whom he wrote his epistles.
3. What the apostle called flesh and spirit, and in what way we walk after them.
4. What we are to understand by his words “die” and “live.”
5. How we may, through the Spirit, put to death the deeds of the body.

By reading the Scriptures we may find, that Paul was an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, and brought up a scholar, well instructed in the law. As to his religion, he was a Pharisee. And what were the Pharisees? Not a loose, profane people; but (in outward appearance) a very religious people, zealous for their temple and its services, and for many other outward observations; insomuch that Jesus said of them, they “made clean the outside of the cup and the platter;”¹² which few now do.

But when the time drew near in which God would no longer be worshipped in temples made with hands, but would dwell in and be worshipped by sanctified hearts; and when the laws that were written by that great prophet Moses for the house of Israel to observe and walk in, must no longer be a rule of righteousness, but Jews and Gentiles must walk by a law proceeding from the Spirit of God in the inward parts; and when One greater than Moses had come, proclaiming a kingdom at hand that consisted of a more excellent righteousness than theirs, testifying to the faces of those outward worshippers that, notwithstanding their great zeal for the temple and its services, they were but hypocrites and blind guides;—then, the rulers of this people were greatly offended. And having a bitter spirit within, notwithstanding their show of righteousness without, they endeavored to stop the coming of that kingdom by murdering the Prince, and imprisoning His subjects. And in this persecution none was more active than Paul, wasting the church of God beyond measure, and seeking to destroy it.

But in the height of his persecution, it was not man, but God, who put a stop to his proceedings;

¹² Matthew 23:25; Luke 11:39

showing him that it was not men, but *Christ in men*, that he persecuted. And indeed this was true; for had not Christ, by His eternal Spirit, been in the men whom Paul was persecuting, opening the eyes of their understandings to see the emptiness of all shadows, and turning them from them, Paul would have had nothing to say to them. But seeing that they inclined to worship God in Spirit, and so neglected the temple-worship, Paul looked upon them as a people not worthy to live.

But it pleased God to reveal in Paul the same Christ that he had persecuted in others; and this revelation, or inward knowledge of Christ, was the foundation of all Paul's knowledge in the mystery of godliness. His future teachings were not from men, nor from books, but from the operation of the eternal Spirit of Jesus in himself. And keeping to the leading of that Spirit, he grew in grace; and as he grew in grace, he grew in the knowledge of Christ. Thus he did not go up to Jerusalem to receive instructions or orders from those who were apostles before him, but in the strength of the Lord, with a book of experience in his heart, instead of a bible in his hand, he went into Arabia to preach the gospel to the Heathen. And what foundation did he lay? Not circumcision (which was the foundation of the Jewish religion), nor John's water baptism (which has since become the foundation of much of the Christian religion); for he told the Corinthians that Christ did not send him to baptize, but to preach the gospel, and thanked God that he baptized no more of them than Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanus. But as Paul's eyes had been opened to see the gift of God in himself, so his work was to open the eyes of others, that they might see the gift of God in themselves also.

The Heathen too had a "light that shines in darkness"¹³ and "gives light to every man that comes into the world,"¹⁴ which light showed them, as it shows us, what is right and what is wrong; what is just and what is unjust; though in their ignorance they might have paid it as little regard as many of us do now.

As the kingdom of heaven consists of righteousness, Paul's work was to bring those people to a righteous and heavenly life. And what better foundation could any man lay in order to bring about a righteous life, than the light of Christ that shines within, manifesting every unrighteous action? A guide that, when truly followed, leads unto God, from whom all men depart by their unrighteous living. This Paul experienced, and his experience made him an able minister, capable of preaching without book or study, and of affirming with confidence that the way to a righteous life was to "walk in the Spirit," or to keep to this Guide.

Thus I have shown how Paul came to be a gospel minister; and now I shall show what the people were to whom he wrote his epistles.

The Romans and Galatians, before their conversion, were called Heathen, for they knew not the true God, but worshipped dumb idols. These were a people who lived, as too many do now, in all manner of ungodliness, walking (as Paul told the Ephesians), "according to the prince of the power of the air."¹⁵

¹³ John 1:5

¹⁴ John 1:9

¹⁵ Ephesians 2:20

But being turned from their darkness, they became acquainted with this true light, which never consented to any unrighteous action. Yes, to this light many of the Heathen turned, taking it for their guide, and confiding in it as a sure foundation; and this is the true faith in Him who was “given for a light to the Gentiles,”¹⁶ and is one in nature with the faith of Abraham.

This people became convinced (though many of us are not) that after they had turned unto the Lord, they then had a race to run. And as it was from God and godliness that they had departed, so to God and to godliness they had to return. They did not content themselves (as too many of us do) with a Christian name, but following this Leader, they walked in newness of life, and became “sober, righteous, and godly in the present age.”¹⁷ This Paul commended, telling the Galatians that they ran well; and we would run well also, if we ran the same race—growing, from day to day more righteous, more upright, more honest, more faithful, and more circumspect—which cannot be expected until we take their Guide for our Leader.

But the churches of Galatia, being at that time “little children”¹⁸ (as Paul called them), a people of small growth in the knowledge of the mystery of godliness, were persuaded by some (as many are now) that a new and heavenly life was not enough; but they must also be in the exercise of various forms of outward worship. And as the Jews’ religion carried the greatest show of godliness, they were persuaded to imitate their customs and observations.

But Paul, having experienced the insufficiency of all outward services to change a man’s nature and bring him to a righteous life, told the Galatians that, “if they were circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing.”¹⁹ That is, if they went from their inward Guide, to rest upon outward performances (as the zealous Pharisees did), then He that was given for a light and a leader, would no longer be their light or their leader. And, indeed, nothing is more evident! For if Christ is *the way*, and if walking by the Spirit is *the means* by which we must mortify sin and come to a righteous life, then whoever goes from this way, whosoever slights this means, has no more benefit from Christ, than a traveller has from a guide whom he has forsaken. As Christ is a “living-giving Spirit,”²⁰ it must be by following Him in His spiritual manifestations that a righteous life is recovered. Nothing less can change our natures and make us new creatures. And until we are new creatures, our citizenship cannot be in heaven.

So the epistles of Paul were written to a people who were on their journey from death to life. They had come out of Egypt, but had not come to the promised land. They were turned from their darkness, and had their faces set towards Zion, but had not come to the New Jerusalem, the city of God. They had begun in the Spirit, but had not come to the true worship in Spirit. They had received Christ, but were not rooted and grounded in Christ. And in order to perfect what was begun, the apostle put them upon nothing but this: “Walk in the Spirit;” keep to your inward Guide, the light of righteousness, for this

16 Isaiah 42:6; 49:6

17 Titus 2:12

18 Galatians 4:19

19 Galatians 5:2

20 1 Corinthians 15:45

alone can raise the sons and daughters of men from their fall and bring them to a life of righteousness.

The third thing to be considered is this: what the apostle calls flesh and Spirit, and how we may walk after them.

It is evident, that flesh and Spirit are both leaders, otherwise we could not walk after them; and if these are leaders, then our visible parts must be followers, bringing forth in our words and deeds that which has been conceived in our hearts or minds. For every deed is first a thought, either good or evil. Evil thoughts arise from that which Paul called flesh. Good thoughts proceed from that which he called Spirit. So then, flesh is a root of evil and Spirit is a spring of good, and both are in ourselves.

From the flesh proceed all such motions as lead unto vice. From the Spirit proceed all cautions and scruples we find in ourselves of yielding thereto, along with all rebukes that follow when we have allowed the enemy to prevail over us. These rebukes are in love to us, even as our rebukes are in love to our children, that they may stand in awe and not offend.

As often as we yield to evil motions we give place to the devil; and whoever yields to one evil motion, shall have another of the same kind. The more often we yield, the more ground he has in us, and the more power he comes to have over us. And the only refuge a man has to fly to when evil motions arise, is that gift in his own heart which Paul calls the Spirit; for this will not consent to any evil deed. Whoever keeps close to this, keeps close to God; they abide with their Guide, and “walk in the Spirit.”

The converted Heathens walked by this rule. They took the eternal Spirit of Christ in themselves for their guide. They confided therein, and became followers thereof; and it is this that brought them to be “a holy nation, and a peculiar people.”²¹ And we would be the same if we would but turn to this eternal Spirit in our own hearts, and order all things according to its leading and guiding; for keeping to this, we should not fulfill the deeds of the flesh.

The fourth thing to be considered is, what the Apostle intended by these words, die and live.

Certainly, with the word die, he did not intend a cessation of their mortal lives, for such a dying in the Lord’s appointed time is common to all men. They that live after the Spirit, as well as they who walk after the flesh, must go down into the grave. But the dying that the Apostle intended was a decay of our inward life, a dying unto righteousness (which few in our present age take notice of)—such a dying as the first man Adam died when he fell from the government of the eternal Spirit, which was man’s first state; or such a dying as the house of Israel died, when they clung to outward observations, and disregarded justice, mercy, and a humble walking with their God.

Now such as walk after the flesh, living in the practice of any known sin, depart further from God, and come to have less life, less light, less grace, less fear of offending God and injuring their neighbors, as

21 1 Peter 2:9

we may see by men's conduct. And this decrease is a dying unto righteousness.

And as they who live after the flesh have less life, less light, less grace, and less fear; so those who walk after the Spirit, doing such things as are upright, honest, and of good report, from the righteous Seed sown in their own hearts, find an increase. These come to have more life, more light, more grace, more fear of offending God or their neighbor. And this increase is a living unto righteousness. As the one goes further from, so the other draws nearer to, the kingdom of heaven.

Had we not in ourselves Spirit as well as flesh, light as well as darkness, a Conductor in the way of life and salvation as well as a leader in the paths of destruction, we might lay all the blame for loss of life and the calamities of sin entirely upon Adam's score, or charge them exclusively to the account of the wicked one, from whom all wicked motions proceed. But Paul was an expert doctor in divinity. He knew what corrupted the sons and daughters of men, and from where all the ungodliness that is in the world does arise. And to cleanse, to purge, to purify, to make Heathens become sound Christians, and sinners become saints, he describes no other means but this, "Walk in the Spirit." For as we keep to this Spirit, we shall learn (as the converted Heathens did) not only to deny ungodliness, but also to live godly in this present world.

But if we make no use of the aforesaid means, but rest in outward performances (as the zealous Pharisees did), accounting ourselves righteous because of a supposed right form of godliness, then, though we have as great a zeal for our forms and practices as ever Paul had for the religion of the Jews, it will profit us no more than circumcision would have profited the Galatians.

We have had much preaching and teaching. The joys of heaven have been promised to those who do well; the torments of hell have been threatened to those who do evil. But have all these promises and threatenings made us a holy nation and special people, exceeding all others in the fruits of the Spirit? Have all the exhortations that we have received enabled us to mortify the body of sin, which is the cause of ungodliness? Are we thereby translated, as the Heathen were, out of the region of darkness into the kingdom of the dear Son of God, so as to have our citizenship in heaven even while our bodies are on earth? Can we truly say that, "Old things are done away,"²² all exalted thoughts, all covetous inclinations, all wrath and bitterness; and that these new things have come in their place: humility, meekness, temperance, self-denial, with unfeigned love to God and our neighbor? Can we say, 'There was a time in which sin had such dominion over us that we could not refrain from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, but now we are so governed by the eternal Spirit that we must be temperate, we must be sober and vigilant, we must be just, upright, and faithful in word and deed.' If this is really our state, then we are, as the primitive Christians were at their full attainments, dead unto sin and alive unto righteousness, having been built upon the same rock as they were. But if we have not come to this, it would be wisdom to turn to the Lord, as they did, and build on the same foundation that they built upon, namely, "The true Light that enlightens every man that comes into the world,"²³ that we may come to be

²² 2 Corinthians 5:17

²³ John 1:9

acquainted with the eternal Spirit, as they were, and have a Guide and Leader in the paths of godliness, as they had; for it is by and through the power of the eternal Spirit of Jesus in our own hearts that our corruptions must be purged out, and our inside made clean. For indeed, as our walking after the flesh made all wounds, so our walking after the Spirit must heal all wounds. As our living after the flesh caused the growth of our unrighteousness, so by walking after the Spirit we mortify sin, and recover a life of righteousness.

Paul spoke from a good understanding when he told the Romans, “That which may be known of God is manifest within.”²⁴ It is there he had his knowledge in the mysteries of godliness; whatever he preached, whatever he wrote, the spring was in himself. He knew no more of the operation of inward and spiritual grace than any other man, until he came to have his eyes turned inward, and to walk in the Spirit; and so he recommended to the churches what he himself had experienced.

Many can talk of redemption, justification, sanctification, and salvation by Christ, but he is a Christian who witnesses these things wrought in himself. Such may properly be called learned men; for they know what it is to rise, what it is to die, and what it is to live, what they are redeemed and saved from, and by what means.

The fifth thing to be considered is, how the sons and daughters of men may, through the Spirit, put to death the deeds of the body.

But first, let us consider which deeds of the body are to be put to death, which in general are these: As an evil spirit in man is the root of all evil deeds, so *every deed that proceeds from that root* is to be put to death. And nothing can manifest such deeds, giving us a true sight of their nature and rise, but the Spirit of the Lord, or the Light of righteousness in our own hearts, as it comes to shine in brightness.

In order to know which deeds are to be mortified in all of our efforts and undertakings, let us consider our aim therein. If we have nothing in our eye but righteousness, equity, honesty, and love, we may proceed with safety; but if self is the moving cause, if we do not have an eye to our neighbor’s good as well as our own, then pretend what we will, such deeds proceed from an evil root and are to be denied; and in our denying them, they come to be mortified. And what can manifest our aim in every action? Not books nor preachers, but only the Spirit of the Lord, who is an inward light.

Now we do not find that Paul directly charged the Galatians with any manner of loose living, but only with their “observing days and times;” and what harm could there be in that?

Though the Galatians might have seen none, yet Paul saw much, otherwise he would not have asked them, ‘Who had bewitched them?’ For they had begun in the Spirit; they had walked for a season after an inward Guide, which is the only leader to such a life of righteousness as the Lord (in all ages) has required of the sons and daughters of men. This was not a form of godliness without life, but truth in

24 Romans 1:19

their inward parts; for if we have truth in our hearts, righteousness will be performed by our hands. And to this Paul knew they could never come by imitating an outward worship, much less by observing days and times, and so counted such things deeds of the flesh, reasoning with them in this way: “Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”²⁵ Which is to say, ‘Are you so void of understanding? Having begun to walk in newness of life, do you expect to come to such perfection as to have your citizenship in heaven while living on the earth, by going back to the performance of outward services?’ “This persuasion,” he said, “does not come from Him who calls you,”²⁶ and if it was not from God, it must be from the old deceiver. And truly, many have since been deceived in like manner, persuading themselves that godliness consists in that which is called (but is not) true devotion, and yet live in pride, covetousness, envy, and many other things which are clearly deeds of the flesh, never coming so far as to be translated out of the kingdom of darkness, nor to live under the government of the eternal Spirit.

Man’s fall was not from any outward religion or form of godliness, but from a life of righteousness. Man fell from a state in which husband, wife, parents, children, masters, servants, and all other relations, would have known their place and duty, and been found therein; from a state in which all created things which God has given for man’s use, would have been rightly used, and none of them, through excess, wasted or abused; from a state in which truth would have been found in all our words, and equity in all of our deeds; from a state in which the will of God would have been done on earth as it is done in heaven, and the great God glorified by us, and not dishonored. From this state, through the entrance and growth of sin, the sons and daughters of men have departed; and to this state the primitive Christians, through the mortification of sin, returned.

This was the life that the first Adam lost. This is the life that the second Adam came to recover. As many as have the Spirit of Christ, and become true followers thereof, rise from this fall, return unto God, live under His government, and become witnesses of this heavenly life restored.

When I have looked upon the Book of Common Prayer, I have found the words therein as good as could be collected from the Scriptures, with a requirement that not one man be admitted into the church without promising on their behalf as much as I have mentioned. Were these promises truly performed, we would indeed be a holy nation, in no way behind the chiefest of saints; for those who rose highest, rose no higher than to “walk in God’s commands all the days of their lives.”²⁷

But it is rare to find one man that performs this covenant, and the reason is this: we say the Scriptures are our rule, but we heed not their counsel. Paul’s advice is not followed, we do not “walk in the Spirit;” which if we did, the light of righteousness in our own hearts would show us the risings of every evil motion, and what they lead to. This is the time to “forsake the devil and all his works, with all

25 Galatians 3:3

26 Galatians 5:8

27 A Catechism; 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*.

worldly vanities and sinful lusts.”²⁸ for if we deny evil motions, we shall never be found in evil actions; and until we depart from evil, we cannot do the things that are good.²⁹ Sin must be put to death before we can live a life of righteousness. The works of the devil must be denied, before the commands of our God can be walked in even one day, much less all the days of our lives.

And this Paul experienced, which made him say with great confidence, “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” For if we deny and turn from every motion that the light of Christ in our own hearts shows us to be evil, we shall not fulfill them, but instead put to death the root from which they arise; for that which is not fed, in time comes to die.

By this the converted Heathen came to be a holy nation. This is the way to become citizens of the New Jerusalem. By this means the Colossians were (and we may be) translated into the kingdom of the dear Son of God, to live under His government. This is the kingdom that John the Baptist proclaimed to be then at hand. This is the kingdom for which the disciples of Christ were instructed to pray. This is the kingdom that consists of righteousness and stands in power. This is the kingdom that all believers are to seek first; for under the government of the eternal Spirit of Jesus in their hearts, the sons and daughters of men are limited from doing any unrighteous thing.

Many of the present professors of Christianity are persuaded that, though they remain unrighteous in their lives, yet being in the exercise of something called religion, it shall go well with them in the end. But the living Lord does not take notice what religion we profess, but what leader we follow; for let our religion be what it will, if we live after the flesh, we shall die. And, though little appears that is considered religion, if we walk after the Spirit, if our citizenship is in heaven, if truth is in our mouths and righteousness performed by our hands, we shall live.

But who is capable of walking after the Spirit, and through the Spirit, of putting to death the deeds of the body?

There are many, even amongst those who bear the name of Christians, who, through a perseverance in evil-doing, have become dead in sin, having no sense or feeling of anything in themselves that is of God; and such as these, who have no acquaintance with the Spirit, certainly cannot “walk after the Spirit.”

There are others who are not dead, but dying. They have both sense and feeling; they have that in themselves that would lead them to better things than they practice, but pay it little or no regard. They do not take it for their guide. And while they disregard that light within them which manifests the deeds of the body, they can in no way put them to death.

But some may be found who are weary of their sins and burdened with their iniquities, having in them-

²⁸ A Catechism; 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*.

²⁹ Isaiah 1:16-17

selves a hunger and thirst after righteousness. Such as these are a living people, and capable, through the Spirit, of putting to death the deeds of the body.

I am convinced that in our present age, many have been awakened from the sleep of sin, and have found in themselves a true hunger and thirst after righteousness; but having been awakened by an outward ministry, from that they have expected to have their hunger and thirst satisfied.

Many may be awakened, but not be quickened,³⁰ by an outward ministry. “It is,” as Jesus said, “the Spirit that gives life;” and what can raise life but that which gives life? What can satisfy a soul that thirsts after righteousness, but that which in truth is the very Spring of righteousness? It is in ourselves that the well is to be found, where those who drink shall never thirst. Only there is the fountain that springs up unto everlasting life.

As the kingdom of heaven stands not in words but in power, so it is not words, but the power of God that can put to death the deeds of the body, change our nature, and make us new creatures. Could words fill us with righteousness, justice, truth, equity, and faithfulness, we would have long since been a holy nation; for there has been no lack of words, but there is still a great lack of righteousness and faithfulness.

If good words could bring hearers to a righteous life, then instead of saying, “Walk in the Spirit,” Paul would have said to the Galatians, “Hearken to your minister!” He would have had no need to commend them to an inward Guide.³¹ But Paul’s experience demonstrated unto him, that it was not by the hearing of words, but through an obedience to the law of the Spirit, that he put to death the deeds of the body, and came to lead a righteous life. And what he found to be effectual in himself, that he recommended to the churches.

Words, though ever so numerous, may be easily forgotten; they do not abide. But the eternal Spirit abides, and is that “teacher who that can never be removed into a corner.”³² The use of words in the work of salvation is to awaken those who are asleep in sin, and to turn them (as Paul turned the Heathen)³³ to an inward Guide; and also for admonition, while they are on their journey, to keep to their Guide.

Had such who hungered and thirsted after righteousness pressed after what they hungered for; had they acquainted themselves with the eternal Spirit who begot those desires, and followed His leading, He would have rooted out all pride and selfishness. He would have brought them to a humble, lowly, meek, patient, peaceable frame, and to do what was right at all times. This indeed would have removed their burden and given them rest and peace.

30 i.e. made alive

31 Acts 20:32

32 Isaiah 30:20

33 Acts 26:18

And if we would be as the primitive Christians were, we must begin where they did. We must turn to the light of righteousness in our own hearts, and walk in that light until we become children of the light. We must walk in the just man's path by the shining thereof,³⁴ till righteousness becomes our center. This made the primitive Christians a godly people indeed; by this they prospered, otherwise the blind and ignorant Heathens could never have come to be fellow-citizens with saints and of the household of God.

Paul was not a settled minister at any one place, they heard him but seldom; but they heard the voice of the eternal Spirit as often as they transgressed the covenant of light and life. It is to this voice that Christians must incline their ear; for under the new covenant God speaks to His people by His Son, through the eternal Spirit in their hearts.

The first step to a life of righteousness is to acquaint ourselves with the gift of grace in our own hearts that reproveth us for unrighteousness;³⁵ for until we come to this, we are strangers to the foundation of a godly life. For all building, all journeying, all rising, all approaching near to the kingdom of God, depends upon our denying, turning from, and utterly forsaking what the light of righteousness in our own heart convicts us of, and reproveth us for; for by such denials the deeds of the body are put to death. As we make this our concern, and are faithful therein, His light shines more and more; and the more light we have, the greater discovery it makes of what is evil, what is to be denied, turned from, and forsaken. And so guiding our steps by this, we build on the true foundation, we walk in the living way, we grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ, and draw nearer and nearer to His kingdom and righteous government; and His power is felt in a righteous life.

This was the advice of Christ: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate;" testifying, that the way to eternal life was narrow and difficult. What is this strait gate, and narrow way? It is not self-interest, nor yet self-righteousness. Self-interest is the root of all covetous practices, dishonest dealings, and unjust actions. Self-righteousness is the root of all formality and contention about religion, of which there has been (and still is) too much in the Christian world, persecuting one another, even as the unconverted Heathens did the primitive converts.

Neither of these paths leads to that kingdom that consists of righteousness and peace in the Holy Spirit. Had the newly-converted Heathen walked in these paths, they would never have become a holy nation; for their citizenship would have been in the earth, and not in heaven. But the strait gate, and narrow way, that leads to a righteous life, is *self-denial*—a denying of everything that proceeds from the evil root, from the smallest concern to weightiest desire; which nothing can manifest but an inward light, shining in brightness. But with sorrow we may say, it is rare to find even one amongst many, who lives in the practice of what he himself acknowledges to be right. Who will not confess that to speak the truth on all occasions is a right thing? Who will not allow that to keep our word, though it be to our hurt, is an honest thing? Who will not grant, that to do unto all men as we would have them do unto us,

³⁴ Proverbs 4:18

³⁵ Titus 2:11

is a just thing? Yet how few live in the practice of these things? And if we do not live in the practice of what we know to be right, what does our knowledge profit us? We may keep moving, as Israel did in the wilderness, but unless we walk in the narrow way, we can never come to a righteous life.

And so, if we do not willfully shut our eyes, we may plainly see that the way to a righteous life, is to “walk in the Spirit,” to come under the government of our inward Guide, to deny and turn from all that the light of righteousness in our own hearts manifests to be unrighteous, unjust, or dishonest. And in turning from evil, we turn to the One who is good; in forsaking vice, we seek to be filled with virtue; in dying unto sin, we are made alive unto righteousness, and so truth, purity, and love come to have dominion in our hearts. To such as these, Paul said, “There is no condemnation;” for they have “the answer of a good conscience,”³⁶ peace with God, and peace in themselves—peace while they are here, and peace when they go hence.

CONSIDERATIONS GROUNDED UPON THE FOREGOING DISCOURSE

Man was created (as many will acknowledge) to glorify God, and to do His will on earth. And in order that man might be capable of serving his Creator according to His will, God gave him a measure of His good Spirit for an instructor; so that there was much of God in man, according as he was first created—much humility and meekness, much truth and faithfulness, much heavenly wisdom and understanding.

This eternal Spirit was to be man’s head and leader, man’s guide and instructor in the paths of righteousness. On this Spirit man was to fix his eye; to this Spirit man was to incline his ear; by this Spirit man was to be governed; and so following this guide, this leader, and this instructor, man would have been capable of governing both himself and the creation over which he was made lord, according to the will of God.

Did mankind live under the government of this eternal Spirit, we would all bear the image of God. We would be all godly, humble, lowly, meek, merciful, patient, peaceable, upright, and faithful; right in all our ways, and just in all our works. But not keeping with this guide, man disobeys the command of his Maker. And by yielding himself a servant to another master, so another spirit enters which is as contrary in nature as darkness is to light. And as many as follow this leader serve not the God of heaven, but the god of this world; for every man is a servant to whom he obeys.³⁷

Now we, being the offspring of Adam in his fallen state, bear his likeness.³⁸ We have in ourselves both good and evil, a Seed of grace, and a seed of sin. These, in Scripture, are called light and darkness, flesh and spirit, the old man and new man, according to the growth of the seeds in us and the dominion that they come to have over us. For as there is a difference between a seed and an herb, a plant and a tree, a child and a man, so there are differences in grace and in sin; according to their growth in us, so is

36 1 Peter 3:21

37 Romans 6:16

38 Genesis 5:3

their strength felt by us, and the names given in Scripture correspond thereto.

For though we all have a seed of sin in us, yet we are not mastered by it, nor fully enslaved to it, just as soon as we are born. It must have time to spring and grow in us before it comes to have dominion over us. And I may say the same of the Seed of grace, for it is also of a growing nature; otherwise the kingdom of heaven (or government of Christ in the hearts of His people) would not have been compared to a mustard seed, which, though small when it is sown, through its springing and growth, comes to be of great stature.

There are indeed many in the world who are notoriously wicked, and who would appear much more wicked were they not limited by an outward law. These were not so born; it is the growth of sin, and its increasing dominion over men, that makes them notoriously wicked. For the seed of sin, as it comes to full growth in any of the sons and daughters of men, converts them into its own nature, by which they come to be habitually active in wickedness.

This was the devil's aim in Adam's fall, but as his design was not then fully effected, he has followed the sons and daughters of men in all ages of the world (and does so at this day), putting evil motions in their minds along with various temptations, displaying false colors, and painting forbidden things with a beautiful gloss that is more attractive to fallen man than the paths of righteousness. All of his evil motions, temptations, baits, snares, lures, and false colors, are to effect his first design—that being ensnared and led away, we might forget God and cause Him to take His Holy Spirit from us. Until then, the god of this world can call no man his own; we may be his captives, but he has not complete dominion over us.

In our present age, to speak of God's light within, law within, Spirit within, Christ within, etc., is a matter of scoffing to some, and is little regarded by many. But whether they know it or not, I must tell them, they scoff and slight the chiefest treasure that ever was given to the soul of any man. They despise the heavenly talent that God has given to every man to improve, in order to effect their rising from their fall and returning to their native country, to live under the government of the eternal Spirit. Whosoever is without Spirit and light within, is without God in the world. Take away this treasure, and we shall have nothing in us that is good; we shall be left quite graceless.

We read of Jacob and Esau, who were living figures of these two seeds in man, how they struggled while they were in the womb of Rebecca. And as there was a struggling between the seed of two nations in the womb of Rebecca, so there is a struggling between the seed of two kingdoms in every man, as to which shall rise to rule in us, and have the whole dominion over us.

As we are born into the world, we are all innocent. Though we have a seed of sin in us, we are not actual sinners until we yield to some sinful motion that proceeds from it. This the devil knows (though many are of a different opinion), and so, in order that the seed he has sown may spring up and grow, and that an evil spirit may come to have the rule in us, he early begins his struggle, before we well

know our right hand from our left.

Now, where evil is not kept down by careful parents or guardians, it quickly becomes head, and such may say (as many do today), “There is no good thing in us.” For, through the speedy growth of that which is evil, such as these never have any acquaintance with that which is good, except for inward rebukes, which few will acknowledge to be from God. For even as weeds left to grow in a garden do overshadow and keep down the herbs, so vice suppresses virtue, and makes God’s creation such strangers to their Creator that, though “in Him they live, move, and have their being,”³⁹ yet are they without any sense or feeling of His presence.

And even as all evil motions that lead into sin, all baits, snares, and lures, that we meet with in the course of our lives, are the strugglings and strivings of the evil seed; so all the calls that we find in ourselves for righteousness, honesty, truth, and faithfulness, with all inward checks, rebukes, and convictions, are the strugglings and strivings of the good Seed. And if these things are hearkened to, obeyed, followed after, and lived in, they keep down the growth of evil; so that, though we have a root of sin in us, it remains powerless; it does not rise and come to reign over us.

For this reason, parents and guardians ought to be much concerned in the suppressing of sin, in order to allow for the growth of grace. For as the wicked one takes the advantage of our childhood, to make us commit evil before we have any acquaintance with that which is good; parents and guardians (like faithful weeders) should watch, suppress, keep down, and use all endeavors to root out vice as soon as it appears, until grace grows, and a right Spirit comes to reign in them, and have the rule over them.

But this is our present state: just as Esau by his struggling came to be the first-born in days past, even so iniquity, through the early rising of the subtle serpent, is the first-born still. And though most parents in the Christian world are concerned to provide weeders at times, yet few weeds do they actually root up, and many parents none at all; by which great neglect most children come to be wild, stubborn, self-willed, disobedient to parents, and very ungodly in their lives. But the ground of all ungodliness is the growth of that seed which the wicked one sowed. And how may wickedness be brought down when it has already sprouted? Not by parents or guardians or even by preachers; but as it was Jacob that supplanted Esau, so it must be grace that supplants sin. For we see that, notwithstanding all preaching, there is far more pride and haughtiness than humility and meekness, more deceptive dealings and evil practices than self-denial, more seeking the world and its vanities than the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness. And it will always be so while the firstborn is uppermost.

And if we would have the firstborn supplanted; if we would have that which strives to deprive us of life, light, and grace, and all goodness, made powerless; if we would have that suppressed which continually labors to make us servants to sin and bond-slaves to Satan; if we would see the death of that which makes us incapable of glorifying God in our lives; if we would be (as the primitive Christians were) delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the dear Son of God, to

live under the government of His eternal Spirit, which was man's first state—then let us consider how that which now hinders us came to arise, and by what means it may be brought down.

I have said, and say again, that it is not the mere indwelling, but the growth and reign of the evil seed that makes the sons and daughters of men proud, haughty, high-minded, envious, cruel, merciless, fraudulent, and ungodly; darkening their understandings, and making them strangers to the gift of God in themselves. And the growth of this evil seed lies in our often yielding to such evil motions as proceed from it. This the subtle serpent knows, and we may know it also, from the manifold temptations we feel towards evil, especially where our enemy has found them to be effectual.

Who has ever yielded to any evil motion, committing sin and taking pleasure therein, and then has not been tempted again to do the same thing? Or who does not know, that the more often we yield to any temptation, the stronger our temptations are, and the harder to be denied? And with every yielding, there sin rises up, and comes to have more power over us.

Therefore, if it is by our yielding to evil motions that the evil spirit rises, and comes to have power over us, it must be by denying evil motions that he comes to be supplanted, and made powerless in us.

Whosoever will be a follower of Christ, must first learn to deny himself. We must turn from whatsoever the eternal light in our own hearts shows us to be selfish, though this may seem ever so much to our disadvantage; and by thus denying ourselves, we shall abundantly deny the author of all evil motions.

Pride, pleasure, and selfish gain, are baits that have caught many. These, with many other such things, must be denied and turned from, if we will be followers of Christ in a life of righteousness. And by continued denials we shall find that the root of iniquity withers, and grace grows; sinful motions diminish, and heavenly desires increase; the small seed will become the tallest of herbs; and the lump of meal comes to be one in nature with the heavenly leaven.

But this denial must be while the dragon is still in the shell, that is, while sin is still in the motion, before it comes to be action; for sinful motions may be turned from, but sinful actions are past recall. And what can show us the rising of evil motions? Preachers cannot; books cannot; nothing that is without can effectually show us what is within. It must be an inward light; it must be the candle of the Lord, the eternal Spirit that was in the beginning given unto man for an instructor.

We read in Scripture of good men, faithful men, self-denying men, even when there were no preachers or books; and who was their teacher but the eternal Spirit? What guide did they have but the light of righteousness in their own hearts? And if our present preachers would make it their concern to turn people's hearts to this inward Guide,⁴⁰ and to become faithful followers thereof, we would have more good men, faithful men, and self-denying men, than can now be found.

⁴⁰ See Acts 26:18, and Acts 20:32

Neither men nor angels could give better advice to a people who have been turned to this inward light, than that which Paul gave to the Galatians when he exhorted them to “Walk in the Spirit;” for if we are not guided by a right Spirit, we can never lead a righteous life.

But even as the seed of sin grows and waxes strong in us by our yielding to evil motions, so the Seed of grace grows and waxes strong in us by the denying of evil motions. The putting off of the old man is the putting on of the new, and it is the new man that makes us new creatures, and to bring forth a new and heavenly life.

If we do not learn to deny evil motions, and to live in the continual exercise thereof, then (though we hear preachers all the days of our lives) we shall be but like the door on its hinges, or like Israel in the wilderness, often moving back and forth, yet falling just as short of a righteous life, as the first generation that came out of Egypt fell short of the Promised Land.

We cannot abide in the path of the righteous, until His light shines with such brightness that we can see the rising of all evil motions at a distance. For as grace comes to be uppermost in us, the root of iniquity will be lowermost. As the one comes to abide before our faces, the other will remain behind our backs. For where do pride and haughtiness, contention and strife, fraud and deceit, oppression and cruelty come from, but the author of all wickedness? But where the flesh and its affections are crucified, such things are not to be found. And, let us profess what religion we will, while we live in the practice of any such evil, we keep alive what ought to be slain.

Where an evil spirit is uppermost, men know no limits; their ears, eyes, tongues, hands, and feet, are all at liberty. They are free to hear evil reports, to behold vanity, to speak proudly, rashly, unadvisedly, and deceitfully, to do violence, to take bribes, and to go where they wish. But where a right Spirit rules, every member of the body is brought under His government. The ear is turned from fables and the eye from beholding vanity. They cannot (as too many do), cover, disguise, and lie, to accomplish self-ends. Vain communication is not allowed to come out of their mouths, and their hands are kept from doing any wrong. The paths of impurity they cannot walk in, but are lovers of righteousness, and haters of iniquity both in themselves and in others. And to this state we might all come, by denying such motions as the light of righteousness in our own hearts manifests to be evil.

And now my advice to all professors of Christianity is this: that instead of contending about outward forms of godliness, you take heed to that gift in yourselves which leads unto godliness; instead of searching the Scriptures for a right form or practice, you seek to live under the government of a right Spirit; for then you will be delivered from the power of darkness, and return to Zion the city of God, and to the New Jerusalem, where God is known and truly worshipped.

There is one thing more I would have the reader to consider, which is this: Though every man that comes into the world is attended with two spirits, yet he can have but one Lord; and he is Lord that has the whole rule over you.

The right of government in all men belongs to the eternal Spirit that was with the Father before the world began. This, in Scripture, is called the Spirit of Christ; for in Jesus (the second Adam) no other spirit dwelt. Christ was not attended with two spirits, as the offspring of fallen Adam are. He did not have in himself light and darkness, good and evil, a seed of grace and a seed of sin; but as the Scripture says, He was “full of grace, and full of truth.”⁴¹ In Him was life, even the life that the first Adam lost, as a spring of righteousness; and this life He retained, and so kept out the evil spirit who is the author of all wickedness, though His temptations far exceeded those of Eve. And though He lived many years on earth, and met with many provocations, yet in the whole course of His life He fulfilled all righteousness and accomplished the will of God on earth.

Now, the Seed of grace in every man, is one in nature with the fulness that dwelt in Him. And as this Seed springs up in any of us, and grows in strength and stature, it makes us conformable to His image. Thus the more grace we have, the more humble, meek, and loving we will be. The more light we have, the greater discoveries it will make of what is amiss in ourselves and in others. The more truth dwells within, the less evil and impurity will be manifested without.

And as we walk in the light, we shall grow in grace, and “add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love;”⁴² by which, as Peter said, “an entrance will be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of Christ.”⁴³ A right Spirit will come to be exalted in us, and to have the only rule and government over us; and under the government of a right Spirit, we shall bring forth fruit that is acceptable in the sight of God.

Now the prince of darkness, being an enemy to all righteousness, uses all endeavors to blind the eyes of our understanding and keep us strangers to this righteous Seed (which is the spring of all grace and virtue within) that he may draw us away from God and godliness. So that, just as those who walk in the light of the Lord add virtue to virtue until they are filled with His righteousness, so those who follow the leadings of an evil spirit add vice to vice until they come to be filled with wickedness. These also have but one lord, for the prince of the power of darkness has the whole rule over them. And these two states in Scripture are called *life* and *death*.

I believe it can be said that every man, as he comes into the world, has life and salvation before him, and death and destruction behind him, and both are at a distance from him. He has also a good Spirit to conduct him in the way of life and salvation, and an evil spirit waits to lead him in paths of death and destruction; and though these are in him, yet most men are strangers to both. Now the preaching of the gospel was (and still ought to be) for the opening of such blind eyes to see the workings and leadings of these two spirits within, that men might turn from the evil and become followers of that which is good, that He whose right it is might come to have the rule in them and over them.

41 John 1:14

42 2 Peter 1:5-7

43 2 Peter 1:11

And certain I am, that though many are ignorant of these things, still there are many who have had some sight, some sense, and some feeling of the eternal Spirit of Jesus. They have the knowledge of something in themselves that calls for truth and righteousness; and were they to keep to this, they would follow a right Guide, and the Seed of grace would grow, truth and faithfulness would grow, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly-kindness, and love would grow; and they would find in themselves that an entrance into the kingdom of Christ would be abundantly administered.

But while the evil spirit remains unmortified, self stands in our way, and in order to accomplish our selfish ends, an equal balance is not kept, justice is not done, equity is not performed, promises are not kept, undertakings are not faithfully managed, and the fashions and customs of this sinful world are not forsaken. This hinders the growth of the righteous Seed; for as there was no bringing down of the Canaanites while the “accursed thing”⁴⁴ was still in the camp, so there is no bringing down the strength of sin while we have more regard to self than to our Savior. That which manifests self is light,⁴⁵ and by it we may see where every evil motion leads; so that walking in the light, we walk in the way of God’s salvation.

But some may say of this eternal life (as the wicked men and sons of Belial said of Saul, the chosen of the Lord)—“How shall this man save us?”⁴⁶ ‘What advantage could there be in taking heed to this light? We find in ourselves rebukes for sin, but we find nothing in ourselves to save us from sin!’

To such as these I have this to say: Christ was given to the Gentiles for a light⁴⁷ and for a leader.⁴⁸ While we are in the nature of the Gentiles, while we walk after the flesh; while we follow evil motions, we are departed from God, we are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the new covenant that God made with the house of Jacob. In this state we cannot know Christ the Savior of the world in any way other than a reprove; but these reproofs, being “reproofs of instruction, are the way to life,”⁴⁹ even to that life that the first Adam lost through transgression.

For if we turn at these reproofs from the things we are reprov'd for—whether it be idle communication, intemperate living, pride, passion, or any other vice that the evil spirit of this world leads unto—and follow after righteousness, then the rebukes will cease, and our reprove will become our leader. Then that which was behind our backs, will be before our faces; and that which desired to lead us, will now seek to pursue us, as Pharaoh pursued Israel, to bring us back to our old manner of living again—and *then* we shall find Christ to be our Savior. For as many as followed Saul in the beginning of his reign saw how he saved them from their outward enemies; and all who come to be followers of the eternal Spirit of Jesus see how He saves them from their spiritual enemies.

44 See Joshua 7

45 Ephesians 5:13

46 1 Samuel 10:1

47 Isaiah 42:6, 49:6

48 Isaiah 54:4

49 Proverbs 6:23

While we follow the motions of sin, we follow a wrong guide, and in this path we may know the prevailing power of sin, but can never know the restraining and transforming power of grace. It is to as many as receive Christ that He gives power;⁵⁰ and none really receive Him, but such as turn from sin at His reproof, and confide in Him for a Savior. Only these truly believe in His name.

I grant that the shining of an inward light (which is the first manifestation of Christ to the sons and daughters of men) seems small and powerless at first; and so do the first motions to sin. But if you follow such sinful motions as far as they will lead, you shall find them powerful enough. Are there not many to be found at this day, even amongst us who are called Christians, who are so captivated under the power of sin, that a slave held in chains of iron could more easily break his bonds, arise, depart, and return unto his native country, than these could cease from iniquity, rise from their fall, and lead a sober, righteous, godly life.

Now, if the seed of sin comes to have such power over us by our following its motions, why may not the Seed of grace have just as much power over us, if we return to it and become its followers? Surely John, who had travelled from death to life, and was an eye-witness of things as they were in the beginning, felt such a power in himself when he wrote, “Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin, for His Seed remains in him, and he cannot sin.”⁵¹ And many living witnesses may be found at this day, who can say from a sensible experience, that where this righteous Seed has risen and come to have dominion, it is so powerful and restraining that they cannot be unjust in their dealings, nor unfaithful in their promises; they cannot tell a lie, though it would be ever so much to their outward advantage; they cannot be intemperate, wasting the good creation that God has given for their nourishment by excessive eating and drinking; they cannot oppress the poor, the widow, and fatherless, nor take by violence that which they have no right to have. The small Seed in them has become the tallest of plants, and has as much power over them as sin has over all who dwell therein. These, like the Colossians, are delivered from the power of darkness. These, like the Philippians, have their citizenship in heaven. These glorify God in their lives, and so answer the end of their creation.

An abundance of preaching has made many godly talkers, but it is grace in the heart, and truth in our inward parts, that makes godly livers. And there is no way to attain to the fulness of this heavenly treasure but by denying all motions which the eternal light of righteousness in our inward parts shows us to be unjust and dishonest. For in denying the evil, we are choosing the good; and as the growth of sin stands in our embracing what is evil, so the growth of grace stands in our embracing what is good.

Conformity to outward forms of worship (being more attractive to people than the strait and narrow way of the cross) has in our present age gotten the name of religion, Christianity, and true godliness. But the conformity which the living God requires is a conformity to the image of Christ in the whole course of our lives—to be holy as He was holy. Without this we cannot truly be (as the primitive Christians were) the household of God; we have not come to the New Jerusalem, and so cannot be fellow-

⁵⁰ John 1:12 KJV

⁵¹ 1 John 3:9

citizens with the saints. Though we bear the primitive Christians' name, we are not in the primitive Christians' nature; for the first-born is not brought down so as to have a right Spirit rule in us, and have the dominion over us.

If the sayings contained in this book seem strange to the reader, it is because the reader is a stranger to the primitive Christians' life. For if He who was the head and leader of the early Church had become our head and leader, we should have an echo in ourselves answering to what is here written; and our hearts would say, "It is so."

And the way to come to their righteous life, is to walk in the light, denying and turning from the least thing that it manifests unto us to be evil. At the beginning of our journey, it will seem a narrow and difficult way, but after we have travelled a while, we shall run therein with great delight. For the kingdom of heaven—or Christ's government by His eternal Spirit in the hearts of His people—does not consist of righteousness alone; the righteousness that proceeds from a right Spirit is accompanied with peace and joy. As evil-doing is attended with trouble and sorrow, well-doing is attended with peace and joy. All the pleasures of wickedness that the whole world can afford, are not to be compared to the joys of a righteous life.

When the Heathen, through the preaching of the gospel, turned from their darkness and came to be followers of the eternal Spirit, thereby mortifying the strength of sin, they were called by the apostle "Saints." This was a name more suitable than that of "Christians," for the title of saint is peculiar to all truly sanctified souls.

As conforming to outward circumcision had given many the name of Jews, so imitating John's water baptism has given many the name of Christians; but nothing can give either a Jew or Christian the name of a saint, but a heart made pure, single, and righteous, through the mortification of sin, which, in Scripture, is called "the baptism of the Holy Spirit"⁵²—for this is effected not by any outward means, but by our walking after the Holy Spirit. Till this is wrought, though we have a Christian name, we can in no way bring forth a heavenly conduct, and so the name profits little.

For we who are called Christians have in ourselves a seed of sin, just as all others do; and for lack of faithful weeders to root up evil as soon as it appears, iniquity grows to such a height that nothing less than the powerful Spirit of Christ can bring it down. And from those who remain strangers to the working of this Spirit a cry has gone forth, "That there is no freedom from sin on this side the grave!" But the Colossians, who were delivered from the power of darkness, knew better things; and so should we, if we would but turn from iniquity, acquaint ourselves with their Guide, and walk in newness of life.

But just as nothing discouraged the camp of Israel from going up to possess the land of Canaan more

⁵² "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."—Matt 3:11-12

than the report which the ten spies gave of the giants within, so nothing discourages awakened souls from pressing after a life of righteousness more than the report which professors of Christianity give concerning the strength of sin, and how it cannot be overcome. Those who give this report have never made a trial of the way of God's salvation.

All the spies spoke well of the land, as all sorts of people do now of a sober, righteous, and godly life. All will commend humility, meekness, moderation, temperance, patience, chastity, and, above all, plain, upright, honest and just dealings, though they do not practice them. And nothing hinders a life of godliness but this: that the evil spirit of this world remains uppermost within, and few endeavor (in God's way) to bring it down.

Had the camp of Israel appointed a captain and gone back into Egypt, they could never have subdued the Canaanites in the land. And while we allow ourselves to live in sin, it is impossible for us to subdue it; for we strengthen what we should put to death. The strength of the Canaanites was made weak by war, and so must be the strength of sin—with this difference: their war was outward and aggressive, and ours must be inward and defensive. When, by the candle of the Lord that shines in our souls we see an aspiring thought, a lustful desire, a covetous inclination, or any other evil motion, if we stand on our guard and deny it entrance into our affections, it will retreat. And after many attempts, being still resisted, it will hardly attempt any more, and the motions thereof will be but weak at best.

While there was an “accursed thing”⁵³ in the camp, the enemy prevailed, and Israel retreated; and so it is at this day. If we cover, if we hide, if we justify what our own hearts condemn, then evil prevails and the Spirit is quenched. But if we accustom ourselves to the yoke of the cross, then the strength of sin, from day to day, will be weakened, and (as Joshua and Caleb said) “the Lord will be with us.”⁵⁴ His grace will be in our hearts, and His fear will be before our eyes. Truth, equity, and honesty will be uppermost within, and then it will be as easy to lead a sober, righteous, godly life, as ever it was to live a loose and ungodly life. For though something of sin may remain in us, as some of the Canaanites remained in the good land, yet it will be powerless, as they were. And so all our members that were once servants to sin, will become servants to righteousness, as it is written, “The elder shall serve the younger.”⁵⁵

But if we rebel against the Lord by joining with the motions of sin (as many who are called Christians, as well as the Heathen, now do), then this war will be over before it has begun. That seed which is uppermost will continue to be so; and as we live, so we shall die—receiving wages, not according to our *words*, but, according to our *works*.⁵⁶ And then we shall know that a Christian name, without a Christian nature, will be to no profit in the end; for it is not he who is overcome, but he who overcomes, that shall not be hurt by the second death.

53 Joshua 7:1, 11-15

54 Numbers 14:9

55 Genesis 25:23

56 Matthew 16:27; John 5:29; Romans 2:6; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 2:23, 20:12