

## Forward

Though I have chosen the title *Primitive Christianity Revived* as the principle name for this publication, it is actually a combination of two separate publications by William Penn, one being his book *Primitive Christianity Revived* (first published in 1696), and the other, *A Brief Account of the Rise and Progress of the People Called Quakers*, which originally served as the introduction to the *Journal of George Fox* (published in 1694) but was later printed separately. The two publications overlapped in their scope, both dealing (in various degrees) with the rise of the Society of Friends, and the distinct principles and practices of this people, and it was thought that these short books could be combined and interwoven in such a way as to present the reader with a more thorough presentation of these subjects than either publication could do individually. In attempting to do this, I have taken a degree of editorial liberty—removing repetition, adding short segues between sections, and moving paragraphs around to where they seemed to fit best. I have also attempted to carefully and conscientiously modernize and sometimes re-word Penn’s archaic (albeit beautiful) language, adding an occasional Scripture reference or a phrase of my own with the aim of greater clarity. My objective was not simply to republish the works of William Penn; all of his original publications still exist and are available through many online sources. My goal was to present the present-day seeker of truth with a readable and heart-impacting account of what God did in the early Society of Friends, which is the same that He desires to do in the hearts and lives of every modern Christian.

It also perhaps needs to be said that, throughout these pages, Penn relates the state of the Society of Friends as it was over three hundred years ago, and his words are not at all descriptive (to my knowledge) of any present day Quaker meetings or associations. The light that shined so conspicuously in the hearts of these men and women grew dimmer and dimmer in succeeding generations, not being cleaved to or obeyed with the same zeal and resignation. Thus Penn’s exhortation to the children of Friends (in the final pages of this book) proved both a warning and a prophecy, and by the mid 1800’s the great majority of those who bore the name Quaker were strangers to that heavenly power and presence which had first gathered them to be a people.

—JASON HENDERSON

*February 2018*

## An Epistle to the Reader.

Dear Reader,

The following account of the people called Quakers was written in the fear and love of God: first, as a standing testimony to that ever-blessed truth in the inward parts, with which God visited my soul in the days of my youth, and for the sense and love of which I was made willing to relinquish the honors and interests of the world. Secondly, as a testimony for that despised people, whom God has in His great mercy gathered and united by His own blessed Spirit in the holy profession of it—whose fellowship I value above all worldly greatness.

Herein I hope it will appear to every sober and considerate reader that, despite all the ill usage we have met with from the world, our great business has ever been the reality and experience of true religion, that is, to know an effectual transformation before our great and final change. And truly, we desire that all may come to this inward, discernible, and experiential knowledge of God, through the convictions and operations of the light and Spirit of Christ in themselves (the sufficient and blessed means given to all), and thereby come savingly to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent to enlighten and redeem the world. This knowledge is indeed life eternal; and that you, dear reader, may obtain it, is the earnest desire of your sincere friend,

—WILLIAM PENN.

## Chapter I

*Containing a Brief Account of the Different Dispensations of God in the World, to the Time He Was Pleased to Raise Up the People Called Quakers.*

Various have been the dispensations of God since the creation of the world unto the sons of men; but the great end of them all has been the renown of His own excellent name in the creation and restoration of man—who was made the image of Himself, and is the glory of all His works. The world began with innocency, and all was then good that the good God had made. And as He blessed the diverse works of His hands, so their natures and harmony magnified their Creator. Then the morning stars sang together for joy, and every part of His work said ‘amen’ to His law. There was not the least discord in the whole frame; but man in paradise, the beasts in the field, the fowl in the air, the fish in the sea, the lights in the heavens, the fruits of the earth, yes, even the air, the earth, the water, and fire, worshiped, praised, and exalted His power, wisdom, and goodness. O holy Sabbath! O holy day to the Lord!

But this happy state lasted not long; for man, the crown and glory of the whole, being tempted to aspire above his place, unhappily yielded, against his command and duty, as well as his interest and felicity, and so fell far below it. Thus he lost the divine image—the wisdom, power, and purity in which he was made;

and being no longer fit for paradise, he was expelled from the garden of God (his proper dwelling and residence) and driven out as a poor vagabond from the presence of the Lord, to wander in the earth, the habitation of beasts.

Yet the God that made him had pity upon him; for He saw that man was deceived, and that it was not from malice, but through the subtlety of the serpent (who had first fallen from his own state), and through the mediation of the woman—man’s own nature and companion—whom the serpent had first deluded. Accordingly, in infinite goodness and wisdom, God provided a way to repair the breach, recover the loss, and restore fallen man by a nobler and more excellent Adam who was promised to be born of a woman. And just as by means of a woman the evil one had prevailed upon man, so too by a woman the last Adam would come into the world, prevail against the serpent, bruise his head, and deliver man from his power—all of which, in an exceptional manner, was personally and fully accomplished by and in the Son of God in the flesh, as man’s Savior and Redeemer.

But the manifestation of God’s power through Him was not limited to that time; for both before and since His blessed manifestation in the flesh, He has been the light and life, the rock and strength, of all that have ever feared God. He was present with them in their temptations, followed them in their travels and afflictions, and supported and carried them through and over the difficulties that have attended them in their earthly pilgrimage. It was by this alone that Abel’s heart excelled Cain’s, that Seth obtained the preeminence, and that Enoch walked with God. It was this light and power that strove with the old world before the flood (against which they rebelled), and the same that sanctified and instructed Noah unto salvation.

But the outward dealings of God with man, after his fall, especially among the patriarchs, was generally through the agency of angels; as the Scriptures of the Old Testament do in many places express, as with Abraham, Jacob, etc. And the next dispensation was that of the law by Moses, which was also delivered by angels, as the apostle tells us. This administration was very much outward, suited to a low and servile state, and was therefore called by the apostle Paul, that of a “schoolmaster,”<sup>1</sup> for it pointed out and prepared a people to look and long for the Messiah, who would deliver them from the servitude of a ceremonious and imperfect dispensation, by knowing (within themselves) the realities of those mysterious figures and types. At this time the law was written on stone, and the temple was built with hands and attended with an outward priesthood, external rites and ceremonies, that were shadows of good things to come. But these were only to serve “until the Seed should come,”<sup>2</sup> that is, the more excellent and general manifestation of Christ; for to Him was the promise, and to all men only in Him, in Whom the promise was yes and amen—even life from death, immortality and eternal life.

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1 Galatians 3:24-25

2 Galatians 3:19

This the prophets foresaw, and comforted the believing Jews in the certainty of it. For the ministry of the prophets was the height of the Mosaic dispensation, which ended in John, the forerunner of the Messiah; and John's ministry finished in Him who was the fullness of all. And then it was that God, who at sundry times and in various manners had spoken to the fathers by His servants the prophets, spoke to men by His Son Christ Jesus, who is the Heir of all things. This was the dawn of the gospel-day, the dispensation of sonship, which ushered in a much nearer covenant and a better hope; even the beginning of the glory of the latter days, and the restitution of all things; yes, the restoration of the kingdom unto Israel.

Now the Spirit, which was more sparingly communicated in former dispensations, began to be poured forth upon all flesh, according to the testimony of the prophet Joel. And the light that shined in darkness, or but dimly before, the most gracious God caused to shine out of 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.

And now the poor in spirit, the meek, the true mourners, the hungry and thirsty after righteousness, the peacemakers, the pure in heart, the merciful and persecuted, came more especially in remembrance before the Lord, and were sought out and blessed by Israel's true Shepherd. Old Jerusalem with her children waxed old, and the new Jerusalem became the mother of the sons of the gospel-day. Thus, no more at old Jerusalem, nor at the mountain of Samaria, would God be worshiped above other places; for, behold, He is, by His own Son, declared and preached to be a Spirit, and will be known as such, and worshiped in the Spirit and in the truth. He will now come nearer than in ancient times, and will write His law in the heart, and put His fear and Spirit in the inward parts, according to His promise. And so all signs, types, and shadows did fly away—the Day having discovered their insufficiency in not reaching to the inside of the cup, to the cleansing of the conscience—and all elementary services expired in and by Him, who is the substance of all.

And to this great and blessed dispensation of the Son of God the apostles did testify, whom the Lord had chosen and anointed by His Spirit to turn the Jews from prejudice and superstition, and the Gentiles from vanity and idolatry, to Christ's light and Spirit that shined within them, that they might be quickened<sup>3</sup> from the sins and trespasses in which they were dead, to serve the living God in the newness of the Spirit of life, and walk as children of the light and of the Day. Such as these truly put on Christ, the light of the world, and make no more provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts. And so this light, Spirit, and grace of God, which comes by Christ and appears in man, was the divine principle from which the apostles ministered, and to which they turned people's minds, and into which they gathered and built up the church of Christ in their day. And for this cause they warned all not to quench the Spirit, but to wait for the Spirit, and speak by the Spirit, and pray by the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, as that alone which proved them to be the truly begotten children of God, born not of flesh and blood, nor of the will of man, but of the will

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3 *quicken* means to make alive.

of God. For by doing His will, and denying their own, by drinking Christ's cup, and being baptized with His baptism, the way and path is known upon which all the heirs of life have traveled to blessedness.

But alas, even in the apostles' days (those bright stars of the first gospel light), some clouds, foretelling an eclipse of this primitive glory, began to appear! Several of them gave early warning of it to the Christians of their time, saying that even then there was, and yet would be more and more, a falling away from the power of godliness, and the purity of that spiritual dispensation, by such as sought to make a fair show in the flesh, but with whom the offense of the cross had ceased. Their sight was true; and what they foretold to the churches, gathered by them in the name and power of Jesus, came to pass; for Christians degenerated quickly into outward things, such as days, and foods, and various other ceremonies. And even worse, they fell into strife and contention about these things, separating one from another, and envying one another. And, according as they found power to do so, they persecuted one another, to the shame and scandal of their common Christianity, and the grievous stumbling and offense of the heathen. And then, having at last gotten worldly power into their hands, by kings and emperors embracing the Christian profession, they changed the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, into a worldly kingdom; or, at least, they called the worldly kingdom that was in their hands, the kingdom of Christ. Then human inventions and novelties, both in doctrine and worship, crowded fast into the church; for indeed, a door was opened to such things by the grossness and carnality that appeared then among the generality of Christians, who had long since abandoned the guidance of God's meek and heavenly Spirit, and given themselves up to superstition, will-worship, and voluntary humility. And even as superstition is blind, so too it is rash and furious, for all must stoop to its blind and boundless zeal, or perish by it. So in the name of the Spirit, they persecuted the very appearance of the Spirit of God in others, opposing that in others which they resisted in themselves, namely, the light, grace, and Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. But this they did, and always do, by branding it heresy, schism, innovation, or some such plausible name; though true Christianity allows no foundation or pretense whatsoever for persecuting a man for matters of mere religion, being in its very nature meek, gentle, and forbearing, and consisting of faith, hope, and love, which no persecutor can have. For how can a persecutor believe well, hope well, or have a charitable or tender regard to another, while he seeks to violate another's mind, or persecute his body, for matters of faith or worship towards God.

Thus the false church sprang up, and mounted the chair. But, though she lost her nature, she would by no means relinquish her good name—the Lamb's bride, the true church, and mother of the faithful—constraining all to receive her mark, either in their forehead, or right-hand; that is, publicly, or privately. But, in deed and in truth, she was mystery Babylon, the mother of harlots, the mother of those who, despite all their show and outward religion, had adulterated and gone off from the Spirit, nature, and life of Christ, having grown vain, worldly, ambitious, covetous, cruel, etc., which are the fruits of the flesh, and not of the Spirit.

Now it was, that the true church fled into the wilderness,<sup>4</sup> that is, it fled from superstition and violence,

to a retired, solitary, and lonely state—hidden, and as it were, out of the sight of men, though not out of the world. And this does show, that her former visibility was not essential to her being a true church in the judgment of the Holy Spirit; for she was as true a church in the wilderness (though not as visible and radiant), as when in her former splendor. From this wilderness state, many attempts were made to return, but the waters were yet too high, and her way was blocked up; and many of her excellent children, in several nations and centuries, fell by the cruelty of superstition, because they would not depart from their faithfulness to the truth.

The time of the reformation did make some steps towards it, both as to doctrine, worship, and practice. But any advancement in practice quickly failed; for wickedness flowed freely, both among the professors<sup>5</sup> of the reformation, as well as those from whom they reformed; so that by the fruits of their conduct they could not be distinguished. And the children of the reformers, if not the very reformers themselves, then sought after earthly policy and power to uphold and carry on their reformation which had begun with spiritual weapons; which I have often thought to be one of the greatest reasons why the reformation made no better progress as to the life and heart of religion. For while the reformers remained lowly and spiritually minded, and trusted in God, and looked to Him, and lived in His fear, and consulted not with flesh and blood, nor sought deliverance in their own way, there were daily added to the church those who were being saved. For these, for a time, were not as concerned to be safe from persecution, as to be faithful and harmless under it, being more concerned to spread the truth by their faith and patience in tribulation, than to get the worldly power out of the hands of their persecutors.

In doctrine they were in some things short; in other things, to avoid one extreme, they ran into another; and as for worship, there was, in the generality, far more of man in it than God. They acknowledged the Spirit, inspiration, and revelation, and indeed grounded their separation and reformation upon the sense and understanding which they received from it, in the reading of the Scriptures of truth. And this was their plea: the Scripture is the text, the Spirit the interpreter, and that every man is left for himself. But yet there was too much human invention, tradition, and art that remained both in praying and preaching; and of a worldly authority, and worldly greatness in their ministers—especially in Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark, and some parts of Germany. God was therefore pleased in England to shift us from vessel to vessel, and to humble the ministry, so that they became more strict in preaching, devout in praying, zealous for keeping the Lord's day and catechizing children and servants, and repeating at home in their families what they had heard in religious service. But as these grew into power, they were found not only whipping some out, but forcing others into their temples. They appeared rigid in their spirits, rather than serious in their lives, and more for political parties than for inward piety; which brought forth another

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4 See Revelation 12:6

5 The word *professor* is used throughout this book to refer to one who professes or affirms a belief in something; here it has nothing to do with teachers or scholars. Likewise, a person's *profession* refers to what they believe or profess to be true, and is not related to their employment.

people, who were yet more retired and select.

These would not fellowship with all, nor seek communion with the national church; but formed churches among themselves of such as would be accountable of their conduct. They had very promising experiences of the work of God's grace upon their hearts, and lived under mutual agreements and covenants of fellowship, which kept them together. Being of a somewhat softer temper, this people seemed to recommend religion by the charms of its love, mercy, and goodness, rather than by the terrors of its judgments and punishments; by which the former party would have frightened people into religion. They also allowed greater liberty to prophesy than those who were before them; for they admitted any member to speak or pray, as well as their pastor (whom they always appointed, and not the civil magistrate). And if any found anything pressing upon them, persons of any trade (without the distinction of clergy or laity) had their liberty to speak, be they ever so simple and unschooled.

But alas, even this people suffered great loss! For tasting of the worldly empire, the favor of princes, and the gains that ensued, they degenerated much. And though they had criticized the national church and ministry, and forced maintenance too, many, when it was their turn to be tried, were overcome by the weight of worldly honor and advantage. For they found their way into profitable parsonages, and soon contradicted their own principles; and, what is worse, some of them turned absolute persecutors of other men on behalf of God, having only lately themselves come out of the same furnace.

And this drove many a step further, that is, into the water—for another baptism—believing they were not scripturally baptized, and hoping to find the presence and power of God that they lacked by submitting to this watery ordinance. This people also made profession of neglecting, (if not renouncing and censuring) not only the necessity, but the use of all human learning as regards to the ministry, looking to nothing besides the helps and gifts of the Spirit of God, and those abilities natural and common to men.

For a time these seemed like John of old, a burning and a shining light to other Christian societies. They were very diligent, plain, and serious; strong in Scripture and bold in profession, bearing much reproach and contradiction. But that which had bewitched others, proved their snare as well. For they were spoiled by the taste of worldly power, and rested too much in their watery dispensation, instead of passing on more fully to that of the Holy Spirit and fire, which was the baptism of Him who came with a fan in His hand to thoroughly (and not in part only) purge His floor, and take away the dross and the tin of His people, and make a man finer than gold. So they grew high, rough, and self-righteous, opposing further growth in the Spirit, and forgetting the day of their infancy and littleness, which had given them something of real beauty.

Hence many left them, along with all visible churches and societies, and wandered up and down as sheep without a shepherd, and as doves without their mates, seeking their beloved, but not able to find the One their souls loved above their chiefest joy. These people were called Seekers by some, and the Family of Love by others. And as they came to the knowledge of one another, they sometimes met together, not

formally to pray or preach at appointed times or places, in their own wills, as in times past they were accustomed to do; but rather, they waited together in silence, and as anything arose in any one of their minds which savored of the divine Spring, they sometimes spoke. But so it was, that some of them did not keep in humility, nor in the fear of God, and so after an abundance of revelation they were exalted above measure. And for lack of staying their minds in a humble dependence upon the One that opened their understandings to see great things in His law, they ran out in their own imaginations. Then, mixing their dark ideas with divine openings, they brought forth a monstrous birth, to the scandal of all who feared God and waited daily in the temple not made with hands for the consolation of Israel; that is, the inward Jew, and the circumcised in spirit.

This people obtained the name of Ranters, from their extravagant discourses and practices. For they interpreted Christ's fulfilling of the law for us to be a discharge from any obligation and duty which the law required of us, saying that now it was no sin to do that which before it was a sin to commit. And declaring that the slavish fear of the law had been taken off by Christ, they taught that all things that man did were good, if he would but do them with the mind and persuasion that it was so. Thus, many fell into gross and outrageous practices, pretending (for an excuse) that they could, without evil, commit the same act which was sin for another to do; for they distinguished between the action and the evil of it according to the direction of the mind and the intention in doing it. This made sin to super-abound by the abounding of grace, turning the grace of God into lewdness, and providing a more secure way of sinning than before—as if Christ came not to save us from our sins, but in our sins; not to take away sin, but that we might sin more freely at His cost, and with less danger to ourselves. This deception ensnared many, and brought them to an utter and lamentable loss with respect to their eternal state. These grew very troublesome to the better sort of people, and furnished the looser sort with an occasion to blaspheme.

## **Chapter II**

### *The First Instrumental Author, and the Rise of the People called Quakers.*

It was about this very time that the eternal, wise, and good God was pleased, in His infinite love, to honor and visit this benighted and bewildered nation with His glorious Day-spring from on high, bringing a more sure and certain sound of the Word of light and life, through the testimony of a chosen vessel, to an effectual and blessed purpose, for which many thousands can say 'glory be to the name of the Lord forever!'

The first instrument or person by whom God began to gather this people into the way they now profess

was George Fox, whose many excellent qualifications manifested a divine, and not a human power to have been their origin. And having no desire to exalt the creature, but rather to magnify the God who worked mightily in and through him, I shall declare (as God shall enable me) who and what he was; not only by the report of others, but from my own long and most inward acquaintance and intimate knowledge of him.

This George Fox was born in Leicestershire, about the year 1624. He descended of honest parents, who endeavored to bring him up, as they did the rest of their children, in the way and worship of the national church, his mother being a woman accomplished above most of her degree in the place where she lived. But from a child he appeared of another frame of mind than the rest of his brethren, being more religious, inward, still, solid, and observant beyond his years, as the answers he would give, and the questions he would ask, did manifest, to the astonishment of those that heard him, especially in divine things.

His mother, taking notice of his unusual disposition, the gravity, wisdom, and piety that very early shined through him, and how he refused childish and vain sports and company even when very young, was tender and indulgent over him, so that from her he met with little difficulty. As to his employment, he was brought up in country business. He took most delight in sheep, and was very skillful with them, an employment that well suited his mind in several respects, both for its innocency and solitude, and as a just emblem of his latter ministry and service.

When he was somewhat above twenty years of age, he left his friends and visited the most retired and religious people in those parts; for there were some in this nation who waited night and day for the consolation of Israel, even as Zachariah, Anna, and good old Simeon did of old. To such as these he was sent, and these he sought out in the neighboring counties, and among them he sojourned till a more extensive ministry was given to him. At this time he taught and was an example of silence, endeavoring to bring people away from all self-performances. He testified of, and turned people to, the light of Christ within them, encouraging them to wait in patience, and to feel after the power of Christ to stir in their hearts, that their knowledge and worship of God might stand in the power of an endless life. This power was to be found in the light, and obeyed in all its manifestations in man; for in the Word is life, and that life is the light of men, and so it becomes life in men too, as the light is obeyed. And as the children of the light live by the life of the Word, they are begotten again unto God, which is the regeneration or new birth without which none may enter the kingdom of God. But whosoever does enter by this door is greater than John; that is, greater than John's dispensation, which was not that of the kingdom, but of the consummation of the law, the forerunner of the gospel-time. Accordingly, several meetings were gathered in those parts; and thus his time was employed for some years.

In 1652, he being in his usual retirement with his mind exercised towards the Lord, upon a very high mountain in some of the higher parts of Yorkshire, he had a vision of the great work of God in the earth, and of the way that he was to go forth in a public ministry to begin it. He saw people as thick as dust in a

beam of sun, who would in time be brought home to the Lord, that there might be but one shepherd and one sheepfold in all the earth. There his eye was directed northward, beholding a great people that should receive him and his message in those parts. Upon this mountain he was moved of the Spirit to sound out the Lord's great and notable day, as if he had been in a great auditory; and from there went north, as the Lord had shown him. And in every place where he came, if not before he came to it, he had his particular exercise and service shown to him, so that the Lord was his leader indeed. And it was not in vain that he traveled, for God sealed his commission in most places with the convincement of some of all sorts, from open sinners to sober professors of religion.

Some of the first and most eminent of those that came forth in a public ministry, and who are now at rest, were Richard Farnsworth, James Nayler, William Dewsberry, Thomas Aldam, Francis Howgil, Edward Burroughs, John Camm, John Audland, Richard Hubberthorn, Thomas Taylor, Thomas Holmes, Alexander Parker, William Simson, William Caton, John Stubbs, Robert Withers, Thomas Low, Josiah Coale, John Burnyeat, Robert Lodge, Thomas Salthouse, and many more worthies that cannot well be here named. These, after knowing a time of God's purging judgment in themselves, and a waiting in silence upon Him to feel and receive power from on high to speak in His name (which none else rightly can, though they may use the same words), felt its divine motions, and were frequently drawn forth to reprove, inform, and exhort the people. Sometimes in markets, fairs, streets, and by the highway-side, they called people to repentance, and to turn to the Lord with all of their heart and strength, directing them to the light of Christ within them, by which they could see, examine, and consider their ways, turning from evil in order to do the good and acceptable will of God. These suffered great hardships for their love and good-will, being often stocked, stoned, beaten, whipped, and imprisoned, though honest men and of good report where they lived, who had left wives, children, houses and lands to visit the nation with a living call to repentance. And though the priests generally set themselves to oppose them, and wrote against them, and insinuated the most false and scandalous stories to defame them, stirring up the magistrates to suppress them, especially in those northern parts; yet God was pleased to fill them with His living power, and give them such an open door of utterance in His service, that there was a great convincement in those parts.

But I return to this excellent man, whose qualities, both natural, moral, and spiritual, manifestly appeared in his converse with the brethren, and among the church of God.

He was a man that God endued with a clear and wonderful depth, being a discerner of other men's spirits, and very much a master of his own. And though his understanding of things, and especially his expression of them, perhaps sounded uncultivated and unfashionable to more refined ears, yet his matter was nevertheless found to be weighty, instructive, and profound. And indeed it showed, beyond all contradiction, that God had sent him, in that natural art and skill had no share in the matter or manner of his ministry. Yes, the many excellent and necessary truths that he preached to mankind had nothing of man's wit or wisdom to recommend them.

As a man he was an original, being no man's copy; and his ministry and writings showed they were from one that was not taught of man, nor had learned what he said by study. Nor were these notional or speculative doctrines, but sensible and practical truths, tending to conversion and regeneration, and the setting up of the kingdom of God in the hearts of men. Indeed, I have many times been overcome in myself, and been made to say with my Lord and Master upon the like occasion, "I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and learned of this world, and revealed them to babes."<sup>1</sup> For, many times has my soul bowed in humble thankfulness to the Lord, that He did not choose any of the wise and learned of this world to be the first messenger in our age of His blessed truth to men; but that He took one that was not of high degree, or elegant speech, or learned after the way of this world, that His message and work might appear with less suspicion or envy of human wisdom and interest, and with more force and clearness upon the consciences of those that sincerely sought the way of truth.

Yes, beholding with the eye of my mind (which the God of heaven had opened in me) the visible marks of God's hand in this testimony—from the clearness, the power, and the efficacy of it, in the exemplary sobriety, plainness, zeal, steadiness, humility, gravity, charity, and circumspect care in the government of church-affairs, which shined in this man's life and testimony—it greatly confirmed that it was of God, and engaged my soul in a deep love, fear, reverence, and thankfulness for His love and mercy therein to mankind.

In his ministry, George Fox labored much to open truth to the people's understandings, and to establish them upon the one sure foundation—Jesus Christ the light of the world; so that, by bringing them to know the gift of God in themselves, they might better know and judge concerning both Him and themselves. And indeed, he had an extraordinary gift for opening the Scriptures. He would go to the marrow of things, and show the mind, harmony, and fulfillment of them with much plainness, and to great comfort and edification. He spoke much of the mystery of the first and second Adam, of the fall and restoration, of the law and the gospel, of shadows and substance, of the servant's and Son's state, and the fulfilling of the Scriptures in Christ and by Christ in all that are His, through the obedience of faith. And it was sensibly felt that he spoke only what he had received of Christ and was his own experience, in that Spirit which never errs nor fails.

But, above all, he excelled in prayer. The inwardness and weight of his spirit, the reverence and solemnity of his address and behavior, and the fewness and fullness of his words, have often struck even strangers with admiration. The most awesome, living, reverent frame I ever felt or beheld, I must say, was his in prayer. And truly this was a testimony that he knew and lived nearer to the Lord than other men; for they that know Him most see most reason to approach Him with reverence and fear.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21

He was of an innocent life, no busy-body or self-seeker. He was neither touchy nor critical, and what fell from his mouth was blameless and edifying. So meek, contented, modest, easy, steady, and tender, it was a pleasure to be in his company. He exercised no authority except over evil, and that he did everywhere and with all, but in love, compassion, and long-suffering. He was a most merciful man, as ready to forgive, as he was unlikely to take or give an offense. Thousands can truly say, he was of an excellent spirit and savor among them, and so it was that the most excellent spirits loved him with an unfeigned and unfading love.

He was an incessant laborer. In his younger years (before his many, great, and deep sufferings and travels had too enfeebled his body for itinerant services) he labored much in England, Scotland, and Ireland, turning many to God, confirming those that were convinced of the truth, and settling good order in church affairs. And towards the conclusion of his traveling service, between the years 1671 and 1677, he visited the churches of Christ in the colonies of America, in the United Provinces, and in Germany, to the convincement and consolation of many.

As he was unwearied, so he was undaunted in his services for God and His people, and the care he took of the affairs of the church in general was very great. And though there was no person who the discontented struck at so sharply, this good man was no more to be moved to fear than to wrath. He bore all their weakness and prejudice, and returned no evil for evil; forgiving many weak and bitter speeches and praying for his enemies, that they might have a sense of their course, and turn to the light of the world.

And truly, I must say, that though God had visibly clothed him with preference and authority, yet he never abused it; but held his place in the church of God with great meekness, and a most engaging humility and moderation. For upon all occasions he was a servant to all, holding and exercising his eldership in the invisible power that gathered this people. Yes, his authority was inward and not outward, and he got it and kept it by the love of God, and in the power of an endless life. I write my knowledge, and not a report; and my witness is true; having been with him for weeks and months together on many occasions, and those of the nearest and most exercising nature. And I can say, that by night and by day, by sea and by land; in this and in foreign countries, I never saw him out of his place, or not a match for every service and occasion. For in all things he acquitted himself like a man, yes, a strong man, a new and heavenly-minded man, and all of God Almighty's making.

But I return now to the dawning of this great gospel day in the nation of England, where many were soon gathered by the arm of the Lord to a true experience of the light and life of Christ, both through the ministry of George Fox, and that of other worthies, both men and women, who had been raised up by the same power. And as their ministry reached the conscience, it broke the heart, and brought many to a sense and understanding that that which they had vainly sought without (with great pains and cost) was to be found within, namely, the right way to peace with God. For these were directed to the light of Jesus Christ within them, as the Seed and Leaven of the kingdom of God, which is near to all, because it

is sown in all, being God's gift or talent given to all—a faithful and true Witness and righteous Monitor in every bosom. This is the gift and grace of God unto life and salvation that appears to all, though few regard it; which the traditional Christian, conceited in himself, strong in his own will and righteousness, and overcome with blind zeal and passion, has either despised as a low and common thing, or opposed as a novelty. Yes, the professors of Christianity have given this heavenly gift many hard names and abusive terms; denying, in their ignorant and angry minds, any fresh manifestations of God's power and Spirit in man in these days, though it was never more needed to make true Christians. These are not unlike those Jews of old, who rejected the Son of God even while they blindly professed to wait for their Messiah. For, alas! He did not appear among them according to their carnal minds and expectations.

Thus the appearance of this ministry in England brought forth many abusive books, which filled the greater sort with envy, and the lesser with rage; making the way and progress of this blessed testimony strait and narrow indeed to those that received it. However, God acknowledged His own work, and this testimony did effectually reach, gather, comfort, and establish the weary and heavy laden, the hungry and thirsty, the poor and needy, the mournful and sick, who had spent all they had upon physicians of no value, and who waited for relief from heaven alone. For many of these were made to see, upon a serious trial of all things, that nothing else but Christ Himself would do—the light of His countenance, a touch of His garment, help from His hand, who had cured the poor woman's issue, raised the centurion's servant, the widow's son, and the ruler's daughter. And like Peter's mother, they no sooner felt His power and efficacy upon their own souls, then they gave up to obey Him in a testimony to His power, which they did with resigned wills and faithful hearts, despite all mocking, contradiction, confiscation, beatings, prisons, and many other jeopardies that attended them for His blessed name's sake.

And, truly, their persecutions were very many, and very great; so that in all human probability they must have been swallowed up quickly by the proud and boisterous waves that swelled and beat against them, except that the God of all their tender mercies was with them in His glorious authority. For indeed, the hills often fled, and the mountains melted before the power that filled them, working mightily for them, as well as in them—the one ever following the other. And by this they plainly saw, to their exceeding great confirmation and comfort, that all things were possible with Him with whom they had to do. And though what God required seemed to cross man's wisdom, and expose them to man's wrath, yet He appeared to help and carry them through all to His glory.

Insomuch, that if ever any people could say in truth, 'You are our sun and our shield, our rock and sanctuary; and by You we have leaped over a wall, and by You we have run through a troop, and by You we have put the armies of the aliens to flight'—these people had a right to say it. And as God had delivered their souls of the wearisome burdens of sin and vanity, and enriched their poverty of spirit, and satisfied their great hunger and thirst after eternal righteousness, and filled them with the good things of His own house, and made them stewards of His manifold gifts; so they went forth to all corners of these nations, to declare what God had done for them—what they had found, and where and how they had

found it, that is: the way to peace with God; inviting all to come and see, and taste for themselves, the truth of what they declared unto them.

And as their testimony was to the light, grace, or Spirit of God in man, the precious pearl and leaven of the kingdom, as the only blessed means appointed of God to quicken, convince, and sanctify man; so they opened unto others what this gift was in itself, what it was given to them for, and how they might know it from their own spirit, and from the subtle appearance of the evil one. Moreover, they showed what it would do for all whose minds would turn from the vanity of the world, and its lifeless ways and teachers, and adhere to Christ's blessed light within, which discovers and condemns sin in all its appearances, and shows how to overcome it, if minded and obeyed in its holy manifestations and convictions. For to these it gives power, both to avoid and resist those things that do not please God, and to grow strong in love, faith, and good works. Thus man, whom sin has made like a wilderness, over-run with briers and thorns, may become as the garden of God, cultivated by His divine power, and replenished with the most virtuous and beautiful plants of God's own planting, to His eternal praise.

But these experiential preachers of the glad tidings of God's truth and kingdom could not run when they wanted, nor pray or preach when they pleased, but only as Christ their Redeemer prepared and moved them by His own blessed Spirit. It was for this that they waited in their services and meetings, and so spoke as He gave them utterance, which made them as those having authority, and not like the dry and formal Pharisees. And so it plainly appeared to all who were serious-minded, whose spiritual eye the Lord Jesus had in any measure opened, that to one was given the word of exhortation, to another the word of reproof, to another the word of consolation, and all by the same Spirit, in His good order, to the convincing and edifying of many.

And, truly, these ministers of the gospel waxed strong and bold through faithfulness, and by the power and Spirit of the Lord Jesus they became very fruitful. Thousands, in a short time, were turned through their testimony to the truth in the inward parts, having been cut to the heart by both their ministry and sufferings; insomuch that, in most counties, and in many of the towns of England, meetings were settled, and daily there were added to the church such as were being saved. For they were diligent to plant and to water, and the Lord blessed their labors with an exceedingly great increase, notwithstanding all the opposition made to their blessed progress by false rumors, slander, and bitter persecution—not only from the powers of the land, but from anyone that wished to injure and abuse them. Thus they seemed as “poor sheep appointed to the slaughter, and as a people killed all the day long.”<sup>2</sup>

To relate the extent of their cruel sufferings would doubtless fill many volumes, for they received scoffing and abuse from professors as well as from profane, from magistrates as well as rabble. Indeed it may be said of this abused and despised people, that “they went forth weeping, and sowed in tears, bearing

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<sup>2</sup> Romans 8:36

testimony to the precious Seed,”<sup>3</sup> even the Seed of the kingdom, which stands not in words (even the finest and highest that man’s wit can use) but in power—that is, the power of Christ Jesus, to whom God the Father has given all power in heaven and in earth, that He might rule angels above, and men below. It was this Jesus who empowered them, as their work clearly witnessed, for multitudes were turned through their ministry from darkness to light, and from the broad way to the narrow way of life and peace, bringing many to a weighty, serious, and God-like conduct, the practice of that doctrine which they taught.

Yet their strict conformity to the dictates of Truth and to that light which manifests all things that are reprobable, gave them a strange and disagreeable appearance to many, who considered them those who “turn the world upside down.”<sup>4</sup> And indeed, in some sense they were, but in no other way than that wherein Paul was so charged, namely, in seeking to bring things back to their primitive and right order again. For their unusual conduct and practice was not the result of personal fancy or conceit, or any desire for civil distinction, as some have imagined; but was the fruit of an inward sense, which God, through His holy fear, had begotten in them. They did not consider how to contradict the world, or distinguish themselves as a particular party distinct from others; having no desire to advocate either schism or novelty. But having been given a true sight of themselves, they saw the whole world through the same lens of truth. Yes, they sensibly discerned the affections and passions of men, and the rise and tendency of things; understanding what it was that gratified the “lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which are not of the Father, but of the world.”<sup>5</sup> For from these things many vain customs have arisen during the night of darkness and apostasy which has spread over the people through their degeneration from the light and Spirit of God. But such things are seen by the heavenly Day of Christ that dawns in the soul to be either wrong in their origin, or, by time and abuse, hurtful in their practice. And though their refusing to conform in these things seemed trivial to some, and rendered this people foolish and conceited in such persons’ opinions; there was far greater depth to them than many could perceive. Indeed, it was not easy for our primitive friends to make themselves sights and spectacles, and the scorn and derision of the world; but they easily discerned how this must be the consequence of so unfashionable an interaction with it.

And though they were not often great and learned men in the esteem of this world (for then they would not have lacked followers by virtue of their own credit and authority), yet they were generally among the most sober in the several religious persuasions to which they formerly belonged, and of the most repute for piety; and many of them were of good capacity, substance, and account among men.

And also some among them were not at all lacking for education, learning, or estate; though now, as of old, not many wise or noble, etc., are called; or, at least not many among these receive the heavenly

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3 Ps. 126:6

4 Acts 17:6

5 1 John 2:16

call, by reason of the cross that accompanies every sincere response. But talent and learning, though they make better orators and disputants, do not make better Christians; and it is the ignorance of people about the divine gift that causes this vulgar and mischievous mistake. Theory and practice, speculation and experience, words and life, are two separate things. O, it is the repentant, the reformed, the lowly, the watchful, the self-denying and holy soul that is the Christian! And this character is the fruit and work of the Spirit, which is the life of Jesus Christ—whose life, though hid in its fullness in God the Father, is shed abroad in the hearts of all that truly believe, according to their capacity. O that people did but know this Spirit to cleanse them, to circumcise them, to quicken them, and to make them new creatures indeed, recreated or regenerated in Christ Jesus unto good works! Then they might live unto God, and not to themselves; and offer up living prayers and living praises to the living God, through His own living Spirit, in which alone He is to be worshiped in this gospel day.

Now, concerning the ministry of this people, and their right qualifications for it, the following are several marks or signs that it was truly Christian:

First, they were changed men themselves, before they went about to change others. Their hearts were rent as well as their garments, and they knew the power and work of God upon themselves. This was seen by the great alteration it had made, their stricter course of life, and the more godly conduct that immediately followed upon it.

Second, they did not go forth or preach in their own time or will, but in the will of God; and they spoke not their own studied matter, but only as they were opened and moved by His Spirit, with which they were well acquainted by their own regeneration. This, I am aware, cannot be expressed to carnal men, so as to give them an intelligible account; for to them such things, as Christ said, are like the blowing of the wind, which no man knows from where it comes or where it goes. Yet this proof and seal went along with their ministry, that many were turned from lifeless professions, and the evil of their ways, to an inward and experiential knowledge of God, and a holy life, as thousands can witness. And as they freely received what they had to say from the Lord, so they freely administered it to others.

Third, the stress and tendency of their ministry was conversion to God—true regeneration and holiness. It was not schemes of doctrines and verbal creeds, or new forms of worship; but a leaving off all that is superfluous in religion, reducing the ceremonial and formal part, and pressing earnestly after the substantial, the necessary and profitable part to the soul.

Fourth, they directed people to a gift or Seed in themselves, though not of themselves, by which all that they asserted, preached, and exhorted, might be wrought in them and experientially known by them. This indeed is a high and distinguishing mark of the truth of their ministry, for they knew what they said, and encouraged all to put it to the test. Yes, they were bold from certainty, and desired that no one believe their testimony based on human authority, but rather upon inward conviction—the conviction that came from this Seed, which they asserted was sown in the ones to whom they preached. It was unto this

Seed of the kingdom, this measure of the Spirit, that they directed all men, that all might examine and prove the reality of those things which they had affirmed of it, as to its manifestation and work in man. And truly, this is far more than many ministers can do, who declare theory and speculation, and preach doctrines concerning God, Christ, holiness and heaven, etc.; but do not speak their own knowledge and experience, or ever direct their hearers to the divine gift, to the “implanted Word which is able to save the soul,”<sup>6</sup> or instruct where to find it, and how to wait to feel it working the good and acceptable will of God in them.

Fifth, they reached to the inward state and condition of people, which is an evidence of the virtue of this implanted Word, and of their ministering from it, and not from their own imaginations, biases, or opinions upon Scripture. For nothing reaches the heart, except what is from the heart. Nothing pierces the conscience, except what comes from a living conscience. So that, in the ministry of this people, it has often happened that the secrets of hearts have been revealed, and true states and conditions have been declared. Yes, the very thoughts and purposes of the hearts of many have been so plainly detected, that they, like Nathaniel, have cried out concerning this inward appearance of Christ, “You are the Son of God, You are the King of Israel.”<sup>7</sup> And those that have embraced this divine Word or Seed, have found the same mark of its truth and divinity which the woman of Samaria found of Christ when He was in the flesh, namely: “It told them all that ever they had done.”<sup>8</sup> It showed them their insides, the most inward secrets of their hearts, “laying judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet,”<sup>9</sup> of which thousands at this day can testify. So that those who have turned to this heavenly Seed have had cause to say, “It was a true report which I have heard, and indeed the half was not told to me”<sup>10</sup> of the power, purity, wisdom and goodness of God therein.

Sixth, the extraordinary understanding in divine things with which even some of the lowest among them were furnished by the operation of this heavenly Seed, gave occasion for many to wonder, saying of them, as some did of their Master, “Is this not the carpenter’s son, how did he acquire such great learning?”<sup>11</sup> From this, others took occasion to suspect and insinuate that they were Jesuits or great scholars in disguise; though there was not the least ground of truth for any such reflection, seeing that their places of abode, kindred, and education were known to all.

Seventh, these ministers came forth low, despised, and hated, even as the primitive Christians did, and not at all by the help of worldly wisdom or power, as former reformations in part have done. Yes, in all things it may be said that this people was brought forth in the cross, in a true contradiction to the ways,

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6 James 1:21

7 John 1:49

8 John 4:29

9 Isaiah 28:7

10 1 Kings 10:6-7

11 Matthew 13:54-56

worships, fashions, and customs of this world; against all its currents and tides, so that no flesh might glory before God.

Eighth, they clearly had no design to themselves in their work and service, thus to expose themselves to such scorn and abuse; to spend and be spent, leaving wife and children, house and land, and all that can be accounted dear unto men, with their lives in their hands, being daily in jeopardy, to declare this primitive message revived in their spirits by the good Spirit and power of God, namely: That God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all; and that He has sent His Son as a light into the world to enlighten all men and lead them to salvation; and that they that say they have fellowship with God, and yet walk in darkness—that is, in disobedience to the light in their consciences, and according to the vanity of this world—lie and do not practice the truth. But all that love the light, and bring their deeds to it, and walk in the light, even as God is light, these experience the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleansing them from all sin. (1 John 1:19-4; 3:20-21; 1:5-7.)

Ninth, their great constancy and patience in suffering for their testimony (in all of its branches) is well known to all; and that sometimes they suffered even unto death, by beatings, bruising, and long and crowded imprisonments in filthy dungeons. Four of them in New England died by the hands of the executioner,<sup>12</sup> purely for preaching among the people of Boston. Not to mention banishments and excessive plunderings of goods and estates, in almost all places, for their faithfulness to the good and glorious cause; often refusing deliverance by dishonorable ways or means, though it was many times offered to them.

Tenth, they not only showed no disposition to revenge when it was at any time in their power, but they forgave their cruel enemies, showing mercy to those that had shown none to them.

Eleventh, their plain dealing with those in authority, much like the ancient prophets, not fearing to declare both the private and public sins of rulers and magistrates to their faces, and accurately prophesy their afflictions and downfall, even when in the height of their glory. They likewise foretold some national judgments in very express terms, such as the plague of 1665,<sup>13</sup> and the great fire of London,<sup>14</sup> as well as particular judgments to several wicked persecutors, which accordingly overtook them.

O that those who read me could but feel me! For my heart is affected with this merciful visitation of the Father of lights and spirits to this poor nation, and to the whole world through the same living testimony. Why should the inhabitants of the land reject it? Why should they lose the blessed benefit of it? Why

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12 William Robinson, Marmaduke Stevenson, Mary Dyer, and William Leddra. See William Sewel's *The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress of that Christian People called Quakers*.

13 The Great Plague of 1665-1666 was the last major epidemic of the bubonic plague to occur in England, killing an estimated 100,000 people in 18 months, about a fourth of the population of London.

14 The Great Fire of London burned from Sunday, September 2nd to Wednesday, September 5th 1666. It consumed 87 parish churches, most buildings used by city authorities, and 13,200 houses—the homes of 70,000 of the city's 80,000 inhabitants.

should they not turn to the Lord with all their hearts, and say from the heart, “Speak Lord, for now Your poor servants are listening. O that Your will may be done—Your great, good, and holy will, in earth as it is in heaven! Do it in us, do it upon us, do what You will with us; for we are Yours, and desire to glorify our Creator our Redeemer. For You are redeeming us from the earth, from the vanities and pollutions of it, to be a peculiar people unto You.” O, this would have been a great day for England, if she would have said so in truth; but alas, the case is otherwise!

O land of my nativity! Some have mourned over you with bitter wailing and lamentation. Their heads have indeed been as waters, and their eyes as fountains of tears, because of your transgression and rebellion; because you will not hear, and fear, and return to the Rock from which you were hewn. But be warned, O land of great profession, to receive Him into your heart. Behold, He has stood long at the door knocking; but as of yet you will have none of Him.

O be awakened, lest Jerusalem’s judgments do swiftly overtake you, because her sins do abound in you! For Jerusalem abounded in formality but made void the weighty things of God’s law, as you daily do. She withstood the Son of God in the flesh, and you resist the Son of God in the Spirit. He would have gathered her as a hen gathers her chicks under her wing, and she was not willing; so He would have gathered you out of your lifeless professions and brought you to inherit substance, to know His power and kingdom. To this end He often knocked from within, by His grace and Spirit; and called from without, by His servants and witnesses; but just as Jerusalem of old persecuted the manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh, and crucified Him, and whipped and imprisoned His servants; so you have crucified to yourselves afresh the Lord of life and glory, and insulted His Spirit of grace. Yes, you have slighted His fatherly visitation, and persecuted those who declared it, by your laws and magistrates, though they have pleaded with you day and night in the power and Spirit of the Lord, in love and meekness, that you might know the Lord, and serve Him, and become the glory of all lands.

Alas, you have evilly entreated and requited them. You have set aside all their counsel, and desired none of their reproof. Their appearance was too plain, and their qualifications were too low for you to receive them. You are like the Jews of old who cried, “Are not His brothers and sister among us? Which of the scribes, and of the learned (the orthodox) believe in Him?” So you prophesied their downfall in a year or two, and sought to bring it to pass by making and executing severe and unjust laws. Yes, you endeavored to terrify them out of their holy way, or destroy them for abiding faithful to it. But you have seen how many governments that arose against them, and determined their downfall, have been overturned and extinguished, and that they are still preserved, and have become a great and numerous people. And notwithstanding the many difficulties from without and within, under which they have labored since the Lord first gathered them, they are an increasing people; for the Lord still adds to them, in various places, such as shall be saved if they persevere to the end.

Remember, O nation of great religious profession, how the Lord has waited upon you and pleaded with

you. Awake and arise out of your deep sleep, and hear now His Word in your heart, that you may live. Do not let this your day of visitation pass over your head, or neglect so great a salvation as this, which has come to your house, O England! For why should you die? O land that God desires to bless, be assured it is He that has been in the midst of this despised people, who are in the midst of you. It is not a delusion, as your mistaken teachers have made you believe. And this you shall surely find by their marks and their fruits, if you will but consider these things in the spirit of moderation.

## Chapter III

### *The Gift of God—Christ's Light Within*

Having now spoken something concerning their origin and rise, and briefly portrayed the manner and aim of their ministry, it remains upon me to speak more expressly of the fundamental principles and practices that distinguish this people from the many other professors of religion at this day. I have already touched upon their fundamental principle, which is the light of Christ within, as God's gift for man's salvation. And as this is the root of the excellent tree of doctrines that grew and branched out from it, I believe it warrants further consideration and explanation.

That which the people called Quakers lay down as a main fundamental in religion is this: That God, through Jesus Christ, has placed a gift of His Spirit in every man, to inform them of their duty, and to enable them to do it; and that those who live in humble submission to this are the people of God, and those that live in disobedience to it, are not God's people, whatever name they may bear or profession they may make of religion. This is their ancient, first and standing testimony. With this they began, and this testimony they bore, and do bear to the world.

By a gift of His Spirit, they understand something that is divine; but though it be in man, yet it is not of man, but rather of God; and even as it came from Him, so it leads to Him all who will be led by it.

Now, there are several ways of speaking which this people have been led to use, by which they declare and express what this Spirit is. They call it the light of Christ within man, or simply light within, which is their ancient, and most general and familiar phrase; also the manifestation or appearance of Christ, the witness of God, the seed of God, the seed of the kingdom, His wisdom or Word in the heart, the grace that appears to all men, a measure of the Spirit given to every man, the Truth in the inward parts, the spiritual leaven that leavens the whole lump of man, etc. Many of these are figurative expressions, but all are such as the Holy Spirit has used in Scripture, and will be used in this treatise, for they are frequently found in the writings and ministry of this people. But, to avoid any misapprehension or confusion in the reader,

I would have all know that, by all of these various terms or designations, they mean the same thing as was before mentioned, namely: that gift or grace which, though it be in man, is not of man, but of God, and therefore divine. This Spirit is one in itself, though diversely expressed by the penmen of Scripture, according to its various manifestations and operations.

It is to this Spirit of light, life, and grace, that this people direct all; for they say it is the great agent in all true religion, and that without it, there is no conviction, and so no conversion or regeneration, and consequently no entering into the kingdom of God. That is to say, without this gift there can be no true sight of sin nor sorrow for it, and therefore no forsaking or overcoming it, nor remission or justification from it. A necessary and powerful Spirit indeed, when neither sanctification nor justification can be had without it! In short, there is no becoming virtuous, holy, and good, without this; and there is no acceptance with God, nor peace of soul, but through it. So then, the reason for so much irreligion among Christians, so much superstition instead of devotion, so much profession without possession, and so little heart-reformation, is because people in religion generally overlook this Holy Spirit, and leave it entirely behind.

Alas, men seek to be religious without it, to be Christians without it, but this Spirit is the only means of making them so. It is natural to men in their degenerate state to prefer sacrifice before obedience, to make prayers pass for practice, and to flatter themselves with hope because of their ceremonial and bodily services. In this way they excuse themselves before God from the stricter discipline of His Spirit in the soul, which leads all to take up the cross, deny self, and to do that which God requires of them. This must be every man's true religion, for though a man cannot make himself holy, humble, patient, meek, merciful, just, kind, and charitable; yet the Holy Spirit will make all men so, who embrace the convictions and teachings of it; for this is the only Root of all true religion, and the one good Seed from which all good fruits proceed.

It is by the measure of this Spirit, poured out upon all flesh,<sup>1</sup> that man is given: First, the knowledge of God and of himself, and therein a sight of his duty and any disobedience to it. Secondly, it begets a true sense and sorrow for sin in those that seriously regard the convictions of it. Thirdly, it empowers them to forsake sin, and sanctifies them from it. Fourthly, it applies God's mercies in Christ for the forgiveness of sins that are past unto true justification, upon sincere repentance and obedience. Fifthly, it gives to the faithful perseverance unto a perfect man, and the assurance of blessedness in the age to come.

## **The evidence of Scripture for the light of Christ**

*John 1:1.* In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

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<sup>1</sup> Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17

Verse 8. All things were made by Him.

Verse 4. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Verse 9. That was the true light, which enlightens every man that comes into the world.

I have begun with the account of the beloved disciple, well-known for his excellent knowledge and wisdom in heavenly things. He began his history with Him who was the beginning of the creation of God, and tells us first what Christ was in the beginning, namely, the Word. “In the beginning was the Word.” And though this implies what the Word must be, yet he adds and explains, that “the Word was with God, and the Word was God;” lest any should doubt the divinity of the Word, or have lower thoughts of Him than He deserves. The Word then is divine; and this is indeed an appropriate name by which to call Him, since He is so great an expression of the wisdom and power of God unto men.

“All things were made by Him.” If this is so, He lacks no power. Nothing can be too hard for Him who was sufficient to make all things, and “without whom nothing was made that was made.”<sup>2</sup> And even as we were first made by Him, so we must be newly made by Him, or we can never enjoy our God. Yes, even as man’s Maker must be his husband, so his Creator must be his Redeemer as well.<sup>3</sup>

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” *This is precisely our point.* The evangelist first begins with the nature and being of the Word; from there he descends to the works of the Word; and lastly, he tells us what this same Word is with respect to man (who is above the rest of the creation)—it is his light. The Word was life, and the life was the light of men. This relationship must be very near and intimate indeed, for the very life of the Word (which was with God, and was God) is said to be the light of men. This is not said of any other creature.

Man, then, cannot be without light; no, not without a divine light; for if this light is not divine (which is clearly said to be the life of the divine Word), then there can be no such thing at all as divine or supernatural light and life. And this text does not only prove the divinity of the light, but the universality of it also, for it is expressed in the ninth verse, “That was the true light, which enlightens every man that comes into the world.” John was not this light, but bore witness of Him who was, and who enlightens every man; namely, the Word that became flesh. Thus, both the divine nature, and the universality<sup>4</sup> of

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<sup>2</sup> John 1:3

<sup>3</sup> See Isaiah 54:5

<sup>4</sup> In more recent years, there have been misunderstandings and false conclusions derived from the Quakers’ use of the term *universal* with reference to the light of Christ. This word was used by Friends to establish an intentional contrast with the prevalent idea that God offers the saving knowledge of Christ to only a small, predestined few. The Quakers rejected the idea of individual predestination and a “limited atonement,” insisting that Christ died for all men, and that an offer of redemption extends towards all the sons of Adam through the light and grace of God. It is this gracious, inward invitation that is universal. When received, followed, and obeyed, the light of Christ becomes the life and salvation of the soul. When rejected, the same light becomes man’s eternal condemnation. See John 3:19-21. Early Quakers were not at all proponents of universalism, or universal reconciliation.

the light of Christ within, are here confirmed together.

## **Not a Natural Light**

But though there is no passage or proposition to be found in Holy Scripture in which mankind is more concerned, or that is more clearly laid down by the Holy Spirit than this which I have produced, yet scarcely has any Scripture been more industriously twisted from its true and plain sense. Some insist this to be but a natural light, or a part of man's nature, though it is called the very life of the Word by whom the world was made. But because I desire to be understood, and to deal with all plainness, I will open the terms of this objection as well as I can, and then offer my answer to it.

If by natural is meant a created thing, as man is, or anything that is essential to the composition of man, I deny it. The text is expressly against such an idea, and says, the light with which man is enlightened is the life of the Word which was with God, and was God. But if by natural it is only intended, that we have this light as sure as we are born, and that it (at times) shines in our minds and understandings, and is not the result of any outward revelation, as by angels or men, then we mean and intend the same thing. In this sense, it is natural to man to have a supernatural light, and for the creature to be enlightened by an uncreated light—the life of the creating Word.

And if people would but consider the constitution of man, it would assist much to deliver them from any dilemma upon this account. For man can no more be a light to his own mind, than he is to his own body. He has the capacity of seeing objects when he has the help of light, but cannot be a light to himself by which to see them. Therefore, as the sun in the firmament is the light of the body, and gives us discerning in our temporal affairs, so the life of the Word is the glorious light and sun of the soul. It is our inward luminary, that has power to inform our mind, and give us true judgment and distinction about those things that more immediately concern our better and inward man.

But others will make this text read, not that the Word enlightens all mankind, but only all of those who are enlightened by it, thereby not only narrowing and abusing the text, but rendering God partial and so severe to His creatures as to leave part of the world in perfect darkness, without any means or opportunity of salvation. However, we are assured from the Scriptures, that all have been given light, that Christ is the “light of the world,”<sup>5</sup> and that “He died for all men;”<sup>6</sup> yes, even “the ungodly,”<sup>7</sup> and that “God desires not the death of any, but rather that all should repent and come to the knowledge of the Truth and be saved;”<sup>8</sup> and that the “grace of God has appeared to all men,”<sup>9</sup> etc.

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5 John 8:12

6 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Romans 6:10; Hebrews 2:9, etc.

7 Romans 5:6; see also 2 Peter 2:1

There is a third sort who allege this Scripture to be speaking, not of any illumination by a divine light or Spirit in man, but by the doctrine Christ preached, and the life and example He lived and led in the world. But the knowledge of this reached not to the thousandth part of mankind, nor is this in any way consistent with what the apostle John intends in the beginning of his history, which wholly relates to what Christ was before He took flesh, and what He is to the soul of man by His immediate insinuations and influences.

It is most true that Christ was, in a sense, the light of the world in His outward appearance, and that He shined forth by His heavenly doctrine, His many admirable miracles, and His self-denying life and death. Yet this does not hinder the truth that He was and is also the spiritual light which shines (in various degrees) in the hearts of the sons and daughters of men. For the evangelist, seeking to distinguish Christ's light from John's, who was not the true light, did not set forth Christ's fasting forty days, preaching many sermons, working many miracles, nor His holy life and patient death, but instead showed that the true light, the Messiah, the Word made flesh, enlightens every man that comes into the world. Thus Christ is manifested and distinguished by His giving of light; as indeed, His true followers are distinguished from other people by their receiving and obeying it. There are many other Scriptures, in both Old and New Testaments that refer to the light within, either expressly, or indirectly, which for brevity's sake, I shall forbear reciting.

## **The Efficacy of Christ's Light Within**

Let us then consider the virtue and efficacy of this light with regard to the end for which God has given it, namely, to lead and guide the soul of man to blessedness. In order to effect this, the first thing it does in and for man is to give him a true sight or discerning of himself, what he is and what he does, that he may see his true condition, and know what judgment to make concerning religion and a future state. Let us hear what the Word himself, who cannot err, says of this light, as John relates it in the third chapter of his gospel: "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been wrought in God."<sup>10</sup>

This is a most pregnant description of the virtue and authority of the light. First, it is said to be that by which men ought to examine themselves. Secondly, it is that which gives a true discerning between good and evil, what is of God and what is not of God. And lastly, it is a judge, condemning or acquitting, reproving or comforting the soul of man, according as he rejects or obeys it. Now, that which is able to

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8 Ezekiel 18:32-33:1; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9

9 Titus 2:11

10 John 3:20-21

show unto man what is of God, and what is not, and give the obedient a distinct knowledge of what has been wrought or performed by God's power, and after His will, and what is the mere workings of the creature, this must indeed be both divine and efficacious. For if it were not, it could by no means manifest the mind of God, nor give man a grounded sense and discerning of the rise, nature, and tendency of his mind or inward man, as is both expressed and implied in these words of our Savior.

But that this light does indeed manifest God, is evident from Romans 1:19. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in men, for God has showed it unto them." This is a universal proposition, and we have the apostle's word for it, who was inspired by the Spirit to tell us the truth; let it then have its due weight with us. If that which may be known of God is manifest in men, the people called Quakers cannot be out of the way in preaching up Christ's light within, without which nothing can be manifested to the mind of man, as the same apostle says in his epistle to the Ephesians (vs. 5:13): "Whatsoever makes manifest is light." Rightly then, do they call this light a manifestation or appearance of God, which shows in and to man all that may be known of God.

A passage much like this, is that of the prophet Micah, chapter 6:8. "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" God has shown you, O man! This is very emphatic. But how has He shown him? Why, by this light in the conscience, which the wicked rebel against. For Job has said, "There are those who rebel against the light; they do not know its ways, nor abide in its paths;"<sup>11</sup> but its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace to those who obey it.

This light gives the light of life (which is eternal life) to those who receive and obey it. For, thus says the blessed Savior of the world, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life."<sup>12</sup> Now, He is the light of the entire world because He enlightens every man that comes into the world. Those who obey His light obey Him, and so have the light of life; that is to say, His light becomes eternal life to their soul. For again, it is the life of the Word which is the light in man, and this becomes the life in man through his submissive obedience to its various manifestations.

Furthermore, this light was the very ground of the apostolic message, as the beloved disciple assures us, saying: "This then is the message which we have heard of Him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practice the truth. But 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."<sup>13</sup> This is so comprehensive with regard to the virtue and excellency of the light of Christ in reference to man, that there is little more that can be added to it. For here we see, first, that it reveals God, and that God Himself is light. Secondly, it

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11 Job 24:13

12 John 8:12

13 1 John 1:5-7

distinguishes darkness from light, there being no fellowship between them. Thirdly, that man must walk in the light, as the way to obtain both forgiveness of sin and sanctification from it. And fourthly, that this is the means to have peace and fellowship with God and His people—His true church—who are redeemed from the pollutions of the world.

## Chapter IV

### *Some Objections Considered and Answered*

*Objection:* But some may object that the attributes and effects which we ascribe to the light within belong rather to the Spirit and grace of God, which are the peculiar blessings of the new and second covenant, and the fruit of the coming of Christ.

*Answer:* If it appears that the properties ascribed to the light within are the same with those that are given to the Holy Spirit and grace of God; then surely these are but various terms or epithets, used to express the diverse manifestations or operations of one and the same Spirit.

Now, to try the case, and to see whether the light within is of the same nature with the Spirit and grace of God, and tends to the same end (which is to bring people to God), let the properties of the light be compared with those of the Spirit and grace of God. First, the light proceeds from the one Word, and the one life of that one Word, which was with God and was God, John 1:4, and 1:9. Secondly, it is universal, that is, it is said to enlighten every man. Thirdly, it gives the knowledge of God, and fellowship with Him, Rom. 1:19. John 3:21. 1 John 1:5-6. Fourthly, it manifests and reproves evil, John 3:20. Ephesians 5:13. Fifthly, it is made the rule and guide of Christian living, Ps. 43:3. John 8:12. Ephesians 5:13,15. Sixthly, it is the path for God's people to walk in, Ps. 119:105. Proverbs 4:18. Isaiah 2:5. 1 John 1:7. Rev. 21:24, "And the nations of those who are saved, shall walk in the light of the Lamb." Lastly, it is the armor of the children of God against Satan, Ps. 27:1, "The Lord is my light, whom shall I fear?" And Romans 13:12, "Let us put on the armor of light."

Now let all this be compared with the properties of the Holy Spirit, and their agreement will be very manifest. First, the Spirit proceeded from God, because it is the Spirit of God, Rom. 8:11. Secondly, it is universal; it strove with the old world (Gen. 6:3), and no doubt does so with the new one as well. Everyone has a measure of it given to profit withal, 1 Cor. 12:7. Thirdly, it reveals God, Job 32:8, 1 Cor. 2:10-11. Fourthly, it reproves for sin, John 16:8. Fifthly, it is a rule and guide for the children of God to walk by, Rom. 8:14. Sixthly, it is also the path they are to walk in, Rom. 8:1. Gal. 5:16, "Walk in the Spirit." Lastly, it is likewise the spiritual weapon of every true Christian, Ephesians 6:17, "Take up the sword of the Spirit,

which is the Word of God.” So then, I hope none will deny that this light and this Spirit must be of one and the same nature, work one and the same effect, and tend evidently to one and the same holy end.

And what is said of the light and Spirit, may also very well be said of the light and grace of God. For first, the grace flows from Christ—the Word that took flesh—as well as the light; for even as “in Him was life, and the life was the light of men,”<sup>1</sup> so He was also “full of grace and truth,” John 1:14, and “of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace,” John 1:16. Secondly, it is universal, which can be seen both in the foregoing text, and from the apostle’s words to Titus; “For the grace of God that brings salvation, has appeared to all men,” Titus 2:11. Thirdly, it manifests evil, for “it teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,” vs. 12. Fourthly, it reveals godliness, and so consequently must manifest God. Fifthly, it is an instructor and guide; for the apostle says, “It teaches to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;” and herein is the rule or guide of the Christian life. Sixthly, it is to those who receive it all that they can need or desire, 2 Cor. 12:9, “My grace is sufficient for you;”—a strong testimony from heaven to the power of this teaching and saving grace, under even the strongest temptations.

*Objection:* But there is little mention made of the Spirit, and none of the grace, before Christ’s coming, and therefore the Spirit, as spoken of in the writings of the New Testament, and more especially the grace, must be another, and a nobler thing than the light within.

*Answer:* By no means another thing, but another name for another manifestation or operation of the same Spirit. It is called light from the perception and discerning it gives. “Let there be light, and there was light,” said God in the beginning of the old world. So too there is first light in the beginning of the new creation of God in man. It is called Spirit, because it gives life, sense, motion, and vitality, and thus it is often mentioned in the writings of both Old and New Testaments. By this Spirit, God strove with the world before the flood (Gen. 6:3), and with Israel in the wilderness (Neh. 9:30). And David asked in the agony of his soul, “Where shall I go from Your Spirit?” (Ps. 139:7); and the prophets often felt it. And it is called grace, not from its being another Spirit, but because it was a fuller dispensation of the virtue and power of the same divine Spirit; which, being purely God’s favor and mercy, and not man’s merit, is rightly called the grace of God to undeserving man.

The wind does not always blow strongly, nor does heaven always send down rain freely, nor does the sun always shine forth clearly. Shall we therefore say it is not of the same *kind* of wind, rain, or light, when it blows, rains, or shines but a little, as when it blows, rains, or shines much? It is certainly the same in nature and kind; and so it is with this blessed Spirit under all its various dispensations, manifestations, and operations, which are all for the benefit of man’s soul, ever since the world began.

And we most freely, humbly and thankfully acknowledge that the dispensation of the Gospel is the clearest, fullest, and noblest of all others, both with regard to the coming of Christ in the flesh to be our

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<sup>1</sup> John 1:4

one holy offering for sin through the eternal Spirit; and in the breaking forth of His light, the effusion of His Spirit, and the appearance of His grace in and unto man, in a more excellent manner after His ascension. For though it was not another light or Spirit than that which He had given to man in former ages, yet it was another and greater measure; and this is the great privilege of the Gospel above all former dispensations.

What before shined but dimly, shines since with greater glory. What then appeared but darkly, now appears with open face. Types, figures, and shadows veiled His appearances and made His glory look low and faint; but in the Gospel time the veil is rent and the hidden glory is now made manifest. Under the law it was but as dew or a small rain, but under the Gospel, it may be said to be poured out upon all men, according to that gracious and notable promise of God by the prophet Joel: “In the latter days I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh.”<sup>2</sup>

When it rains plentifully, we say, ‘Look how it pours!’ So too God has augmented His light, grace and Spirit to all in these latter days. They shall not have it sparingly and by small drops, but fully and freely and overflowing too. Thus Peter, that deep and excellent apostle, applied the promise in Joel to the day of Pentecost as the beginning of the accomplishment of it. This is grace and favor and goodness indeed! And therefore rightly may this brighter illumination, this greater effusion of the Spirit, be called grace; for as the coming of the Son excelled the time of the servant, so did the manifestation of the light and Spirit of God since the coming of Christ, excel that of all foregoing dispensations; yet it was ever sufficient to salvation for all who walked in it.

This is our sense of the light, Spirit, and grace of God. And by what is said, it is evident they are one and the same, and that he who has light, need not lack the Spirit or grace of God, if he will but “receive it in the love of it.”<sup>3</sup> For the very light that appears to him, is also Spirit to quicken him, and grace to teach, help, and comfort him. It is sufficient in all circumstances of life to those who diligently mind and obey it.

*Objection:* But some may yet say, “If it is as you declare, why is it then that all who are enlightened, are not so good as they ought to be, or as good as this light would make them?”

*Answer:* Because people do not receive and obey it. All men have reason, but all men are not reasonable. Is it the fault of the grain which lies in the storehouse that it yields no increase, or of the talent hidden in the handkerchief that it accrues no interest?

It is plain in the parable that a talent was given; and it is equally plain that it was capable of increase—both because identical talents had gained in the hands of others, and that the just Judge expected His talent with interest. Now, whose fault was it that the talent did not increase? Was it not the unprofitable

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<sup>2</sup> Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17

<sup>3</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:10

servant who was unfaithful with little? The blind must not blame the sun, nor sinners charge the grace of God with insufficiency. It is sin that darkens the eye, hardens the heart, and hinders good things from the sons of men. Christ tells us, "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine."<sup>4</sup> Men not living up to what they know cannot blame God that they know no more. The unfruitfulness is in us, not in the talent, and it would be well indeed if this were laid to heart.

*Objection:* But some yet object, "If mankind has always had the Holy Spirit, why is it that Gospel truths were not so fully known before the coming of Christ to those that were obedient to it?"

*Answer:* Because a child is not a grown man, nor is the beginning the end; and yet He that is the beginning is also the end. The Spirit is the same, though not the manifestation, and they that are faithful to what they know of the dispensation of their own day shall hear the happy welcome of, "Well done, good and faithful servant."<sup>5</sup>

And yet many of God's people in those days did have a view of the glory of latter times, the improvement of the covenant, and the happiness of the church of God. This we see plainly in the prophecy of Jacob and Moses concerning the restoration of Israel by the Messiah. And David, in many of his excellent psalms, expresses a most sensible and extraordinary enjoyment of the Spirit, and prophesies things to come.<sup>6</sup> The prophets are full of such expressions, and for that reason have their name.<sup>7</sup> All of this was not another Spirit, but another manifestation of the same. The Spirit that came upon Moses was the same that came upon John the Baptist; and the Spirit that came upon Gideon and Sampson, also fell upon Peter and Paul; but it was not the same dispensation of that Spirit.

It has been the way of God to visit and appear to men according to their states and conditions, and according as they have been prepared to receive Him, be it more outwardly or inwardly, sensibly or spiritually. There is no human capacity too low or too high for the reach of this Divine Spirit; for as He made and knows all, so He reaches unto all people. He extends to the lowest, and yet the highest cannot subsist without Him. This made David break forth in his distress, saying, "Where shall I go from Your Spirit, or where shall I flee from Your presence?"<sup>8</sup> Here he implies that the Spirit is everywhere, though not everywhere or at every time alike. "If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me."<sup>9</sup> Yes, even there this Divine

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4 John 17:17

5 Matthew 25:21

6 Particularly his 2nd, 15th, 18th, 22nd, 23rd, 25th, 27th, 32nd, 36th, 37th, 42nd, 43rd, 45th, 51st, 84th, etc.

7 Particularly Isaiah, chapters 2nd, 9th, 11th, 25th, 28th, 32nd, 35th, 42nd, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 63rd, 65th, 66th. Jeremiah also, chapters 23rd, 30th, 31st, 33rd. Ezekiel, chapters 20th, 34th, 36th, 37th. Daniel, chapters 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th. Hosea, chapters 1st, 3rd. Joel, chapters 2nd, 3rd. Amos, chapter 9th. Micah, chapters 4th, 5th. Zachariah, chapters 6th, 8th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 14th. Malachi, chapters 3rd, 4th.

8 Ps. 139:7

9 Ps. 139:8-10

Word, this light of men, this Spirit of God, will find me, lead me, help me, and comfort me. For it is with me wherever I am and wherever I go, in one respect or other. “When you go, it shall lead you; when you sleep, it shall keep you; and when you awake, it shall talk with you;”<sup>10</sup> and I could no more get rid of it, if I so desired, than of myself—so present is it with me, and so close does it stick to me.

*Objection:* But if the Jews had this light, it does not follow that the Gentiles had it also; but by your doctrine all have it.

*Answer:* Yes, and it is the glory of this doctrine which we profess that God’s love is thereby held forth to all. And besides the texts already cited (which are as full and positive as can be expressed), the apostle is very particular in the second chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, “That the Gentiles, not having the law, did by nature the things contained in the law, and were a law unto themselves.” That is, they did not have an outward law as the Jews had, but they had “the work of the law written in their hearts,”<sup>11</sup> and so, having the law in themselves, they might well be a law unto themselves.

So the Jews had it too, but they also had greater outward helps to quicken their obedience to it, such as God did not afford to any other nation. It is for this reason that the obedience of the Gentiles (or uncircumcision) is said to be by nature, or naturally, because it was without those additional, external, and extraordinary laws and signs which the Jews were given to provoke them to duty. But this is so far from discounting the obedient Gentiles, that it rather exalts them in the apostle’s judgment; because though they had less advantages than the Jews, yet the work of the law written in their hearts was made so much the more evident by the good life they lived in the world.

Paul then adds, “their consciences bearing witness,” or as it may be rendered, witnessing with them, “and their thoughts, meanwhile, accusing, or else excusing one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of all hearts by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel.”<sup>12</sup> This presents us with four things to our point, and worth our serious reflection: First, that the Gentiles had the law written in their hearts. Secondly, that their conscience was an allowed witness or evidence regarding their duty. Thirdly, that the judgment made thereby shall be confirmed by the apostle’s Gospel at the great Day, and therefore be valid and irreversible. Fourthly, that this could in no way be the case, unless the light that shined in the conscience were a divine and sufficient light.

*Objection:* But it may be said, “If it is all the work of one Holy Spirit, then why so many modes and forms of religion since the world began? For the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian, all have their great differences; not to mention what has befallen the Christian religion since the beginning of its publication to the world?”

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<sup>10</sup> Proverbs 6:22

<sup>11</sup> Romans 2:15

<sup>12</sup> Romans 2:15-16

*Answer:* I do not know how these may properly be called diverse religions, since they all assert the true God for the object of worship, the Lord Jesus Christ for the only Savior, and the light or Spirit of Christ for the great agent and means of man's conversion and eternal happiness, any more than infancy, youth, and manhood make up three men, instead of three growths or periods of time in one and the same man. But passing that by, the many modes or ways of God appearing to men, arise (as has been said) from the diverse states of men, in all of which it seems to have been God's main design to prevent idolatry and vice by directing their minds to the true object of worship, and pressing virtue and holiness. To the patriarchs, He seems to have spoken mostly by angels in the fashion of men, over and above the inward illumination of the Spirit. To the prophets, for the most part, He communicated by the revelation of the Holy Spirit in them, and accordingly through them to the Jews. And since the Gospel dispensation, He has spoken by His Son, both externally by His coming in the flesh, and internally by His spiritual appearance in the soul as the great light of the world. Yet in all of these dispensations, the use of outward instruments or agents should be understood as a "sowing of light"<sup>13</sup> into the earth from the same Spirit, which cooperates with the manifestation of light immediately experienced in man's own breast.

This is of great weight, both for our information and encouragement, that God's work, in reference to man, is one and the same, and that His eye has ever been upon the same thing in all His dispensations, namely, to make men truly good, by planting His holy awe and fear in their hearts. However, He has condescended, because of the hardness and darkness of men's hearts, to approach and spell out His holy mind to them by low and outward ways, allowing Truth to put on various sorts of garments, in order to better reach to the low state of men, and turn them from false gods and wicked lives.

And if we do but consider the reason of the prevalence of idolatry upon the earlier and darker times of the world (of which Scripture is very particular), we shall find that it arises from this: that their worship was more sensual, and therefore calculated to please the senses of men, being more outward and visible, and more in their own power to perform than a worship more spiritual in nature. They desired to see the object of their devotion, and have it in their power to address it how and whenever they would. For this reason, God, by many judgments and great deliverances, brought forth a people to Himself, that they might remember and worship the Hand that saved them, and in so doing, root up idolatry, and plant the knowledge and fear of Him in their minds as an example to other nations. Whoever reads Deuteronomy, which is a summary of the other four books of Moses, will find the frequent and earnest care and concern of that good man about this very point, and will see how often Israel slipped and lapsed (notwithstanding God's love, care, and patience over them) into the idolatrous customs of the nations about them.<sup>14</sup>

Now that which is furthest from idolatry, and the best antidote against it, is the very Spirit of God of

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<sup>13</sup> Ps. 97:11

<sup>14</sup> Several other Scriptures inform us of the same, especially those of the prophets, Isaiah 54 and 4, Psalms 37, 115, and Jeremiah 10, where the Holy Spirit confutes and rebukes the people, and mocks their idols with a sort of holy disdain.—W. P.

which we have spoken. And the more people's minds are turned and brought to it, and the more their faith, worship, and obedience are bound to the holy illumination and power of it, the nearer they come to the purpose of their creation, and consequently to their Creator. These are more spiritually qualified, and become better fitted to worship God as He is; for (as we are told by our Lord Jesus Christ) He is a Spirit, and will be worshiped in Spirit and in Truth. These are such worshipers as God seeks to worship Him in this Gospel day.

“The hour is coming,” says He, “and now is;”<sup>15</sup> that is to say, ‘some now do, but more shall’—which was a plain assertion for the present time, and a promise and prophecy of the increase of such worshipers in the future. This shows a change intended from a ceremonial worship and state of the church of God, to a spiritual one. Thus the text, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth;”<sup>16</sup> which is to say, when the worship of God shall be more inward than outward, and thus more suitable to the nature of God and to the nobler part of man—the inward and better man. This worship is in Spirit, that is, through the power of the Spirit; and in Truth, that is, in substance, not in shadows, ceremonies, or formalities. Behold, a worship in sincerity, with and in the life of God, being divinely prepared and animated, which both brings man to offer up what is pleasing to Him, and lifts his soul into intimate communion and fellowship with God, who is a Spirit.

And if it be duly weighed, it will appear that God, in all the various manifestations of Himself, has come nearer and nearer to the insides of men, that He might reach to their understandings, open their hearts, and give them a plainer and nearer acquaintance with Himself in Spirit. It is there, in the heart, that man must seek and find the knowledge of God for his eternal happiness.

All things that are made, show forth the power and wisdom of God and His goodness to mankind. Indeed, many appeal to the majesty of creation to silence the atheistical objections of men. But though all created things show forth a God, yet man does so above all the rest. He is the precious stone on the ring, and the most glorious jewel on the globe. Man is a composition of both worlds; his body is of this, his soul of the other world. The body is as the temple of the soul, the soul the temple of the living Word, and the Word the great temple and manifestation of God. By the body, the soul looks into and beholds the creation, and by the Word it beholds its God and the world that is without end. Much might be said of this order of things, but I desire to be brief.

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15 John 4:23

16 John 4:23

## Chapter V

### *The Doctrines of Justification and Salvation*

Much has been rumored and falsely charged upon us by our adversaries with respect to the important doctrines of Christ's satisfaction to God for our sins, and the ground of a sinner's justification before God. I shall first speak negatively, as to what we do not believe, which perhaps has given occasion to those who have been more hasty than wise, to judge us defective in our belief of the efficacy of the death and sufferings of Christ unto justification.

First, we cannot believe that Christ's sufferings and death either satisfy God, or justify men, in such a way that they are thereby immediately accepted of God. We believe they are indeed thereby put into a state capable of being accepted of God, but that it is through the obedience of faith and the sanctification of the Spirit, that they come into a true state of acceptance. We can never think a man justified before God while he remains self-condemned, or that any man can be in Christ who is not a new creature; or that God looks upon men otherwise than they really are. We think it a state of presumption and not of salvation to call Jesus Lord, and not by the work of the Holy Spirit; or Master, when He is not yet master of their affections; or Savior when they are not saved by Him from their sins; or Redeemer when they are not yet redeemed by Him from their passion, pride, covetousness, vanity, vain honors, friendships, and glory of this world. This, we believe, is to deceive one's self, for God will not be mocked; such as men sow, that they must reap. And though Christ indeed did die for us, yet we must, by the assistance of His grace, "work out our salvation with fear and trembling."<sup>1</sup> As He died for sin, so we must die to sin, or we cannot truly be said to be saved by the death and sufferings of Christ, or thoroughly justified and accepted with God.

Now positively, what we believe with respect to justification:

We most certainly believe that Jesus Christ was our holy sacrifice, atonement, and propitiation; that He bore our iniquities, and that by His stripes we were healed of the wounds which Adam gave us in his fall; and that God is just in forgiving true penitents upon the credit of that holy offering which Christ made of Himself to God for us. We believe that what Christ did and suffered has satisfied and pleased God, and that it was for the sake of fallen man who had displeased God. And it is through the offering up of Himself once for all, through the eternal Spirit, that "He has forever perfected those (in all times) that are sanctified,"<sup>2</sup> who have "walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."<sup>3</sup>

In short, we believe that justification consists of two parts, or has a twofold consideration—namely:

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1 Philippians 2:12

2 Hebrews 10:14

3 Romans 8:1,4

justification from the guilt of sin, and justification from the power and pollution of sin; and in this twofold sense justification gives a man full and clear acceptance before God. It is for lack of this latter part that so many souls (who are religiously inclined) are often under doubts, scruples, and despair, notwithstanding all that their teachers tell them of the extent and efficacy of the first part of justification. And it is too general a fault among the professors of Christianity, that they seek to cloak their own active and passive disobedience with the active and passive obedience of Christ.

The first part of justification, we do reverently and humbly acknowledge, is only by virtue of the death and sufferings of Christ. It is nothing we can do, but is done by the operation of the Holy Spirit, who is able to cancel old debts and wipe out old scores. It is the power and efficacy of this propitiatory offering, upon faith and repentance, that justifies us from the sins that are past;<sup>4</sup> and it is the power of Christ's Spirit in our hearts that purifies and makes us acceptable before God. For until the heart of man is purged from sin, God will never accept it. He reproveth, rebukes and condemns those that entertain sin there, and such as these cannot rightly be said to be in a justified state—condemnation and justification being contraries. Therefore, those who believe themselves to be in a justified state because of the active and passive obedience of Christ, even while they are not actively and passively obedient to the Spirit of Christ Jesus, are under a strong and dangerous delusion. And it is for crying out against this sin-pleasing imagination (and doctrine), that we are represented and reproached as being deniers and despisers of the death and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ!

But let it be known to all such who walk in unholiness under a profession of justification: these add to Christ's sufferings and crucify to themselves afresh the Son of God, trampling the blood of His covenant under their feet. For God will not acquit the guilty, nor justify the disobedient and unfaithful. Such deceive themselves, and at the great and final judgment their sentence will not be, "Come you blessed," because it cannot be said to them, "Well done good and faithful servant;" but rather "Go you cursed," for they live and die in a reproveable and condemnable state. For none truly know Christ to be their sacrifice, who reject Him as their sanctifier; for the end of His coming was to save His people from the nature and defilement, as well as the guilt of sin. Accordingly, those who resist His light and Spirit, make His coming and offering of no effect to them.

Therefore, O my reader, do not rest wholly satisfied with what Christ has done for you in His blessed Person without you, but press on to know His power and kingdom within you, so that the strong man (who has too long kept your house) may be bound, his goods spoiled, his works destroyed and sin finished, according to 1 John 3:7. It is for this end, says that beloved disciple, that Christ was manifested; that all things may become new—a new heavens and new earth, in which righteousness dwells. In this you will come to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are His; and so live to Him and not to yourself. Indeed, your love, joy, worship and obedience; your life, conduct and practice; your study,

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<sup>4</sup> See Romans 3:25

meditation and devotion, will all be spiritual.

The Father and the Son will make their abode with you, and Christ will manifest Himself to you; for the secrets of the Lord are with those that fear Him, and these have a holy anointing which leads them into all truth, not needing the teachings of men. Yes, these are better taught, being instructed by the Divine oracle. They are not bare hear-say or traditional Christians, but fresh and living witnesses—those who have seen with their own eyes, heard with their own ears, and handled with their own hands, the Word of life, in its various operations, to their souls' salvation. In this they meet together, in this they preach, and in this they pray and praise. Behold the new covenant fulfilled; the church, anointing, and worship of Christ!

## **Salvation by Christ**

And lest any should say we are ambiguous in our expressions, and allegorize away Christ's appearance in the flesh, meaning thereby only His inward appearance in our own flesh; or that as often as we mention Him we speak only of the mystery, or the spiritual and mystical sense of Him, I desire to preserve all from being misled by such suggestions, and to inform and reclaim such as are under the prejudice of them by declaring the following: We do truly believe and confess, to the glory of God the Father, and the honor of His dear and beloved Son, that Jesus Christ took our nature upon Him, and was like unto us in all things, sin excepted. We believe He was born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, was crucified, dead, and buried in the sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathea, that He rose again the third day, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, in the power and majesty of His Father, who will one day judge the world by Him—even that blessed Man, Christ Jesus—according to their works.

But because we believe this, we must also believe what Christ has said, "He that is with you shall be in you."<sup>5</sup> "I in them, and they in Me,"<sup>6</sup> etc. And the many similar statements of the apostles: "When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me."<sup>7</sup> "The mystery hid from ages, which is Christ in the Gentiles, the hope of glory."<sup>8</sup> "Unless Christ be in you, you are reprobates!"<sup>9</sup> Or must we be represented as deniers of Christ's coming in the flesh, and all the parts and branches of His doing and suffering, only because we believe and stress the necessity of believing, receiving, and obeying His inward and spiritual appearance and manifestation, through His light, grace, and Spirit in the hearts and consciences of men and women,

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5 John 14:17

6 John 14:20

7 Galatians 1:16

8 Colossians 1:27

9 2 Corinthians 13:5

to reprove, convict, convert, and change them? This we esteem hard and unrighteous treatment on the part of our adversaries.

However, we are very ready to declare to the whole world, that we cannot believe men and women can be saved by their belief in the outward, without the sense and experience of the inward. It is this that we oppose, and not His blessed manifestation in the flesh. For we plainly confess that Christ, at that time, overcame our common enemy, foiled him in the open field, and, partaking of our nature, triumphed over the one who had triumphed over it<sup>10</sup> in our forefather Adam, and in all his posterity. Nevertheless, as truly as Christ overcame him in His own person, so too, by His Divine grace being received and obeyed by us, He overcomes the enemy in us; that is, He detects him by His light in the conscience, and enables the creature to resist his fiery darts, to fight the good fight of faith and overcome, and to lay hold of eternal life.

This is the dispensation of grace which we declare has appeared to all, in various measures, teaching all who will receive it, “to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”<sup>11</sup> And because it is from the teaching, experience, and operation of this grace that we minister to others, so the very purpose of our ministry is to turn people’s hearts to this grace in themselves, that all may do the good and acceptable will of God, and work out their salvation with fear and trembling, making their heavenly calling and election sure.

For what a man sows, that he must reap; and he is the servant of whomever he obeys. We must know a true regeneration, or we cannot be children of God and heirs of eternal glory. To be born again, another Spirit must prevail, leaven, season, and govern us, besides the spirit of the world, or our own depraved spirits. This can be no other Spirit than that which dwelt in Christ; for we are told, unless His Spirit dwells in us, we are none of His, Romans 8:9. This Spirit begins in conviction, and ends in conversion and perseverance; the one necessarily following the other. For conversion is the consequence of convictions obeyed, and perseverance is a natural fruit of conversion and being born of God. Such as these “do not sin, because the Seed of God abides in them,”<sup>12</sup> and through faithfulness they continue to the end and obtain the promise, even everlasting life.

But let my reader be assured that we do acknowledge that Christ, through His holy doing and suffering, has obtained mercy from God His Father for mankind, and that His obedience has great influence upon our salvation in all the parts and branches of it, since thereby He became a conqueror, led captivity captive, and obtained gifts for men (with other great and precious promises), that thereby “we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”<sup>13</sup> I say,

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10 i.e. the nature of man, referring to Satan’s conquest and long reign in and over the fallen nature of humanity.

11 Titus 2:11

12 1 John 3:9

we most certainly believe and confess that the active and passive obedience of Christ Jesus affects our salvation throughout, saving from the power and pollution of sin, as well as from the guilt, He being a conqueror as well as a sacrifice, and both through suffering. Yet those who reject the divine gift which He thus obtained, and which He has given to them, and by which they may see their sin and the sinfulness of it and repent and turn away from it, and who do not wait upon God for daily strength to resist the fiery darts of the enemy, and to be comforted through the obedience of faith in this divine grace of the Son of God—such as these do not please God, do not truly believe in God, nor are they in a state of true Christianity or salvation. “Woman,” said Christ to the Samaritan at the well, “If you had known the gift of God, and who it is that speaks to you,”<sup>14</sup> etc. People do not know God or Christ, “whom to know is life eternal,”<sup>15</sup> because they are ignorant of the gift of God, namely, the “manifestation of the Spirit of God which is given to every man to profit withal;”<sup>16</sup> which reveals Christ and God to the soul.

Flesh and blood cannot do it; being educated at Oxford and Cambridge cannot do it; languages and philosophy cannot do it; for those “who through wisdom did not know God,”<sup>17</sup> had these things for their wisdom. They were strong, deep, and accurate in such learning; but alas, they were clouded, puffed up, and set further off from the inward and saving knowledge of God because they sought for it where it cannot be found. Yet the key of David is another thing, which shuts and no man opens, and opens and no man shuts. And all who receive the gift of God into their hearts do find this key, and it opens to them the knowledge of God and of themselves, and gives them quite another sight, taste, and judgment of things than their intellectual or traditional knowledge can afford them. This is the beginning of the new creation of God, and by it we become new creatures.

We are therefore bold to declare that there is no other way like this, by which people can come into Christ, or be true Christians, or receive the advantage that comes by the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And therefore we say—and upon good authority, even that of our own experience, as well as that of the Scriptures of Truth—that Christ will prove no saving sacrifice for those who refuse to obey Him. They that reject the gift, deny the Giver, instead of rejecting themselves for the Giver’s sake. O that people were wise, that they would consider their latter end and the things that make for their eternal peace! Why should they perish in a vain hope of life, while death still reigns within? Or why do they hope to live forever with God, when they do not live unto Him, nor walk with Him now? Awake you that sleep in your sin, or at best, in your self-righteousness! Awake, I say, and Christ shall give you life! For He is the Lord

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13 2 Peter 1:4

14 John 4:10

15 John 17:3

16 1 Corinthians 12:7

17 1 Corinthians 1:21

from heaven, the life-giving Spirit, who quickens us by His Spirit, if we do not resist it and quench it by our disobedience, but rather receive, love and obey it, in all its holy leadings and teachings. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”<sup>18</sup>

To this Holy Spirit I commend my reader, that you may the better see where He is, and come to the true belief and advantage of the doings and sufferings of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For truly He saves from the power and pollution of sin, as well as the guilt of sin, in all who will hear His knocks, open the door of their hearts to Him, and allow Him to work a real and thorough reformation in and for them. In this way the benefit, virtue, and efficacy of His doings and sufferings without us, will come to be livingly and effectually applied and experienced within us, and a fellowship with Christ in His death and sufferings will be felt and known, according to the doctrine of the apostles. But those who continue to live in that sin which made Christ suffer, show they do not know Him, though they profess to be saved by His death and sufferings.

I conclude this chapter with this earnest desire: that however people may mistake, misconstrue, or misrepresent our views on this important subject, they would not deceive themselves in the great business of their own salvation, and while happily declaring that Christ has done all, be found disowned by Him on the last day. Read the 7th of Matthew: it is the one who hears Christ—the great Word of God—and does what He enjoins, commands, and recommends by His own blessed example, that is compared to a wise builder with a strong foundation. No other house will stand in the final shaking and judgment. For this reason we are often plain, direct, and earnest with people to consider that Christ came not to save them in, but from, their sins. Those who think to dismiss themselves from His yoke and burden, His cross and example, and secure themselves by praising Christ for His having done all for them (while He has wrought little or nothing in them, nor have they parted with anything for the love of Him) will finally awake in a dreadful surprise, at the sound of the last trumpet, and this sad and irrevocable sentence, “Depart from Me you workers of iniquity, I do not know you.”<sup>19</sup> May all avoid this terrible end by timely hearkening to wisdom’s voice, and turning at her reproof. For surely she will lead you in the ways of righteousness, and in the midst of the paths of judgment your souls will come to inherit substance—even durable riches and righteousness in the kingdom of God.

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18 Romans 8:14

19 Matthew 7:23; Luke 13:27

## Chapter VI

### *On the True Worship of God, and the True Ministry, which is by His Spirit.*

Now, as the Lord effectually wrought in the hearts of this people by His divine grace, He thus brought them to a divine worship and ministry, whereby they came to experience Christ's words: "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth...for the Father is seeking such to worship Him."<sup>1</sup> For having bowed to the convictions of the Spirit in themselves in their daily course of living (by which they were taught to renounce every appearance of evil, and to do that which was good), they then, in their assembling together, sat down and waited for the preparation of the Holy Spirit, in order to both see their true states and conditions before the Lord, and to worship Him acceptably. And as they were made sensible of any needs, shortcomings, or weaknesses, so in the secret of their own hearts prayer would spring to God through Jesus Christ, to help, assist, and supply. But they did not dare awaken their Beloved before His time,<sup>2</sup> nor approach the throne of the King of glory until He held out His scepter.<sup>3</sup> Nor did they take thought what they should say, or offer their own (or other men's) studied words and forms, for they learned that this was to offer "strange fire;"<sup>4</sup> to pray, but not by the Spirit; to ask, but not in the name. For the name is the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, who prayed and spoke as one having authority, that is, having power, divine energy, and force that reached and pierced the heavens. And this power He gives to all who obey His light, grace, and Spirit, in their solemn waiting upon Him. Accordingly, it is this people's principle, that fire must come from heaven, life and power must come from God, to enable the soul to pour itself out acceptably before Him. And when a coal from His holy altar touches our lips, then we can pray and praise Him as we ought to do.

And as this is our principle (which is according to Scripture), so it is our experience and practice; and therefore we have separated from the worship of men, under its variety of forms, because it is not founded in the operation, motion, and assistance of the Spirit of Christ, but in the appointment, invention and framing of man, both as to matter, words and time. We do not dissent from others in our own wills, but we dare not comply with them against the will of Him who has called us and brought us to His own spiritual worship. Yes, it is in obedience to Him that we are what we are, in our separation from the many ways of worship in the world.

Moreover, even as our worship stands in the operation of the Spirit of Truth in our inward parts, so does our ministry. For as the testimonies of the servants of God of old arose from the operation of His blessed

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1 John 4:23-24

2 Song of Solomon 2:7, 3:5, 8:4,

3 Esther 4:11-5:2, 8:4

4 Leviticus 10:1

Spirit, so must those of His servants in every age; and that which does not have the Spirit of Christ for its spring and source, is of man, and not of Christ. Christian ministers are to minister what they receive; this is Scripture. And what we receive is not our own, and much less another man's, but rather the Lord's. Accordingly, not only must we cease to steal words from our neighbors, but we must take care not to study or speak our own words as well. For Christ told His ministers, "When they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you."<sup>5</sup> Now, if we are not to study what to say before magistrates on behalf of ourselves, much less should we study what to say on behalf of God to His people. "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies."<sup>6</sup> We are to minister as the oracles of God, and so must receive from Christ, God's great Oracle, what we are to minister. And if we minister what we receive, then it is not what we study, collect, and fetch out of our brains, for this is not the mind of Christ, but our own imaginations, and will not profit the people at all.

This was recommended to the Corinthians by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 14, that is, that they should speak as they were moved, or as anything was revealed to them by the Spirit for the edification of the church. "For," he says, "You may all prophesy;" that is, you may all preach unto edification, as anything is revealed to you for the good of others, and as the Spirit gives utterance.<sup>7</sup> And knowing that the Spirit must give Christ's ministers their utterance, so those whom He has prepared and sent are fearful and careful not to utter anything in His name that is not out from His Spirit. Consequently, those who go before the true Guide, and utter words without the knowledge of the mind of the Spirit, are none of Christ's true ministers. These certainly run, but God has not sent them, and they cannot profit the people at all.<sup>8</sup> And indeed, how could they? For it is impossible that a mere man, with all his abilities, arts, and acquirements, can turn people from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, which is the very end and work of the Gospel ministry. Indeed, it must be inspired men, gifted by God, taught and influenced by His heavenly Spirit, who are qualified for so great, so inward, and so spiritual a work.

Ministers of Christ are said to be His witnesses, and the credit of a witness is that he has heard, seen, or handled something true. Thus the beloved disciple states the truth and authority of their mission and ministry in these words: "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, that we declare unto you, that your fellowship may be with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."<sup>9</sup> I say, if Christ's ministers are His witnesses, they must know what they speak; that is, they must have experienced and passed

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5 Matthew 10:19-20

6 1 Peter 4:11

7 See 1 Corinthians 14:29-31

8 Jeremiah 23:32

9 1 John 1:1-3

through the various states and conditions of which they preach, and practically know the truths that they declare to the people. Otherwise, they came not in by the door, but climbed over the wall, and are thieves and robbers.

He that has the key of David comes in at the door (which is Christ Jesus), and has his admission and approbation from Him, being anointed by Him, the only high Priest of the Gospel dispensation. He it is that breathes and lays His hands upon His own ministers. Yes, He anoints them, refills their flask, and renews their horn with oil, that they may have it fresh for every occasion and service which He calls them to and engages them in.

And as they receive freely, freely they give; they do not teach for hire, divine for money, nor preach for gifts and rewards. It was Christ's holy command to His ministers to give freely, and this is our practice. And truly we think it strange that this should be considered a fault, and that preaching for hire should not be seen a mark of false prophets, when it has been so frequently and severely cried out against by the true prophets of God in former times. I desire not to be uncharitable, but it would be wise to call to mind the case of one who formerly offered money to be made a minister, and the answer he met with from the apostle Peter, Acts 8:18-20. May the Lord touch the hearts of those who are giving their money to be made professional ministers in order to live by their preaching, that they may see what ground it is that they are building upon. May they repent and turn to the Lord, that they may find mercy and become living witnesses of His power and goodness in their own souls. Then they will be enabled to tell others what God has done for them, which is the root and ground of all true ministry, and that which God does bless.

*Objection:* But does not this sort of ministry and worship tend to make people careless, and to raise spiritual pride in others? And does it not give occasion for great mischief and irreligion?

*Answer:* By no means, for the end of all words is to bring people to the great Word, Jesus Christ, and then the promise of God is accomplished, that "they shall be all taught of the Lord, from the least to the greatest, and in righteousness they shall be established, and great shall be their peace."<sup>10</sup> With this declaration of Isaiah, the beloved disciple agrees, and thus gives a full answer to this objection: "These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him."<sup>11</sup> Here there are three very observable things: First, that John wrote his epistle upon a particular occasion, that is, to prevent their delusion. Secondly, that he recommends a nearer and superior minister than himself, namely, the anointing or grace which they had received, and which would accompany them in all situations. Thirdly, that if they would but take heed to its teachings, they would have no need of

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<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 54:13-14; Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:11

<sup>11</sup> 1 John 2:27

man's directions, nor fear of his deception. In this way the apostle Paul also spoke to the Thessalonians, saying, "But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another."<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, outward helps are useful and a great blessing, when they are of God. Such was John the Baptist; but remember he pointed all to Christ, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God!"<sup>13</sup> "I baptize you with water, but He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."<sup>14</sup> All true ministry does likewise. Wherever people are sensual, and under a dark eclipse by the intrusion of sin and Satan, God is pleased to send forth His enlightened servants to awaken and turn them from the darkness to the light in themselves, that through obedience to it, they may come to be children of the light, and have their fellowship in it, and an inheritance at last with the saints in light forever.

And because it is the way that God has chosen to call and gather His people, so a living and holy ministry is of great advantage, to watch over and build up the young, and to comfort and establish the feeble and simple ones. But still I say, the more inward, the less outward. That is to say, the more people come to be taught directly by God through the light of His Word and Spirit in their hearts, the less need they will have of outward means. For the prophet writes:

*The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the Lord will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended.*

—Isaiah 16:19-20

This is held by all to be a Gospel promise, and the sun and moon here are generally understood to signify the various external means in the church. Compare this with John 1:13; Rom. 1:19; 1 Cor. 2:11,15; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 John 2:20,27; and Rev. 21:22-24; all of which prove what we assert concerning the sufficiency and glorious privilege of inward and spiritual teachings. And most certainly, as men grow in grace, and know the anointing of the Word in themselves, the dispensation will be less in words (though still in words) and more in life; preaching will be in great measure turned to praising, and worship will be more a walking with God than a talking of Him. For the truest and highest worship that a man is capable of in this world is to bow to God's will at all times and in all places. Yes, it is conformity that gives communion; and there is no fellowship with God, no light of His countenance to be enjoyed, no peace and assurance to be had, further than there is an obedience to His will, and a faithfulness to His indwelling Word, according to the manifestation of its light in the heart.

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<sup>12</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:9

<sup>13</sup> John 1:29,36

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16

I say, this is the truest and highest state of worship; for set days and set places, with all their solemnity, were most in use during the weakest dispensation of the Spirit. Altars, arks and temples, sabbaths and feasts, etc. are not to be found in the writings of the New Testament. There, every day is alike, and every place is alike (but if a day is kept, let it be kept unto the Lord). Thus says the apostle, but he plainly shows a state beyond the keeping of places and times; for with him, to live was Christ, and to die was gain; for the life he lived was by the faith of the Son of God, and therefore it was not he that lived, but Christ that lived in him; that is, Christ ruled, conducted, and bore sway in him. This is the true Christian life, the life of conversion and regeneration, to which all the dispensations of God and ministries of His servants have ever pointed, as the consummation of God's work for man's happiness. Here every man is a temple, and every family a church, and every place a meeting-place, and every visit a meeting.

Not that we would be thought to undervalue public and solemn meetings; for indeed, we have them all over the nation wherever the Lord has called us. Yes, though but two or three of us be in a corner of a country, there we meet, as the apostle exhorted the saints of his time, and reprov'd such as neglected to assemble themselves. We also meet together for a public testimony of religion and worship, and for the edification and encouragement of those who are yet young in the truth, and to call and gather others to the knowledge of it, who are yet going astray, etc. And blessed be God, it is not in vain, since many are thereby added to the church that we hope and believe shall be saved. But yet we show unto you, O reader, a more excellent way of worship. For many may come to meetings, and go away carnal, dead and dry; but the worshipers in spirit and in truth—whose hearts bow, whose minds adore the eternal God who is a Spirit, in and by His own Spirit, and such as conform to His will, and walk with Him in a spiritual life—these are the true, constant, living and acceptable worshipers, whether they be in meetings or out of meetings.

## **Chapter VII**

### *Other Distinctive Principles and Practices*

Besides these general doctrines, which were like larger branches of a gospel tree, there sprang forth several particular doctrines and practices that further evinced the truths which this people espoused. And indeed, many of these smaller branches or testimonies are what other professors of Christianity pretend to hold in words and forms, but not in the power of godliness. For, generally speaking, the power has long been lost because of man's departing from that grace or Seed of life that is in him. And having disregarded it, he has lost the sense of it, though it is in and by this alone that man can be quickened to serve the living God in newness of life. Therefore, finding that the life of religion was largely abandoned, and that the generality of men lived and worshiped God after their own wills—and not after the will of

God nor the mind of Christ—thus what the people called Quakers pressed was not notion, but experience; not formality, but true godliness; for they had become sensible in themselves (through the work of God’s righteous judgments) that “without holiness no man will see the Lord.”<sup>1</sup> Some of their distinctive testimonies are as follows:

First, communion and loving one another. This is a noted characteristic among them, confessed by all sorts of men concerning this people. They will meet, they will help, and they will stick one to another; so that it is common to hear people say, “Look how the Quakers love and take care of one another!” Thus if loving one another, enjoying intimate communion in religion, and manifesting a constant care to meet in order to worship God and help one another, is any mark of primitive Christianity, they had it in an ample manner, blessed be the Lord.

Second, they recommend silence by their example, having very few words upon all occasions, for “in the multitude of words sin is not lacking.”<sup>2</sup> They seek frequent solitude and retirement, but when in company endeavor not to use, nor willingly listen to, unnecessary or unrighteous discourse, whereby they preserve their minds pure and undisturbed from many unprofitable thoughts and distractions. They also keep to their word in business, their yes being yes, and their no being no; nor can their customers, with many words, bring them off from it, for they have more regard to truth than to custom or gain.

Third, they both teach and practice love to their enemies. They not only refuse to seek revenge for any wrongs done to them (condemning this as an unchristian spirit), but they freely forgive, and even help and relieve those that have been cruel to them, even when it is in their power to pay back their oppressors. Many remarkable instances of this could be given if time would allow.

Fourth, not fighting but suffering, is another testimony peculiar to this people. They affirm that the Spirit of Christ teaches men to “beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks, and to learn war no more,”<sup>3</sup> so that “the wolf may lie down with the lamb, and the lion with the calf,”<sup>4</sup> and nothing that hurts or destroys be entertained in the hearts of people. Thus they exhort men to employ their zeal against sin, and to turn their anger against Satan, making war against sin and wickedness so as to dethrone the author of all enmity. For all wars and fighting arise from the lusts of men’s hearts, according to the apostle James,<sup>5</sup> and not from the meek Spirit of Christ Jesus, who is captain of another warfare which is carried on with other weapons. And truly, their testimony in this regard ought not to be considered disagreeable to civil government, since, if they cannot fight for it, neither can they fight against it. Nor is it reasonable that they should be blamed for not fighting for others when they will not

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1 Hebrews 12:14

2 Proverbs 10:19

3 Isaiah 2:4

4 Isaiah 11:6

5 James 4:1-2

even fight for themselves. But though they are not for fighting, yet they are for submitting to government, and this they do not only from fear of punishment, but for conscience-sake, wherever government does not interfere with conscience. For they believe government to be an ordinance of God and a great benefit to mankind wherever it is justly administered.

Fifth, as God has been pleased to call them out from a human ministry, so they cannot (for conscience sake) support and maintain it; and it is upon this ground, and not out of defiance or covetousness, that they refuse to pay tithes, or suchlike pretended church dues, concerning which, many books have been written in their defense. They cannot support what they cannot approve, but must indeed testify against it for two reasons: First, because all compelled maintenance is expressly contrary to Christ's command, who said, "Freely you have received, freely give;"<sup>6</sup> so that any support of gospel ministers should be free and not forced. And second, because the national ministers do not have the Holy Spirit for their foundation, but rather an assortment of human arts and acquirements.

Sixth, they speak truth on all occasions, but dare not swear oaths, for Christ forbids it, saying, "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King... But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."<sup>7</sup> And James, His follower, says, "But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth, or with any other oath. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No,' lest you fall into judgment."<sup>8</sup> Swearing is needless as well as evil, for the reason of swearing is untruth, when a man's yes is not yes. Swearing was used to intimidate men into speaking the truth, and to give others satisfaction that what was sworn was true. But the true Christian's yes being yes (they being under the bond of truth in themselves) the purpose of an oath is answered, and so the use of it is needless, superfluous, and must come from evil.

Seventh, they dare not give worldly honor, vain compliments, flattering titles, or use the frequent and fashionable salutations of the times,<sup>9</sup> seeing plainly the vanity, pride, and ostentation that belong to them. Christ also forbade such things in His day, denouncing the self-flattering spirit that loves greetings in marketplaces and to be called "Rabbi" by men. Their nonconformity in these things comes not from pride, ill-breeding, or fancy, nor do they seek in this way to distinguish themselves as a party, but it is in obedience to the sight and sense they have received from the Spirit of Christ of the evil ground and tendency of such things. And though this has rendered their conduct disagreeable to many who are lovers of themselves and of that honor which comes from men, yet they are mindful of what Christ said to the Jews, "How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes

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6 Matthew 10:8

7 Matthew 5:34-37

8 James 5:12

9 The normal greeting between peers at this time involved scraping the right foot backwards along the ground, bowing low while removing the hat, and then flattering one another with titles like "your Lordship," "your Eminency," etc.

from the only God?”<sup>10</sup>

Eighth, for the same reason they have returned to plainness of speech, that is, saying *thee* and *thou* to a single person, regardless of their status or degree among men.<sup>11</sup> And though men use no other language in their address unto God, they will rarely endure the same from us,<sup>12</sup> so that this has been a great test upon the pride of many, showing their blind and weak insides, notwithstanding their lofty outward professions of religion. And truly, this people’s stance on this point is purely because of conscience, whatever people may think or say of them for it. And though they may be despised and evilly treated, yet their plain appearance in this way is backed by both Scripture and grammar; and as they have propriety of speech in favor of it, so they also have found peace in the practice of it.

Ninth, plainness and simplicity in dress and furniture is another testimony peculiar to them, along with temperance in food, and abstinence from the vain recreations and pastimes of the world—all of which they have been taught by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ to be according to godliness. They have therefore long exhorted all that “their moderation may be known unto all men;”<sup>13</sup> for they have found that the Lord is at hand to enter into judgment for all extravagance, immodesty, and excess.

Tenth, they cannot, in conscience to God, observe so-called holy days, or public fasts and feasts, knowing that such things have no divine warrant, but are instituted, ordained, and appointed in the will of man.

Lastly, they have been led by the good Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ (according to the example of the primitive saints) to have a due care over one another, for the preservation of the whole Society, in a conduct and discipline suitable to their holy profession. The first matter of business that arose among them was the exercise of charity, supplying the necessities of the poor, and seeing that care was taken of widows, orphans, and those who were helpless. Accordingly, collections were generously made for this and various other services in the church, which were entrusted to faithful men of good report, who feared God and did not grow weary in well-doing. This continues to be their regular and careful practice in all the places where this people is found.

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<sup>10</sup> John 5:44

<sup>11</sup> Most modern English speakers are unaware that the words *you* and *your* were originally plural pronouns used only to address two or more people, whereas *thee* and *thou* were used to address one person. In the 1600’s, it became fashionable (as a means of showing honor or flattery) to use the plural *you* and *your* in addressing people of higher social status, while *thee* and *thou* were reserved for servants, children, or people of lower social or economic position. Early Friends stuck to what was then considered “plain language” (using *thee* and *thou* to every single person, and *you* and *your* to two or more), rather than showing preferment by addressing certain individuals in the plural. These may seem like small matters to the 21st century reader, but it is remarkable how many thousands of Friends were insulted, beaten, imprisoned, and even hanged for refusing to conform to these customs.

<sup>12</sup> Though people at this time would use the plural *you* and *your* to address each other, everyone continued using *thee* and *thou* in their addresses to God in prayer. It seemed strangely hypocritical to early Friends that, though their persecutors would pray to their Creator using *thee* and *thou*, they would not tolerate being addressed in the same language.

<sup>13</sup> Philippians 4:5

And as their numbers greatly increased both in town and in country, so that they were looked upon by all sorts of inquirers, they were concerned that all who belonged to them walked worthy of the gospel in all their behavior among men, upon all occasions. For as they compel none to join them, so they rightly insist that those who are of them walk suitably to their profession, in order to be acknowledged by them, and remain in fellowship with them.

And to the end that this good order may be observed in the ways of truth and soberness, for the comfort and edification of the Society, select meetings for business, oversight, and discipline were fixed in all parts that they inhabit, which are held monthly, and which resolve into Quarterly Meetings, and those into one larger Yearly Meeting. These were established for their better communication one with another in those things that maintain piety and charity, and for the careful management of the poor, orphans, orderly walking, integrity to their professions, births, marriages, burials, sufferings, and other such concerns, to the end that this people live peaceably among men, and are in all things good examples.

This then is the account I have to give of the people of God called Quakers, as to their rise, appearance, principles, and practices, in this age of the world, with respect to both their faith and worship, and their discipline and conduct.

## **Chapter VIII**

### *Containing Several Exhortations.*

And now, Friends, you that profess to walk in this way, allow, I beseech you, a word of exhortation—fathers as well as children, elders as well as young men. The glory of this day, and the foundation of the hope that has made us unashamed since we were a people, you know, is that blessed gift of the light and life of Christ which we profess, and to which we direct all people, as the great and divine instrument and agent of man's conversion to God. It was by this that we were first touched and effectually enlightened, as to our inward state, and which put us upon the consideration of our latter end, causing us to set the Lord before our eyes, and to number our days, that we might apply our hearts to wisdom. In that day we judged not after the sight of the eye, nor after the hearing of the ear, but according to the light and sense which this blessed gift gave to us; yes, by it we judged and acted, in reference to things and persons, ourselves and others, and even towards God our Maker. For being quickened by it in our inward man, we could easily discern the difference between things, coming to feel what was right and what was wrong, what was fitting, and what was not, both in reference to religious and civil concerns. And this gift of light and life being the ground of the fellowship of all saints, it was in it that our fellowship stood. In this we

desired to have a sense of one another, and to act towards one another, and all men, in love, faithfulness, and fear.

In feeling the stirrings and motions of this grace in our hearts, we drew near to the Lord, and waited to be prepared by it, that we might feel drawings and movings before we approached the Lord in prayer, or opened our mouths in ministry. In beginning and ending with this stood our comfort, service, and edification. And as we ran faster than it, or fell short of it in our services, we made burdens for ourselves to bear; finding in ourselves a rebuke instead of an acceptance; and instead of “Well-done,” we found, “Who has required this at your hands?”<sup>1</sup> In that day we were an exercised people; our very countenances and deportment declared it.

Care for others was then much upon us, as well as for ourselves, and especially for the newly convinced. Often we had the burden of the word of the Lord for our neighbors, relations, and acquaintances, and sometimes for strangers also. We were likewise in travail for one another’s preservation; not seeking, but shunning occasions of any coldness or misunderstanding, treating one another as those who believed and felt God present, which kept our conduct innocent, serious, and weighty, guarding ourselves against the cares and friendships of the world. We held the truth in the Spirit of it, and not in our own spirits, nor after our own wills and affections.

We were bowed down and brought into subjection to the Lord, to such an extent that it was visible to all who knew us. We did not think ourselves at our own disposal, to go where we wished, or say or do what we wished, or when we wished. Our liberty stood in the liberty of the Spirit of truth; and no pleasure, no profit, no fear, no favor, could draw us from this retired, strict, and watchful frame. We were so far from seeking occasion of social company, that we avoided it when we could, pursuing our own business with moderation, instead of meddling unnecessarily with other people’s affairs.

Our words were few and savory, our looks composed and weighty, and our whole deportment was in plain view to all. True it is, that this retired and strict sort of life exposed us to the criticism of many of the world’s libertines, humorists, and conceited and self-righteous persons, but it was our preservation from many snares to which others were continually exposed by the predominance of the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, which never lack occasion to entice men abroad into communion with the world.

I cannot forget the humility and chaste zeal of that day. O, how constant at meetings, and how watchful in them; how faithful to truth’s life, as well as to truth’s principles; and how single and united we felt in our communion, as, indeed, is fitting for those who profess one Head—even Christ Jesus the Lord.

Now then, first, to you my beloved and much honored brethren in Christ who are in the exercise of

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 1:12

the ministry. To you I say: O, feel life in your ministry! Let life be your commission, your well-spring and treasury on all such occasions; or else (as you well know) there can be no begetting unto God. For nothing makes alive except the life of God; and only a ministry in and from this life can enliven a people to Him. We have seen the fruit of all other ministries, and how few are truly turned by them from the evil of their ways. It is not our learning, our memory, or the repetition of former revelations in our own will and time that will do God's work. A dry doctrinal ministry, however sound in words, can reach only the ears, and its effect is like a dream at best. There is another sort of soundness that is more effective than all, namely: Christ the power of God. This is the key of David, which opens and none can shut; and shuts and none can open. This power is to words what oil is to a lamp, and what the soul is to the body, which made Christ say, "My words are Spirit and they are life;"<sup>2</sup> that is, they proceed from life, and therefore make all alive who receive them. And if the disciples who had lived with Jesus were to stay in Jerusalem until they received it, much more must we wait to receive power from on high before we minister in His name, if indeed we seek to "turn people from darkness to light, and from Satan's power to God."<sup>3</sup>

I fervently bow my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you may always be like-minded, and that you may ever wait reverently for the coming and opening of the Word of life, and attend to it in your ministry and service, that thus you may serve God in His own Spirit. And if your service be little or much, it is well; for much is not too much, and the least is enough, so long as it issues from the motion of God's Spirit. But truly, without it, ever so little is too much, and is to no profit at all.

For it is the Spirit of the Lord, either directly or through the ministry of His servants, "that teaches His people to profit;"<sup>4</sup> and to be sure, so far as we take Him along with us in our services, that far we are profitable, and no further. For if it is the Lord that must work all things in us for our salvation, much more must He work through us for the conversion and edification of others. If, therefore, it was once a cross for us to speak in His assemblies, though the Lord required it at our hands, let it never be so to remain silent, when He does not.

It is one of the most dreadful sayings in the book of God, that "He who adds to the words of the prophecy of this book, God will add to him the plagues written in this book." And to keep back the counsel of God is just as terrible; "For he that takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life."<sup>5</sup> Truly, this has a great caution in it for all who use the name of the Lord, that they be well assured that the Lord indeed speaks, and are not found to be of the number who add to the testimony which the Lord gives them to bear, nor withhold or diminish the same—both being so very offensive to God.

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2 John 6:63

3 Acts 26:18

4 Isaiah 48:17

5 Revelation 22:18-19

Therefore, brethren, let us be careful, neither to out-run our leader, nor loiter behind Him, since he that makes haste may miss his way, and he that stays behind may lose his guide. For even those who formerly received power from on high, had need to wait for wisdom to see how to “rightly divide the word;”<sup>6</sup> which plainly implies that it is possible for one who has received the word of the Lord, to mis-step in the dividing and application of it. This, no doubt, comes from an impatient and self-working spirit that makes an unsound and dangerous mixture. Such ministry can never rightly beget unto God a living and right-minded people.

I am earnest about this, above all other considerations, well knowing how much it concerns the present and future state and preservation of the church of Christ Jesus, which has been gathered and built up by a living and powerful ministry. May your ministry, then, always be held, preserved, and continued in the manifestations, motions, and supplies of the same life and power.

And wherever it is observed, that anyone ministers more from gifts and abilities than from life and power, though they have an enlightened and doctrinal understanding, let them be duly advised and admonished for their own preservation; for such as these will no doubt come to depend upon their own self-sufficiency, insensibly forsaking Christ the living Fountain, to hew out cisterns for themselves that will hold no living waters.<sup>7</sup> And, by degrees, they will draw others away from waiting upon the gift of God in themselves, and from feeling it work in others (to their strength and refreshment), in order to wait upon them, and so turn from God to man again. These make shipwreck of the faith once delivered to the saints, and of a good conscience towards God, which are only maintained by that divine gift of life which first begat the one, and then awakened and sanctified the other.

Nor is it enough that we have once known the divine gift, and by it have reached to the spirits in prison, and been the instruments of convincing others of the way of God, if we do not keep as low and poor in ourselves, and as dependent upon the Lord as ever. For no memory, no repetition of former openings, revelations, or enjoyments, will bring a soul to God, or give bread to the hungry, or water to the thirsty, unless the life accompanies all that we say; and that must be waited for.

O that we may have no other fountain, treasure, or dependence! O that none may presume to act of themselves for God, merely because they have long acted from God! May we never replace the necessity of waiting, with words that arise from our own wisdom, or think that we may take less care and more liberty in speaking than we formerly did. And whenever we do not feel the Lord by His power to open and enlarge us, may we never exceed His supply, or fill up time with our own, regardless of what we have formerly done, or what the expectation of the people may be.

I hope we shall ever remember who it was that said, “Of yourselves you can do nothing.”<sup>8</sup> Our sufficiency

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6 2 Timothy 2:15

7 See Jeremiah 2:13

is in Him. And, indeed, the ministry of the Spirit must keep its parallel and agreement with the birth of the Spirit; that as no man can inherit the kingdom of God unless he is born of the Spirit, so no ministry can beget a soul unto God but that which is from the Spirit. It was for this, as I said before, that the disciples waited before they went forth; and it was in this same power that our elder brethren and messengers of God in our day waited, visited, and reached unto us. So then, having begun in the Spirit, let none ever hope or seek to be made perfect in the flesh; for what is the flesh to the Spirit, or the chaff to the wheat? And if we keep in the Spirit, we shall keep in the unity of it, which is the ground of all true fellowship. For by drinking into that one Spirit, we are made one people to God, and by it we are kept in the unity of the faith and the bond of peace. In this way, no envying, no bitterness, and no strife can have place with us. So shall we continue to watch over one another for good, and not for evil; nor shall we ever begrudge, but rather exceedingly rejoice, to see others increase in the riches of that grace by which God replenishes His faithful servants.

And brethren, as you have been committed with a dispensation of the oracles of God, which gives you frequent opportunities and great freedom with the people among whom you travel, I beseech you, not to think it sufficient merely to declare the word of life in their assemblies, however edifying and comfortable such opportunities may be both to you and to them. But, as was the practice of the man of God before mentioned when among us,<sup>9</sup> look into the state of the churches you visit, inquiring who among them are afflicted or sick, who are tempted, and if any are unfaithful or obstinate, and so endeavor to attend to these things in the wisdom and power of God. This will prepare your way in their hearts to receive you as men of God, and will give you credit with them to do them good by your advice in other respects. In this way, the afflicted will be comforted by you, the tempted strengthened, the sick refreshed, the unfaithful convicted and restored, and those who are obstinate will be softened and fitted for reconciliation. Thus you will show yourselves God's workmen indeed, carrying out your business to the praise of His name who has called you from darkness to light, that you might turn others from Satan's power unto God and His kingdom, which is within.

And you, young convinced ones, be entreated and exhorted to a diligent and chaste waiting upon God, in the way of His blessed manifestation and inward appearance to you. Look not out, but within. Let not another's liberty be your snare; nor act by imitation, but by a true sense and feeling of God's power in yourselves. O crush not the tender buddings of His plant in your souls, nor outrun the holy and gentle motions of it because of your desires and the warmth of your affections. Remember it is a still, small voice that speaks to us in this day. It is not to be heard in the noise and hurry of the mind, but is distinctly understood in a retired and watchful frame. Jesus loved and often chose solitude, going to mountains, gardens, and seashores to avoid crowds and hurries, and to show His disciples that it was good to be solitary and sit loose to the world.

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8 John 15:5

9 i.e. George Fox

Two enemies lie near you: imagination and fleshly liberty. But the plain, holy, and living truth that has convinced you will also preserve you, if you mind it in yourselves, and bring all thoughts, inclinations, and affections to the light, to see if they are wrought in God, or of the enemy, or of yourselves. In this way, a true taste, discerning, and judgment will be formed and preserved in you, concerning what you should do and leave undone. In your diligence and faithfulness you will come to inherit substance, and Christ, the eternal wisdom of God, will fill your treasury. And when you are converted, as well as convinced, then strengthen your brethren, and be ready for every good word and work to which the Lord shall call you. Then you may live to His praise, who has chosen you to be partakers with the saints in light of a kingdom that cannot be shaken, an inheritance incorruptible in eternal habitations.

And now, as for you who are the children of God's people,<sup>10</sup> a great concern is upon my spirit for your good, and often my knees are bowed to the God of your fathers for you, that you may come to be partakers of the same divine life and power that have been the glory of this day, and that you may be a generation for God, a holy nation and special people, zealous for good works, when all our heads are laid in the dust. O you young men and women, let it not suffice that you are the children of the people of the Lord; you must also be born again if you will inherit the kingdom of God. Your fathers are but flesh and can only beget you into the likeness of the first Adam; but you must be begotten into the likeness of the second Adam by a spiritual generation, or you will not, you cannot, be of His children or offspring.

Therefore look carefully about you, O you children of the children of God! Consider your standing, and see what you are in relation to this divine kindred, family, and birth. Have you obeyed the light, and received and walked in the Spirit, which is the incorruptible Seed and Word of the kingdom of God, of which you must be born again? God is no respecter of persons. The father cannot save or answer for the child, nor the child for the father. In the sin that you commit you shall die; and in the righteousness that you do, through Christ Jesus, you shall live; for it is "the willing and obedient that shall eat the good of the land."<sup>11</sup> Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatever all nations and people sow, that they shall reap from the hand of the just God. And then your many and great privileges (above the children of other people) will add weight in the scale against you, if you do not choose the way of the Lord. For you have not only had good doctrine but good example; and what is more, you have been turned to, and acquainted with, that heavenly light of which others have been too generally ignorant. And if you, after hearing and seeing the wonders that God has wrought in the deliverance and preservation of your worthy parents, even through a sea of troubles, and beholding the temporal and spiritual blessings that He has filled them with in the sight of their enemies, I say, if you should neglect and turn your backs upon so great and near a salvation, you would not only be the most ungrateful children both to God and to them, but must expect a dreadful judgment at the hand of the Lord. But may it never be so with any of you, says my soul!

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<sup>10</sup> He is here addressing the children of the first generation of Friends.

<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 1:19

Therefore, O young men and women, look to the Rock of your fathers; there is no other God but Him. There is no other light but His, no other grace but His, nor any Spirit but His to convince, quicken, and comfort you; to lead, preserve, and guide you to God's everlasting kingdom. Seek Him, that you may be possessors as well as professors of the truth, embracing it not only by education, but by judgment and conviction, from a sense begotten in your souls through the operation of the eternal Spirit and power of God. By this alone you will come to be the seed of Abraham through faith, and know the circumcision not made with hands, and so become heirs of the promise made to the fathers of an incorruptible crown. Then, as I said before, you will be a generation unto God, holding up the profession of His blessed truth in the life and power of it. For formality in religion is repugnant to God and to all good men. Therefore I say, be careful not to fall flat and formal, continuing our profession without that salt and savor by which it has come to obtain a good report among men. For wherever the divine virtue of it is not felt in the soul, and waited for and lived in, impurities will quickly break out and show themselves, and manifest the unfaithfulness of such persons whose insides are not seasoned with the nature of that Holy Spirit which they profess.

Therefore, dear children, let me entreat you to shut your eyes to the temptations and allurements of this low and perishing world, and to not allow your affections to be captivated by those lusts and vanities that your fathers, for the truth's sake, long since turned their backs upon. Rather, believe the truth and receive it into your hearts, that you may become the children of God, and that it may never be said of you what the evangelist writes of the Jews in his time, that Christ, the true light, "came to His own, but His own received Him not."<sup>12</sup> For like the Jews of that time, you bear the name and practices of God's people (being their children), and Christ by His light in you, may very well be said to have come to His own; but if you obey Him not, and turn your back upon His light, walking after the vanities of your minds, you will be of that number who "receive Him not." So then, turn to the Lord, and to His gift and Spirit within you. Hear His voice and obey it, that you may set your seal to the testimony of your fathers by the evidence of your own experience. So will the grey hairs of your dear parents, who are yet alive, go down to the grave with joy, knowing that the Spirit and nature which they have known and loved shall live in you when they are gone.

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I shall conclude this chapter with a few words to those who are not of our communion, into whose hands this small book may come.

Friends, as you are the sons and daughters of Adam, and my brethren after the flesh, often and earnest have been my desires and prayers to God on your behalf, that by the power and Spirit of His Son Jesus Christ, whom He has given for the light and life of the world, you may experience your Creator to become

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<sup>12</sup> John 1:11

your Redeemer, and a Restorer of that holy image which you have lost because of sin. And O that you who are called Christians would truly receive Him into your hearts; for it is there you have need of Him! At the door of your hearts He stands and knocks that you might let Him in; but alas, He finds you filled already with other guests, so that a lonely manger is His lot among you, even as it was of old. Nevertheless, you are full of beliefs and notions, like the presumptuous Jews who knew Him not, but rejected and mistreated Him in the days of His flesh. And like them, if you do not come to possess and experience what you profess with words, all your formality in religion will avail nothing in the day of God's judgment.

I beseech you to ponder your eternal condition, and to consider what title, ground, and foundation you have for your Christianity. Do you have more than a profession and a historical belief in the truths of the gospel? Have you known the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire, and the fan of Christ that winnows away the chaff in your heart, with all carnal lusts and affections? Do you experience the divine leaven of the kingdom, which, being received, leavens the whole lump of man, "sanctifying him completely in body, soul, and spirit"?<sup>13</sup> If this is not the ground of your confidence, you are still in a miserable state.

Perhaps you will say that, though you are sinners and live daily in the commission of sin, and are not sanctified as I have described, yet you have faith in Christ who has borne the curse for you, and in Him you are complete by faith—His righteousness having been imputed to you. But, my friends, let me entreat you not to deceive yourselves in a matter as important as the fate of your immortal souls. If you have true faith in Christ, your faith will make you clean.<sup>14</sup> Yes, it will sanctify you; for the faith of the saints was "their victory over the world."<sup>15</sup> By faith they overcame sin within and sinful men without. And if you are indeed in Christ, you will walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, the fruits of which are evident to all. You will be a new creature—newly made, newly fashioned, after God's own will and mold. Old things will be done away, and behold, all things will be new—new love, desires, will, affections, and practices. It will no longer be you who lives (the disobedient, carnal, and worldly you), but Christ who lives in you. To live will be Christ, and to die will be your eternal gain, being assured that your "corruptible shall put on incorruption, and your mortal, immortality,"<sup>16</sup> having a glorious house, eternal in the heavens, that will never wax old or pass away. All of this follows a true being in Christ, even as heat follows fire, and light follows the sun.

Therefore be careful how you presume to rely upon such a notion—believing that you are in Christ even while living in your old fallen nature. For "what communion has light with darkness, or Christ with Belial?"<sup>17</sup> Hear what the beloved disciple tells you: "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who

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13 1 Thessalonians 5:23

14 See Acts 15:9

15 1 John 5:4

16 1 Corinthians 15:53

17 2 Corinthians 6:14-15

practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.”<sup>18</sup> And, “If we say we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practice the truth.”<sup>19</sup> That is, if we go on in a sinful way, are captivated by our carnal affections, and are not converted to God, we walk in darkness, and in that state cannot possibly have any fellowship with God. Christ clothes with His righteousness those who receive His grace in their hearts, and deny themselves, and take up His cross daily and follow Him. Christ’s righteousness makes men inwardly holy—of holy minds, wills, and practices. It is not less Christ’s because we have it; for it is not ours by nature, but by faith and adoption; it is the gift of God. But, still, though it is not ours as of or from ourselves, (for in that sense it is Christ’s, being always of and from Him,) yet it is ours, and must be ours, in possession, efficacy, and experience, in order to do us any good; otherwise Christ’s righteousness will profit us nothing. It was after this manner that He was made unto the primitive Christians their “righteousness, sanctification, justification, and redemption”<sup>20</sup>—not an unfelt imputation, but a discernible transformation. And if ever you will know the comfort, the substance, the marrow of the Christian religion, thus you must also come to learn and obtain it.

Now, my friends, by what you have read, you may perceive that God has indeed visited a despised people among you with this saving knowledge and testimony—a people whom He has upheld and increased to this day, notwithstanding the fierce opposition they have met with. Therefore, despise not the lowness of this appearance; it was, and yet is (we know), a day of small things and of small account with many, and many hard and ill names have been given to it. Nevertheless, it is of God; it came from Him because it leads to Him. This we know beyond any doubt, though we cannot make any man know what we know, unless they will take the same path that we took.

The world talks of God, but what do they do? They pray for power, but reject the light in which the power is known. So then, if you desire to know God, and to worship and serve Him as you ought to do, you must come to the means that He has ordained and given for this purpose. Some seek it in books, and some in learned men; but what they look for is found in themselves (though not of themselves), and so they overlook it. The voice is too still, the seed is too small, and the light shines in darkness, but men are wandering abroad. The woman that lost her coin found it at home, after lighting her candle and sweeping her house. You must do the same, and so you will meet with the answer to Pilate’s question, “What is truth?” Indeed, you will find Truth in the inward parts, the light of Christ within. For Christ is the light of the world, and will be a light unto you to show the truth of your condition. And taking heed unto Him, He will lead you out of all darkness into God’s marvelous light; for light increases upon the obedient. Yes, “Light is sown for the righteous,”<sup>21</sup> and “their way is as a shining sun, that shines forth ever brighter unto the perfect day.”<sup>22</sup>

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18 1 John 3:7

19 1 John 1:6

20 1 Corinthians 1:30

21 Ps. 97:11

Therefore, O friends, turn inward, turn inward, I beseech you! Where the poison is found, there you shall find the antidote too. It is there you need Christ, and there you must find Him. Seek and you shall find, I testify for God! But then you must seek rightly, with your whole heart, as men that seek for their lives, yes, for their eternal lives—diligently, humbly, patiently, as those who can taste no pleasure, comfort, or satisfaction in anything else, unless they find the One their soul needs above all. O, this path is a travail, a spiritual travail! Let the carnal, profane world think and say what it will. It is upon a path of travail you must walk to the city of God that has eternal foundations, if ever you will arrive.

And what will this blessed light do for you? I will tell you:

First, it will show you how man has fallen from God, and the miserable state he is in. It will detect the spirit of the world in all of its baits and allurements, and “set all your sins in order before you.”<sup>23</sup>

Secondly, it will beget a deep sense of sorrow in all who believe its testimony. The light will show you the One whom you have pierced, the blows and wounds you have given Him by your disobedience, and how you have compelled Him to serve because of your sins. Then you will weep and mourn for your frightful offense, but your grief will be that “godly sorrow which works repentance”<sup>24</sup> of which the apostle speaks.

Thirdly, it will bring you to a holy watchfulness, to take care that you do so no more, and that the enemy does not surprise you again. Thus you will be taught to bring every thought, word, and work to the judgment of light, which is the highway of holiness where the redeemed of the Lord do walk. Then, and not till then, you will truly love God above all, and your neighbor as yourselves; and “nothing will hurt, nothing will harm, and nothing will make afraid upon this holy mountain.”<sup>25</sup> So you will come to be Christ’s indeed; for you will be of His nature and Spirit, and not of your own. And when you are Christ’s, then Christ will be yours, and you will experience precious communion with the Father and with the Son. And you will know beyond words the power of the blood, even the blood of Jesus Christ, that immaculate Lamb, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel, and cleanses the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

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Behold the testimony and doctrine of the people called Quakers. Behold their practice and discipline, and the men and women who were sent of God in this excellent work and service. May God, in this day of His great love and power, ever have the glory, honor, thanksgiving, and renown, through His beloved Son and Lamb, our light and life, who sits with Him upon the throne, forever and ever. Amen.

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22 Proverbs 4:18

23 Ps. 50:21; Ps. 90:8

24 2 Corinthians 7:10

25 Isaiah 11:9; 65:25

—Says one whom God long ago favored with His merciful visitation, and who was not disobedient to the heavenly vision and call; to whom the way of truth is more lovely and precious than ever, and knowing the beauty and benefit of it above all worldly treasures, has chosen it for his chiefest joy, and therefore recommends it to your love and choice, because he is with great sincerity and affection,

Your soul's friend,

—WILLIAM PENN.

1696