

Life and Immortality Brought to Light Through the Gospel

by Isaac Penington

The sermon explores the true nature of the Gospel, the state of the church, and the difference between the true church and the false church, emphasizing the importance of understanding and living by the true Word of God.

Scripture: Genesis 3:15, Genesis 22:18, Exodus 3:2, Leviticus 16:15, Leviticus 16:27, Isaiah 6:1, Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 63:9, Daniel 3:25, 1 Corinthians 10:3, Hebrews 4:16

Topics: "Christology", "Spiritual Formation"

Description

Isaac Penington preaches about the threefold appearance of Christ throughout history, emphasizing how Christ was prefigured in the Old Testament, manifested in a body of flesh, and revealed in his Spirit and Power under the gospel. He delves into the symbolism of various aspects of the law and the temple, highlighting how they represent spiritual truths and the inward work of Christ in the hearts of believers. Penington stresses the importance of understanding the spiritual significance behind the outward rituals and offerings, pointing to Christ as the ultimate fulfillment of all types and shadows in the Old Testament.

Transcript

LIFE

AND

IMMORTALITY

BROUGHT TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL

BEING

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

IN

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

Written by

ISAAC PENINGTON

IN THE TIME OF HIS IMPRISONMENT IN READING JAIL

[1671. Published posthumously]

PREFACE THE Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Oh, blessed is he, who meets with that which powerfully saves! Most men's religion is but a talk and profession of that which they have not; and what will such a kind of religion avail, when it comes to be tried by the piercing fire of the Spirit of burning, and pure (impartial) judgment. Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Alas, how few know that! And yet if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and all things become new there.

Who can bear the decision of this trial? For many pretend to be in Christ, and yet they themselves are still in the old nature and spirit. "Be not deceived," saith the apostle, "God is not mocked." Alas, how many are deceived about their religion! Indeed it is impossible for a man not to be deceived, who knoweth not the anointing, nor is taught his religion by the anointing. He is truth and no lie, and he teacheth truth and no lie; but men's apprehensions and conceivings upon the Holy Scriptures and mysteries of God's kingdom are but like themselves, empty and vain.

Oh that men could see with the true eye, hear with the true ear, understand with the true heart! Then might they know indeed, and come to witness the Ethiopian skin washed, and the leopard spots changed; but till then, they may change from one opinion to another, and from one profession and way of religion to another, and yet in nature, spirit, mind, and heart, yea, and in conversation also (as to the substance thereof), remain still one and the same. And what will become of men, whose hope is in their religion, in their knowledge of Christ, in their faith, in their worship, &c., if all these, when they come to be tried, shall be found wanting of the true nature and virtue, and condemned by the Lord for dead and dry!

Oh, that men knew what should be yoked down, what should be turned from and denied, how gloriously and takingly soever it appears! "All flesh is grass;" all fleshly knowledge and religion must pass away. That which the earthly man can comprehend in his understanding, is but the outward, the fleshly part of religion; the spiritual knowledge, the living knowledge, is reserved for and given to the spiritual capacity and understanding, which the children of the Most High receive in the new birth, and holy begetting of life.

Here are some queries, held forth in love to thee, reader, to bring thee into a true sense in many weighty matters. They are not of a confounding (unless it be to that part which is not to know), but of an opening nature; they were sweet to my taste, which (as in God's presence, and by the virtue of his life and Spirit flowing in me) relished the things queried of. I desire they may be profitable to thee also, and that thou mayest witness the guidance of God's Spirit, leading thee into, and giving thee faithfully to walk in, the way that leads to eternal rest.

For our days in this world are but for a moment, and then we must be judged, and disposed of by the Lord, for ever; each person according to the nature and spirit he is of, "and according to the deeds done in the

body, whether they have been good or evil." The Lord give thee so to consider thy ways, that thou mayst apply thy heart to true wisdom; which consists in fearing of God, and departing from evil; which the least child, that is taught of God, learns; and those that are grown up in holiness and righteousness, are skilful and perfect in; so that they cannot do any thing against the truth, but in and for the truth.

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

A

FEW WORDS IN GENERAL

TO THOSE THAT DESIRE THE

KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUE GOD

The Inspiration of the Almighty giveth Understanding.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now, I having erred in time past in my former professions, and been deeply perplexed and distressed, through my erring from the holy seed, Spirit, and power of life; bear with me! bear with me! yea, I say again, bear with me, if I pity others, and sincerely desire that their eyes may be opened to see the pure, living, holy, undefiled way, in which no defiled spirit can walk; but a man must be truly made alive, and truly cleansed in mind and spirit, before he can walk in this way. Now, if we experimentally, most tenderly, and in true love, witness, from the God of life and salvation, where the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the cleansing of his blood and Spirit is met with, and that according to the plain testimony of the Scriptures, why are ye offended with us for our love, and for telling you the truth, as the Lord hath opened our eyes, and taught us to see and read it in the Scriptures of truth, and as we have experimentally found it in Jesus?

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

I. P.

Reading Jail, 26th of the Third Month, 1671

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY, &C.

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

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

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

Query 3. Upon the flight of the true church into the wilderness (when she was thus gone out of sight) did not the false church start up; which made a glorious and taking appearance in the world, to the eye of man's wisdom? Did not she sit upon a scarlet-colored beast (wise and strong) having seven heads, and ten horns? Was she not arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, making the kings, nations, and inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication? What do those things mean? What did the wisdom of God thus describe her for?

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

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

Query 6. What will become of this great woman in the end; this rich, this glorious church? Shall she continue for ever? Shall she sit as a queen for ever, and never see sorrow? Shall the true church never come out of the wilderness, to be restored to her beauty and glory again? Nay, nay; in one day shall her plagues come, -- death and mourning and famine. It is true, she is wise and strong (and the beast also, on which she sits and rides, who is able to make war with? saith man's wisdom); but wiser and stronger is the Lord God Almighty, who judgeth her, and who is taking and will take to him his great power, wherewith he will thunder against her, until he hath brought her down, and her flesh be utterly burnt with fire.

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

Now, whereas many say, that the book of the Revelations is such a mystical book that it is not to be understood; to what end then was it written? It was the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, chap. 1:1. and would Christ give them forth in such words as could not be understood? Again, it is said, ver. 3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand. How can any be blessed in reading, or how can any keep what is written therein, without understanding the things contained in it? How can any follow the true church into the wilderness, or avoid being taken with the golden cup of fornications of the false church, or refuse the mark of the beast (that he take it neither on his forehead nor hand, nor have the name of the beast upon him, nor so much as the number of his name), unless he truly and rightly understand these warnings and descriptions of the Holy Spirit of God, given forth in the book, to preserve in the way of truth, in the way of life (though through great sufferings and tribulations), out of the way of spiritual whoredom and death? For mystical Babylon, the nations of the earth and great ones (generally) commit fornication with. Rev. 17:2 and 18:3. Indeed this book is a mystery to man's wisdom; for it was not given to the wisdom of this world, but is hid from that; but God gave it to Christ to give to his servants; and it is not a mystery (but opened and revealed by the Father's Spirit) to the children of the true wisdom, who are instructed and taught of God to escape the bed of whoredom and spiritual fornication, which the earthly wisdom (in the wisest men of this world) is entangled in.

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

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

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

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

Jesus, they also fulfil the righteousness of the law declared in the letter. Rom. 8:4.

Query 4. What is the commandment of this covenant, and where is it written? The commandments of the other covenant are written in the law of Moses, and in tables of stone; but where is this commandment written, or where is it to be found? Is it in heaven above, to be fetched down from thence; or is it beyond the sea, &c? Nay, is it not very nigh? Is not the Word of this commandment nigh in the mouth and in the heart? And is it not there placed by the Lord for this very end, that men might hear it and do it?

Query 5. Was not this the Word of commandment of life and good, or of death and evil to the Jews? See chap 30:14-15. And is it not so also to mankind? He that hears and obeys the Word of this commandment, doth he not live and partake of good? He that disobeys it, doth he not die, and undergo wrath and evil, tribulation and anguish upon his soul from the hand of the Lord, either poured out upon him at present, or treasured up for him against hereafter? Read Rom. 2:5-6, &c.

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

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

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

III. Some Queries concerning destruction and salvation

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

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

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

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

Query 5. Whether, after Christ appeared in a body of flesh, and shedding his blood, any can be saved thereby, or by any believing on Christ whatsoever, without letting in or receiving that life and power which saves? Be not deceived; God is not mocked. He that believeth in the power which raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and is subject to the power, shall be redeemed and saved thereby. For death came by the soul's separation from the power which gave life, and Christ saves by bringing to the power again; so that he that would indeed be saved by Christ, must believe in God through him, and feel the power which redeems. But let a man believe ever so much concerning God and Christ, until he feel this, and be changed by the virtue and operation of this, he cannot be saved, but is still in his sins, and under condemnation and wrath, because of sin, whatever he thinks of himself.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Query 4. Did not the apostles preach this mystery? Did they not preach the word of faith within in the heart? the kingdom within? Christ, the hope of glory, within? Did they not preach this message of the

gospel (which they had from Christ to carry to men), that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"? And did they not preach it to this very end, to turn men, and bring men from the darkness within to the light within, that in it they might have union and fellowship with God, who is light? Can any have fellowship with God, who is light, but as his spirit is brought out of the inward darkness into the inward light?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Query 3. Is not this way a mystery? Can any learn it, but those whose eyes are opened by the Lord, and to whom the mystery is revealed by him? Can any discern or understand it, but the children of the pure, heavenly wisdom, whom the Lord teacheth, and whose eyes he openeth, to see and justify it in every age?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Query 10. Can any be acquainted with the fear of God, and be sensible of the hour of his judgment, and give glory to him, and worship him, but they must know and receive the everlasting gospel? They that are sent to preach this after the apostasy, are they not sent to preach it as the everlasting gospel? Read Rev. 14:6-7. and consider. For come to life and power in any doctrine, which Christ sends his messengers to preach towards the salvation of men's souls, a man comes to the gospel presently; but read and assent to, and practise all the things, as well as men can, related in the Scriptures, without the life and power, and so acknowledge and believe all that is said concerning Christ; yet for all this, and in the midst of all this, a man may miss of the gospel; for the gospel is a hidden mystery of the life and power, see Col. 1:26-27.

Query 11. Is not the message of the gospel, That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all? Doth not the Spirit of Christ preach this, more or less, to all people under heaven? Yea, is not the gospel preached in every creature, and hid in those that are lost, whom the god of this world hath blinded? For is not the

spirit of God, in some measure, everywhere convincing men of sin, and drawing them out of darkness into the sense and obedience of light? And will not this be the general and universal condemnation of the world, that they did not bring their deeds to the light, but turned from it and hated it, loving the darkness more than it, because their deeds were evil, and they had not a mind to part with them, but to remain and abide in them?

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

VI. Some Queries concerning Righteousness or Justification

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

Query 2. What did the old covenant require? Did it not require obedience to the law of Moses? What doth the new covenant require? Doth it not require faith in Christ, and obedience to his Spirit? Doth it not require faith in the grace, and obedience to the grace which bringeth salvation, teaching to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, &c.?

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

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

Query 5. To what end was Christ made under the law, and did fulfil the righteousness of the law? Was it not that he might accomplish and fulfil that righteousness, and so make way for the bringing in of the everlasting righteousness, even of the righteousness of his own nature and Spirit, which is everlasting? Is not this the righteousness which the children of the new covenant experience in the new and living way? Is not this far beyond the righteousness of the law, if they could fulfil it ever so exactly from the letter? For I feel a vast difference between that righteousness which would belong to me from the law, and the righteousness which flows into my heart from the nature and Spirit of Christ revealed in me, and which floweth up in me from my union with him: for this is absolutely a righteousness of another nature, of another kind, of another root.

Query 6. If Christ's fulfilling the law of Moses, the law of the first covenant, were imputed to us as our righteousness, and we justified in the sight of God thereby, were not then our righteousness the

righteousness of the first covenant in nature, and our justification a justification by the righteousness of the first covenant? For Christ was made under the law, made under the first covenant, and fulfilled the righteousness of the first covenant; so that if that be imputed to us for righteousness, then the righteousness of the first covenant is imputed to us for righteousness, and is our righteousness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Query 4. Art thou come out of the apostasy and spirit of darkness, into the light and Spirit of Christ? What was the apostasy from? Was it not from the Spirit, from the anointing? Wherein did it consist? Did it consist in holding a knowledge of Christ, and form of godliness out of the power? Art thou returned to the anointing, -- to the Holy Spirit of the Father? Hast thou received it? Dost thou live and walk in it, and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh?

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

Query 6. Can any be redeemed to God, but by his judgment and righteousness revealed in them? Is the soul redeemed from its enemies, while its enemies remain in strength, and have the dominion over it? Where grace is received, and the soul taught by it and subject to it, doth it not break the dominion of sin? As the spirit of judgment and burning is felt in any heart, doth it not cut down and burn up sin there? And as the righteous Spirit is turned to, is not his righteous nature received, and doth not the holy and righteous seed spring up in the heart? and as it springeth up, doth it not redeem and deliver that which is joined to it? Can any be redeemed by a righteousness at a distance, without partaking of the new, and holy, and righteous image of the Son? And he that is righteous in measure, he may do righteousness: but no man can do righteousness, until he become righteous, by being joined to, changed by, and in some measure brought forth a new plant to God, in the new, righteous, and holy seed. See 1 John 3:7.

Query 7. Do ye indeed know the new covenant? Was it ever inwardly revealed in you? Do ye know the difference between reading the holy directions given forth in the Scriptures, and so getting them into your minds and practicing them as well as you can, -- I say, do ye know the difference between this and God's writing them in your hearts, and causing you to walk in his ways? Do ye know the difference between reading in the letter and in the Spirit; and between walking according to the oldness of the letter, and according to the newness of the Spirit? Oh that ye might not be deceived about these things, but might know the truth as it is in Jesus, and come into fellowship with us therein! For truly our fellowship is with the Father and the Son, in that which changeth not, but is one and the same for ever: yea, the Lord our God

hath redeemed us out of all changeable ways, religions, and worships, into the one pure way of life, and into the worship in the one Spirit and truth, which changeth not, but is still what it was, even one and the same before the law of Moses, or writings of the prophets, all the time of the law, while Christ was in the flesh, afterwards when he was revealed in Spirit, and all the time of the apostasy, and after the apostasy, and so for ever.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For mind: was not this always the sum and substance in every dispensation? Could men be saved by believing that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; or that in Abraham's seed all the families of the earth should be blessed; or that a child should be born, and a Son given; or that through Christ's name, remission of sins was to be had, &c.; without coming into the true fear, which teacheth and causeth to depart from evil; and without giving glory to God, in bowing to his Spirit's instructions and teachings; and without worshipping him, who made heaven and earth, and sea, and fountains of waters? Or could any fear the Lord, and give glory to him, and come under the hour of his judgment, and worship him, who made heaven, and earth, and sea, and fountains of waters; but they must first feel the power of the gospel overcoming their spirits, and leading them thither?

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

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

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

Quest. 2. But what is the way wherein God teacheth you? may some say.

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

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

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

And in this temper of spirit we find nothing too hard for us; for the strength of Christ is still at hand, even in the midst of our weakness; and the riches of the kingdom are still at hand in the midst of our poverty and nothingness; and his strength works, and our weakness doth not hinder the glory of him that works through it. So being beaten to it, by constant sense and daily experience, that it is not by our willing or running, according to our wisdom and strength, that we can attain any thing; but by God's showing mercy to us in Christ; we therefore daily wait at the posts of God's heavenly wisdom, to feel the gate of mercy and tender love opened to us, and mercy and love flow in upon us; whereby we may, and daily do, obtain what our hearts desire and seek after; blessed be the Lord for ever!

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

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

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

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

63:9. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them," &c. So with the three children, he appeared in the midst of the fiery furnace in a form like the Son of God, as Nebuchadnezzar judged. Dan. 3:25.

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

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

Circumcision was a type of his circumcising the heart, that his children (his holy seed) might love the Lord their God with all their heart, and live.

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

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

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

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

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

Jerusalem, the holy city, was a figure of the new Jerusalem, the spiritual Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of all them that are born of the Spirit; and the hill whereon Jerusalem was built signified God's holy mountain, whereon this his city is built; and the inhabitants of the outward

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

And the ark signified that which holds the law of the new covenant; and the pot of manna, with which kind of food God fed and nourished the soul in the wilderness, before he brought it into the Holy Land, must be for an everlasting memorial in the land of the living. For, indeed, Christ appeared to and was with that people in the wilderness, in a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; which signified the leadings of God's Spirit in the day of the gospel. Isa. 4:5. And he was the rock that followed them; and he was the manna of which they did eat, and the water of which they did drink; for they did eat and drink of the heavenly things in a figure, and (as their spirits were at any time opened) had a taste and sense of the true food, in and through the figure; yea, doubtless, at some times, they had all some sense, and did all eat of the same spiritual meat as we now eat of, "and did all drink of the same spiritual drink" as we now drink of; 1 Cor. 10:3-4. for they were not only all under the cloud, and did not only all pass through the sea, but they were also all baptized in the cloud and in the sea, having a sense of the pure power of the Lord, and of his outstretched arm made bare for them; in which sense they sang his praise, though they soon afterwards forgot his works. Psa. 106:11-12. So likewise there was Aaron's rod, that budded, laid up in the ark; which is the evidence of the true priesthood and ministry for ever; and that which is so is not to be spurned against, but still to be acknowledged and honored, as of God.

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

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

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

Now, in the bullock and goat for the sin-offering, the blood was to be brought into the holy place, to make atonement; and the fat and inwards burnt on the altar; and the flesh, skin, and dung carried forth and burnt without the camp. What means this? Oh, how precious is it to read the figures of the heavenly things with

true understanding! but to read through the figures (with the eye

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