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Light Rising out of Obscurity : or, A Reply to Francis Herr's Pamphlet Intitled, A Short Explication of the Written Word of God; Likewise, of the Christian Baptism, and the Peaceable Kingdom of Christ, against the People Called Quakers

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L I G H T

RISING OUT OF  
O B S C U R I T Y,

O R,

A R E P L Y T O  
F R A N C I S H E R R ' s  
P A M P H L E T,  
I N T I T L E D,

A short Explication of the written Word of GOD;  
L I K E W I S E,

Of the Christian Baptism, and the peaceable Kingdom  
of Christ,

A G A I N S T T H E P E O P L E C A L L E D

Q U A K E R S.

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By BENJAMIN MASON.

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*Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. 1 Peter.*



P H I L A D E L P H I A :

PRINTED BY JOSEPH CRUKSHANK, IN MARKET-  
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STREETS. M.DCC.XC.

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# P R E F A C E.

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I SHALL not make any apology for what is here offered to the public, the importance of the subjects being sufficient to justify the investigation thereof. On reading the forementioned pamphlet, I observed, that whatever reasons the author had met with (which divers worthy members of our religious society have with christian ingenuity given thereon) they have fell short of convincing his understanding of the rectitude of our sentiments in the respects treated on; which is no indication of want of ability, but want of opportunity; for it is unreasonable to suppose, that they should adapt answers to every objection that in future might be made; or that they should do the work of their day and ours also. An idea like this, entertained in an unbelieving heart, has in many ages greatly retarded the reformation, which as yet has made but little progress, for the world still lies in wickedness. I am not insensible of the difficulty attendant on combating with popular opinions, flowing from the influence of education, and supported by the custom of many ages: it is immaterial

terial whether those customs be well or ill founded, with respect to their detention of the mind, they equally militate against things offered not coincident therewith; many of my readers being of this class, it would be irrational to suppose, that such will be wholly divested of prejudices, so as to be impartial in the examination of the subjects hereafter treated on: when the sentiments of the reader stand opposed to the matters proposed, except he can suspend them during the consideration, he will be under an utter incapacity of weighing things in the balance of equity. It is the unbiassed only that can judge impartially.

As heaven is higher than the earth, so in like proportion are the things pertaining to salvation superior to temporal considerations; of which number I conceive the following matters to be. As to the scriptures which Francis Herr endeavours to prove to be the everlasting Word of God, I have endeavoured to discriminate between them and the everlasting Word; but if any will have them called the Word, they ought for distinction to call them the written Word, for they are not everlasting. As to water Baptism, which F. H. endeavours to prove to be an ordinance of Christ, commanded and enjoined by him to be perpetuated and practised on all Christians, I have endeavoured to demonstrate it to be John's dispensation.

As to the heavenly Baptism which Christ commanded, I believe it necessary to be experienced by every son and daughter of Adam, ere they can enter the kingdom of heaven. How important then must it be, to be rightly understood! Is it not high time, that men should entertain a jealousy respecting elementary Baptism, inasmuch as it has proved no remedy against sin, and fruitless of salvation? To define precisely whether our Lord commanded water or  
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the Spirit for this purpose, is what I have principally aimed at, and shall leave the reader to judge of my success. As to the order of time referred to, respecting transactions mentioned in Scriptures, I have depended on its chronology. In treating on the peaceable kingdom of Christ, I have not attempted it objectively, except in two or three instances near the conclusion, but have endeavoured to illustrate the way and manner, by which I believe his kingdom will be advanced in the earth, which I think is agreeable to the scripture testimony, and the spreading of primitive Christianity. In all which my design has been more to clear the truth from misapprehensions, and long practised unessential ordinances, than to exult in a victory over my opponent; therefore I have omitted taking notice of several plain contradictions in his pamphlet.

L I G H T

## L I G H T

RISING OUT OF

## O B S C U R I T Y.

## C H A P T E R I.

*Respecting the Scriptures.*

**I**N the first place, respecting the Scriptures, our writings at large fully exhibit our sense and approbation of them to the world ; we esteem them an historical relation, in which is included an unparalleled train of memorable events (viz.) the majesty, power, and greatness of the Almighty, in the production of the universe ; his laws, commandments, testimonies, mercies, and judgments, dispensed to mankind, intermixed with the moral actions and sayings of men of various descriptions, for the space of above 4000 years.

The world abounds with histories of an inferior kind, so that few are at a loss to know, that a history is only a description or declaration of a thing, and not the thing itself. Therefore the Scriptures are not the everlasting Word ; for John saith, “ In the beginning was the Word ;”<sup>\*</sup> but the Scriptures  
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<sup>\*</sup> John i. 1, 2, 3.

were not in the beginning: "And the Word was with God:" but the bible was not with him. "And the Word was God:" but it would be very impious to say, that the Scriptures were God. "The same was in the beginning with God; all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." But the bible never made any thing, visible nor invisible. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."\* &c. but the Scriptures never became flesh. I humbly think the Apostle here furnishes every unprejudiced reader with materials, that with indubitable clearness discriminate between the everlasting Word and those sacred repositories. The commandments were given for a guide to frail man; and the law, as Paul saith, "was added because of transgressions."† And Moses, the earliest writer that we know of, lived about 2500 years after the beginning alluded to by the Apostle, therefore the books under notice are not that Word, because the most antient of them were not in the beginning; but this Word was the same which Moses directed the attention of Israel to, when he said, "the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."‡ This inspeaking Word not only strove with the Israelites and the Antediluvians, but also with all the offspring of Adam, being nigh unto them in their hearts, &c. both before and since the Scriptures were wrote. Paul saith, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."§ That this could not be the Scriptures, is abundantly evident, because from the beginning to this day, the greater part of mankind have not had the benefit of them. David says, "Thy Word is very pure, therefore

\* John i. verse 14.

† Galatians iii. 19.

‡ Deut. xxx. 14.

§ 1 Cor. xx. 7.

therefore thy servant loveth it."\* This could not be said of any of the books then extant, because as before hinted, there are many relations of matters and sayings included, that are moral in their nature, and some of them speeches of impious men and women, and consequently remote from purity; such as the speech of Lamech to his two wives, of Joseph's mistress to her husband, of Korah in his rebellion against Moses, also of Goliath, Saul, the Witch of Endor, Shimei, &c. This Word, which was without beginning or end of days, the Scriptures speak largely of; but I do not understand any of the sacred writers in the sense our author does, neither can I find, that they designed to have them considered as the Word to which they impute such wonderful effects, but through them to direct men to the Word for guidance and instruction. Observe our Lord's reproof to the Jews (viz.) "Ye have not his Word abiding in you; for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me, and ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."† Perhaps no people in the world were more studious in the Scriptures than they were, which is evident from their expectations thro' them to obtain eternal life; yet our Lord plainly told them, that they had not his Word abiding in them, which is a sufficient proof, that he did not call the Old Testament the Word. The Apostle Paul tells us, that "The Sword of the Spirit, is the Word of God."‡ Also, "The Word is quick and powerful, &c. sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; nei-

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\* Psalm cxix. 147.

† John v. 38.

‡ Eph. vi. 17.

ther is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."\* Is it possible, that any enlightened man can be so ignorant, as to suppose that the Old and New Testament is here meant, or that they have such power and capacity of knowing, dividing asunder and discerning; surely no—for the same Apostle said, "Our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."† "But if the ministration of death written and engraven in stones was glorious," &c. Here the Apostle, by representing the commandments written with the finger of God, as the ministration of death, plainly proves, that it was the letter of the Scriptures which he meant that killeth; thereby exhibiting a caution to the believers, that they might not place their trust and dependance on any written prescriptions, but on the Word or Spirit which only giveth life. It was through a bare adherance unto, and unwarrantable expectations from the Scriptures, that rendered the Jews lifeless and destitute of the Word, or a right knowledge of them; and many since them have erred on that ground. They doubtless thought as our author and many others do, that the Scriptures were the Word, as their high expectations evince; for nothing below that all-creating power could administer life, therefore they remained insensible, in a state where woful disappointment inevitably awaited them.

Since by the Word all things were created and are sustained, visible and invisible; and that it was that Rock and Foundation that followed and conducted Israel in their movements in the wilderness, which  
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\* Heb. iv. 12, 13.

† 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6, 7.

the Apostle says was Christ; then it was the Word in the beginning that spake, and said, let it be so, and it was so. The words spoken were the words of the Word, and not the Word itself, as some of the most remarkable passages in Scripture evince, where the Almighty vocally uttered the commandments and statutes, &c. to Israel: he called them the words, but not the Word (viz.) "These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the Children of Israel."\* "All these words which the Lord commanded him." "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God,"† &c. "And the Lord said unto Moses, write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words," &c. "And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."‡ "These are the words which the Lord hath commanded,"§ &c. "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart,"|| &c.

Francis Herr thinks he has proved something in the following quotations (viz.) "And this is the Word of the Lord." "Hear ye the Word of the Lord." "The Word of the Lord came also unto me." "The Word of the Lord came unto me," &c. with divers more to the same import; to which I answer in the words of Christ, who is the Word, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."¶ From which it is plain, that the Prophets and Servants of the Most High were not mistaken, when they informed those to whom they were sent, that they had the Word of the Lord; for his Spirit was upon them, and his power, which is the Word, was with them. They were only purified, chosen and prepared vehicles, through which the

\* Exod. xix. 6, 7.

† — xx. 1, 2.

‡ — xxxiv. 27, 28.

§ Exod. xxxv. 1.

|| Deut. vi. 6.

¶ Matt. x. 20.

the Word spake: it would be equally true to say, it was not them that spake, but the Word that spake through them, for the Spirit of Christ spake through the Prophets under the law, for "The Prophets have enquired," &c. "Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."\*

Behold in what point of view Peter and John considered the Word, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." "But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you."† Which Word is Christ—for as St. Paul saith, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord,"‡ &c. Again: "I have written unto you young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you,"§ &c. From all which it is abundantly evident, that the Saints when speaking of the Word, did not mean any written prescriptions, however sacred, but the power, sensible presence, and Spirit of God, which they often expressed under various appellations, which impress our minds with ideas of wonderful efficacy, incomprehensible power, immaculate purity, and eternal existence, and not transmutable by mortals, therefore not any thing reducible to ink and paper, things destitute of power, and incapable of motion.

This is a clear point, that all that has ever been uttered or written for man's instruction, from the foundation of the world; or that ever will be to the latest period of time, are included under the denomination of records, testimonies, or declarations of God's Spirit; and that all visible and material things

\* 1 Pet. i. 10, 11,

† ————— 23, 25.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 5.

§ 1 John xi. 14.

things must terminate. "For the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up."\* This will doubtless be verified, literally as well as mystically, but the Word will stand and abide for ever.

These observations, however opposite to popular ideas, are I think well founded upon, and plainly deducible from Scripture, free from any subtilty or unwarrantable philology; and in my sense the inspired writers have sufficiently distinguished the words uttered from that All-powerful Word from whence they proceeded; and it is equally necessary for us to continue proper distinctions, otherwise we shall confound causes with their effects, and finally land in perplexity: and wherein are the Scriptures depreciated, by the term of Holy writ? Holy is an high epithet; it is imputed to the Great First Cause, and therefore cannot degrade the effects; and we think it unsafe for us, who thus understand the Word, to give that denomination to the Scriptures, lest we also fall into the condemnation of the Pharisaical Jews, of whom Paul testifies, "That the Children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished—but their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ."†

\* 2 Peter iii. 10.

† 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14.



## C H A P. II.

*Concerning BAPTISM.*

**C**ONCERNING Water Baptism, Francis Herr calls it a reception into the church and congregation of saints, and that it ought not to be called a Christian Baptism, if it is knowingly administered unto the unconverted. Again he says, it being then spiritual, it requires also spiritual and regenerated men, whose hearts were changed, &c. “ See ! These has St. John baptized, and all such has Jesus Christ commanded to baptize.” If he means, that the administration of water is spiritual, I must dissent from him therein, believing that spiritual and regenerated men have already experienced an efficacious and truly spiritual Baptism, which changes the heart, and needs not the operation of any element ; a reliance on which may subject to the same condemnation into which the Galatians fell, who “ began in the Spirit, and thought to be made perfect in the flesh.”\* And if John the Baptist only baptized “ such as were changed by the word of truth,” &c. then did he find a plentiful harvest of converted men. For Matthew says, “ Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the regions round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan.”† Mark says—“ And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan.”‡ Very comprehensive expressions these. Even the Publicans and Soldiers were not refused by him : from which I infer, that those whom John baptized were generally unconverted, such as needed repentance ; and his mis-

\* Gal. iii. 3.

† Matt. iii. 5.

‡ Mark i. 5.

sion was to shew them typically, by bathing or plunging into, and washing their bodies clean in water, how Christ would by his Spirit wash, cleanse and purify their hearts and consciences. And had those already mentioned been converted persons, they would have known Christ (as John did) when he came with his refining and winnowing Baptism, and not have rejected him.

But to come to the point in hand, he further says, "Such has Jesus Christ commanded to baptize, when he saith, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," &c. And again—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature; he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Hence he would infer, that water is meant in the above commands; to which I answer, that God is a God of order; that Christ is not the author of confusion: if water had there been meant, would it not have been expressed? With what precision were the rites of the law enjoined; and the dispensation of the gospel, which is far more excellent, cannot be less complete. The contests and confusion that have been about this simple point, for many generations, have been almost endless. If therefore water was intended, the command appears to be deficient without the expression thereof; and can we admit, that such an omission escaped him who is omniscient? The end and design of Christ's coming, was to lead men from exterior to interior things.—The new covenant, or gospel dispensation, is spiritual, in which without him we can do nothing to advance his glory. It is the substance of all that was prefigured under the law, which I conceive stood in force until he had passed through it, and fulfilled the  
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the righteousness thereof. When on the cross, "Jesus knowing that all things were accomplished, said I thirst.—And when Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, it is finished."\* This I apprehend to be the end of the typical dispensation, which was accomplished and finished in him; "for Christ is the end of the law."† Yet notwithstanding it was for a time kept to, and taught by the Apostles, it being reasonable to conclude, that their continuance in these things was permitted, more through condescension to the attachments and frailty of human nature in general, than from sensible obligation; long fixed and deep rooted customs and prejudices not being readily separated from. For the same reasons do I apprehend John's Baptism was practised at the first under the gospel for a time, by some who doubtless saw the invalidity thereof, and continued by others superstitiously. The Apostles having been baptized by John, saw such evident testimonies of the divine presence attending his mission, that they in an unexperienced state, not seeing clearly the design and exit thereof, probably thought it to have greater efficacy than they afterwards found, as appears from the sense of Peter and Paul, when in a more experienced period of their apostleship (viz.) "The like figure whereunto Baptism doth also now save us;" (mark, he professes being saved by Baptism) "not the putting away the filth of the flesh," (which is the utmost effect of water) "but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."‡ He who experienceth this resurrection spiritually accomplished in himself, knows well what saving Baptism is. Christ told Peter and his brethren, when bodily present, that when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he would guide them into all

\* John xix. 28, 30. † Rom. x. 4. ‡ 1 Peter iii. 21.

all truth, which is a gradual work. They at that time thought their Master's intention was to restore a temporal kingdom unto Israel ;\* he did not deceive them, but left their judgment to be rectified in that, and many other things (which they could not then bear) by their promised guide. Peter in his spiritual infancy practised water Baptism, having, quickly after his Lord's ascension, received a commission and power to preach the gospel, and to work miracles, by which great numbers were converted to the Christian faith. Conversion and Spiritual Baptism are the same thing ; for both imply a change from a state of nature into a state of grace ; and that power by which he preached the gospel mixing with, or being received in true faith by the hearers, baptized them with the Spirit and wrought their conversion ; but many who heard and believed were not so baptized, for want of faith. The above is verified in the instance of Cornelius. " While he yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word."† The Apostles who had hitherto thought salvation was confined to the Jews, were astonished because the Spirit was conferred on the Gentiles also. This appears to be the eighth year from that miraculous effusion of the Spirit mentioned Acts 2d. It seems on this occasion, as though some had began to doubt of water Baptism, or else why did Peter say, " Can any man forbid that water," &c. Nineteen years after this is the date of his epistle, in which he expressed himself concerning Baptism ; by which time we cannot doubt, but that his understanding and judgment was fully rectified, in that and all other things relative to salvation.

The Apostle Paul, through whose efficacious ministry multitudes of the Gentiles embraced the gospel,

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\* Acts i. 6.

† Acts x. 44.

pel, in the 24th year of his apostleship, says, "I thank God, that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say, that I had baptized in mine own name." This by the context is doubtless generally understood of water Baptism. He then proceeds, saying, "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides I know not whether I baptized any other: for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. The Apostle could not be ignorant of the command, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. Had he understood water there to be meant, he must have been very deficient in the execution of his ministerial function, and also very presumptuous, to thank God that he had done his work so negligently. It is highly probable, that many imagine the Apostle confined what he wrote hereon to the Corinthians; but the contrary is demonstrable, for Stephanas was an inhabitant of Achaia, and not of Corinth (now called Morea.\*) If he had been a Corinthian, Paul's recommendation of him would have been unnecessary; from whence I argue, that those enumerated were not only all the Corinthians that he had baptized with water, but all that he had so baptized any where; but that the Spirit's Baptism had been through the gospel power conferred on many by him, is evident: for Luke who wrote the Acts, and was Paul's companion, says positively (when speaking of Paul's labours) "And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized."† And here F. Herr's query, respecting the twelve Ephesians (on whom the Baptism of the Spirit was conferred by the laying

\* It is the southernmost part of Greece, being a peninsula almost cut off from the main by water, and lies nearest to Achaia, they being joined by a narrow isthmus of considerable length.

† Acts xviii. 8.

ing on of Paul's hands) whether he baptized them with water or no, may be answered; the text says they were baptized, but is silent respecting water. This being three years earlier than his epistle to the Corinthians, determines the point so far in our favour, that we may venture to say he did not baptize them with water. Is it any greater miracle or less possible to confer the Spirit's Baptism, than to heal the sick, restore the lame, cast out devils, and raise the dead? surely no; with men they are all impossible, but with God all things are possible. And there are many instances in Scripture, where men not only performed wonders, and things impossible as men, through his power, but also where those things are imputed to men as their acts. And Paul professes a power to confer gifts of the Spirit, saying, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift."\*

Now that water Baptism was John's Baptism, is by all granted; and that he was the only officer divinely commissioned to administer it, is all that can be proved. That the Spirit's Baptism is Christ's Baptism, is equally true. But if water Baptism was also intended to be perpetuated as an ordinance of Christ, his entire silence respecting any command thereon, must be very extraordinary. What did John mean when he said, "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor,"† &c. What else does his description of the purifying effects of Christ's Baptism argue, but that in like manner as I wash, bathe, and purify your bodies in water, so shall he who cometh wash, cleanse, and

\* Rom. i. 11.

† Luke iii. 16. 17.

and purify your hearts and consciences, in his spiritual laver? And what else did John mean, when he said, he must increase, but I must decrease, if it was not in the administration of their different baptismal offices? In what other point of view can we understand it? since to increase implies a gradual spreading or prevailing, and to decrease a gradual diminution; and whatever continues to decrease will terminate. Again: that water is not Christ's Baptism, is clear to me on this head (viz.) as he came to fulfil, and also to abrogate and rend the vail of figurative performances (though originally of equal authority with water Baptism) in order to make way for an higher dispensation; the substance of all that was typified by the ordinances under the law, "which made nothing perfect;" it would therefore be irrational to suppose, that he who came after the power of an endless life, who by "the bringing in of a better hope,"\* should again devolve into shadowy and exterior things. For Paul saith, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (touch not, taste not, handle not; which are all to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"†

F. Herr calls on us to answer him from Holy Writ, where our Lord has given his disciples, &c. power, or commanded them to baptize men with the Holy Ghost; to which I answer, when he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." By this he assured them, that his power was all-sufficient, and should not be lacking: and "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever

\* Heb. vii. 19, 16.

† Coll. ii. 20, 21, and 22.



soever I have commanded you ; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," is a positive command, with an assurance that his presence should not fail them. Likewise, " Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature ; he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not," &c. These two texts our author links together, and so do I,\* supposing them both to have been written at one time. He says, this injunction the Apostles received, as the commandment of their Lord and Master, in which sense I also accept it, having no doubt but that the Baptism of the Spirit was hereby commanded and enjoined ; for only to have enjoined plunging, dipping, and purifying their bodies in water, is a work that sinful men could perform without supernatural aid, and needed not such assurance given of the never failing presence of Almighty Power. And to me it seems demonstrable, that Water was no more intended than expressed, which I think may thus be proved : Our Lord positively says, " He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." Here is no proviso ; he did not say, may be, but shall be saved ; from whence I argue, the Baptism which our Lord commanded, is absolutely a saving Baptism ; and that if water was meant, the consequence is inevitably

\* It is evident, that these two texts were spoken at one time : Matthew says, " Behold he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him."†—Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, &c. Mark says, " Tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him."‡ And the two Evangelists only mention one interview with the eleven in consequence of this direction ; the first says, some doubted ; the latter, that he upbraided them with unbelief ; and it cannot be supposed, that they doubted or disbelieved in his resurrection, after they had seen him.

† Matthew xxxviii. 7, 6.

‡ Mark xvi. 17.



evitably the same ; it must follow, that all who have believed, and been baptized therewith, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are saved, Simon Magus not excepted, for he believed and was baptized. Are there any among the sons of Adam so replete with credulity as to believe, that water, however or by whomsoever administered, is possessed of such soul redeeming efficacy ? surely no ; for it is a deplorable truth, that thousands, yea tens of thousands, who have believed and been baptized in the manner described, have lived, and do live in all the gratifications of sensuality ; and many of them believed not in the possibility of their being delivered from them in this life, therefore far from a state of salvation. If he that believeth, and is baptized (as our Lord commanded) shall be saved, then it was the Spirit's Baptism which he commanded his Apostles to administer, and not water.

Another touchstone he has given for an infallible rule (viz.) Trees are known by their fruits ; " By their fruits ye shall know them ; " \* which is applicable to men or things. He that is baptized with the Spirit, bringeth forth the fruits of the Spirit, which are " love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ; against such there is no law. " † The fruits or works of the flesh mentioned in the three preceding verses, are, " Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, of which I tell you, that they who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. " ‡ If therefore the fruits of many who have been baptized with water, be such as the flesh bringeth forth, then are they not in a state of salvation.

\* Matt. vii. 20. † Gal. v. 22, 23. ‡ Ver. 19, 20, 21.

salvation. Again : if many who have believed, and been baptized with water, be not in a state of salvation, then is the Baptism wherewith they were baptized not the Baptism which Christ commanded.

If the first be true, that the Baptism which Christ commanded be absolutely a saving Baptism, then is the last also true, that Water Baptism is not the Baptism which he commanded and enjoined, because it absolutely is not a saving Baptism.

A Baptism therefore, that cannot save or redeem men from their sins, puts them in no better condition than they would be in if there was no Baptism at all, since it neither makes men more holy nor less wicked : it is refuted by its own consequences ; and like circumcision or uncircumcision, it availeth nothing. And as to the capacity of Christ's Ministers, in the administration of Spiritual Baptism, he told his Apostles, that John truly baptized them with water, but they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence ; (here he represents John as the dispenser of water, and assumes no part of his mission to himself) which promise was fulfilled in the days of Pentecost, when they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. From which it appears, that to be filled with the Holy Spirit, or to have it conferred, and to be baptized therewith, are the same things. Wherefore I argue, that the Apostles did confer the Holy Ghost,\* by the laying on of their hands ; which when Simon Magus saw, he offered them money, thinking to make gain thereby : also the twelve on whom Paul laid his hands heretofore mentioned. Marvel not at these things, for Christ's Spirit is the Christian's strength, which Paul experienced when he said, " I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,"† and as  
before

\* Acts viii. 17.

† Phil. iv. 13.

before hinted, declared this sufficiency to be of God, who had made them able Ministers of the Spirit, and not of the letter ; therefore he that ministereth the Spirit, conferreth the Spirit ; and he that conferreth the Spirit, baptizeth with the Spirit. Christ said, “ Without me ye can do nothing,” but through him they could do all things. Without him it was, and is equally impossible for them, or any now, to preach the gospel (“ which is the power of God unto salvation”\*) to the edification of the church and God’s glory ; therefore whoever attempts to officiate as a Gospel Minister, without being sensibly called of God, and on every such occasion renewedly qualified and put forth by the aid of his power, experiencing his Spirit to give utterance as the Apostles did, cannot profit the people ; for he who dependeth on the Scriptures only for doctrine, and not on the Spirit, is a minister of the letter, and not of the Spirit : such were they who taught for doctrine the precepts of men ; and he that hath “ not the Spirit of Christ is none of his ;”† and he who abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, cannot be his Minister, however eloquent or coherent his doctrines may be : therefore, whatever such do in that line, it being without him, is presumption and worse than nothing.

The above may be considered as a digression, but as it tends to elucidate the subject under notice, I have inserted it ; apprehending that I have been enabled, in a good degree, to demonstrate that Christ has not only commanded, but also given power to his Disciples and Apostles to administer the Baptism of the Holy Spirit ; and I may add, not unto them only who heard him utter the command, but to all that should go forth in his name to the end of the world.

F. Herr tells us of Water Baptism being a proof or seal of regeneration. This is transferring it from  
being

\* Rom. i. 16.

† Rom. viii. 9.

being a type of good things to come, to be an enſign or evidence that they are come; but as it leaves no viſible nor diſtinguiſhable mark or impreſſion on the body, nor makes any material change, ſo as to produce different fruits; and the idea being without foundation in reaſon, or precept from Holy Writ, it may be rejected as being merely imaginary in its effects, and deſtitute of any real conſequence; therefore, with other legal rites, it may now be deemed but a uſeleſs ordinance. The beſt ſeal or proof of having been regenerated, are the fruits of the Spirit heretofore mentioned, which are unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life. And if any want a diſtinguiſhable badge of being Members of Chriſt's Church, Love is the criterion which he propoſed for that end, ſaying, "By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another."\*

We are charged by F. Herr with inſinuating, that Water Baptiſm was derived from the law, and he calls on us to prove where it began. In the firſt place it will be right to define what is Water Baptiſm; is it not to dip, plunge, bathe, or waſh, ſo as to cleanſe the body? or as Peter hath it, to put away the filth of the fleſh? This I take to be what properly conſtitutes Water Baptiſm, when performed on a religious account; any words or ceremony uttered during the operation, does not make it more or leſs ſo. We do not find that John the Baptiſt had any fixed ceremony, except it was to preach the doctrine of repentance; therefore, if to waſh, cleanſe, and purify the body, be what properly conſtitutes Water Baptiſm, in the original ſenſe of the word, then was Water Baptiſm often on religious accounts practiſed by the Iſraelites under the law.† But we do not ſay that

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John

\* John xiii. 35.

† Levit. xv. from verſe 5th to 27th—and Num. xix. from 8th to 21ſt.

John derived his commission from the law, but immediately from heaven: yet if John's Baptism had not had a near affinity with the washings and purifications common among the Jews (which in fact were Baptisms) it is highly probable it would not have found such universal reception amongst that people, who were very tenacious of the customs delivered by Moses. This was abundantly verified; for when Christ came, who had greater testimony than John, his doctrine so contradicted their prejudices, that they almost universally rejected and disowned him.

The following are quotations from the works of Isaac Pennington, a worthy member of our society, who lived in the last century, and had experienced both elementary and Spiritual Baptism. He says,\* "It is said, go teach baptizing, but it is not said baptizing with water, but in the name, or rather (as the Greek is) into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

"Now to baptize with water is one thing, and to baptize into the name is another; as they who experience the Spiritual Baptism know it to be: for the word of faith turns men from Satan to the power of life; and then as they receive the power, and are made partakers of the power, they are baptized into the power and virtue of life; and so they are buried (so far as they come into Christ) by the power of his Spirit, into this Heavenly Baptism, into death unto sin, and by the same power are made alive unto righteousness; and so the name of the Lord, the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, comes over them, and they rise up in it unto life and righteousness, and so are dead unto sin, and alive unto God. Now any outward circumcising or washing, can be but a figure of this; but the inward circumcising and washing

washing is the thing itself. For Christ sent not his able Ministers of the New Testament to minister the letter, or to minister the figures of things, but to minister the Spirit (else how were they able Ministers of the Spirit?) to minister the substance; not to minister a circumcision or Baptism which might be shaken and pass away, as outward and elementary, but to minister the circumcision and Baptism which cannot be shaken, which is the circumcision and Baptism of the gospel; the circumcision and Baptism of the kingdom, which is never to be shaken and pass away as elementary, but to stand and abide for ever.—Read, Heb. xii. 26, 27, 28, and consider how all elementary and outward things, which could be shaken, were to be shaken and pass away, that those things which were of an higher nature, even of the nature of the kingdom, might remain and be established in their stead.”

He says,\* “The Greek word is not *ἐν*, which signifieth in; but *ἐν*, which signifieth into: So that the Baptism here commanded is to baptize into the Name, into the Father’s Name, into the Son’s Name, into the Spirit’s Name, by turning them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, and then the power and life of God’s Holy Spirit comes over their hearts and minds, and breaketh the power of Satan, and washes their consciences from that which is dead, and plungeth or dippeth them into that which is living.”

\* Page 421.

CHAP.

## C H A P. III.

*Concerning the peaceable KINGDOM of CHRIST.*

**C**ONCERNING the peaceable kingdom of the Messiah, we are instructed by many prophecies in Scripture, respecting its spreading and prevalence; and that in process of time, the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.\* Isaiah says, “ And it shall come to pass in the last days (that is, the gospel days) that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it; and many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, &c. and he shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”† Also, “ Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.”§ “ They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”||

Hosea

\* Rev. xi. 15.

§ Isaiah ix. 6, 7.

† Isaiah ii. 2, 3, 4.

|| — xi. 9.

Micah iv. 1, 2, 3.

Hosea says, " And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground ; and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely."\*

Zechariah says, " And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off ; and he shall speak peace unto the Heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."†

The 60th chapter of Isaiah seems all to the like import ; and the Prophet personating the Almighty, saith, " I the Lord will hasten it in his time."

These recited predictions may suffice to evince—that a time of more universal happiness than hath hitherto been, awaits mankind ; but in what manner shall so great a revolution be brought to pass ? Do we look for it to be an instantaneous work, while we remain idle spectators thereof ? What is the kingdom of Christ, and wherein doth it consist ? What saith the Scripture thereon ? " For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."‡ " My kingdom (said our blessed Lord) is not of this world ; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight,"§ &c. And further, " Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."|| " Be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."¶ " No doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them  
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\* Hosea ii. 18.

§ John xviii. 36.

† Zechariah ix. 10.

|| Matt. iv. 17.

‡ Rom. xiv. 17.

¶ Luke x. 11—xi. 20.



and said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; for behold, the kingdom of God is within you."\* If therefore his kingdom be not of this world, and yet within or in the heart, then it must be in the hearts of those who are led and governed by his Spirit. "For no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." "For because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."† From whence it is evident, that a great change must be effected, before the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of Christ; for behold on the right hand and on the left, in city and country, how these fruits of the flesh, together with wrath, strife, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like abound. The world yet lies in wickedness; and in that state stands excluded. It is only as men become his disciples and followers in the regeneration, that they can become subjects of his heavenly kingdom: And the terms of discipleship are plain—"He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."‡ Again: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."—And "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, he cannot be my disciple."§ These first rudiments of Christianity are strongly inculcated, as being indispensably necessary to constitute a disciple and subject of his peaceable kingdom. Yet no compulsive means are used, only the power of love; if we expect to be compelled by any other power, our hope will be in vain. All his invitations are perfectly consistent with free agency: "If any man will come after me let him," &c. all that

\* Luke xvii. 20, 21.

† Eph. v. 5, 6.

‡ Matt. x. 38.

§ Luke xix. 29—xiv. 27.

that will come may come. The will is free; good and evil are set before us in unreserved terms, without distinction or respect of persons, either for their learning, wisdom, eloquence, or preferments. They are by nature all (placed on a level) children of wrath. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him."\* With him "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all."† Therefore, since God is no respecter of persons, it necessarily follows, that all who are willing to lay hold on the terms of salvation, through perseverance, will be saved. It was by a strict compliance therewith, that the gospel and kingdom of Christ made glorious advances in the Apostle's days; and doubtless by the same appointed means will be effected the fulfilling of the prophecies heretofore recited; for the completion whereof, it seems that some of the primitive Christians were looking:—against which the Apostle Paul forewarned them, saying, "We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition: Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time: for the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will

\* Rom. x. 12.

† Colos. iii. 11.

will let until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,"\* &c—which was abundantly verified in after ages; a great falling away, and a dark night of Apostacy came over the first Christian Churches, and eclipsed the brightness thereof, in which the mystery of iniquity, which had already begun, did mightily work in all the deceiveableness of unrighteousness; and here the man of sin, the sinful part, or transgressing nature in man, which is called the birth after the flesh, or the old man with his deeds, or man unconverted, not changed from nature into grace, had the pre-eminence; in which state or nature Satan hath his dominion, and doubtless did mightily work through men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth; "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:"† from such the Apostle said, turn away—who also said, "The time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth; and shall be turned unto fables."‡ All which has literally come to pass, by departing from the faith once delivered to the Saints; and by ceasing to live and to walk in the spirit, they came not to have the deeds of the body mortified, nor to experience the renovating effects thereof, whereby they came not to witness Christ revealed

\* 2 Thes. ii. from the 1st to the 10th verse.

† 2 Tim. iii. 5.

‡ Chap. iv. 3, 4.

vealed in their hearts, nor to “ put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”\* And having departed from this fountain of purity, they committed the two evils complained of by the Prophet (viz.) “ They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”† They could no longer draw water from thence; therefore, to supply the want of those sanctified vessels, through whom the church had been refreshed and edified, they hewed out other sources; they substituted literature, vain philosophy, and the traditions of men, in lieu of those heavenly endowments.—Christ called, qualified, and sent forth his own ministers; and on observing the work to be great, and the labourers but few, he directed them to pray unto him who is Lord of the harvest, that he might send forth more labourers, without delegating any part of the power respecting their call and qualifications, to any man or body of men; he did not direct that they should be equipped with languages, and other rudiments of this world, but in common preferred such as were destitute of those accomplishments, being less replete with self-sufficiency, and having no other source to depend on, could confide entirely on him for every necessary supply; knowing that “ every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”‡ Paul, who appeared the most learned of the Apostles, declared, that his “ preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power:” he adds, “ that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; howbeit, we speak  

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wisdom

\* Eph. iv. 24.

† Jerem. ii. 13.

‡ James i. 17.

wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought ; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew.\* The knowledge of which mysteries, wisdom, and things of God, he further asserts, cannot be acquired, but by the revelation of the Spirit of God. But how opposite have the pursuits of the professed followers of Christ been, since the Apostles days, to acquire the requisite qualifications for the ministry ! Man's wisdom deviseth shining and formidable accoutrements, to effect God's purposes, not having faith to depend on the aid of his Spirit, and the armoury thereof ; they have had recourse to means adapted to the ideas of the wise, the learned, and the princes of this world ; reverse to the Apostle's description as recited, not considering, that " the world by wisdom knows not God."† The Apostle clearly invalidates all human acquirements in things pertaining to salvation and godliness, saying, where is the wise ? where is the scribe ? where is the disputer of this world ? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ?—And the means by which God chuseth to effect his purposes, are often weak and contemptible in the eyes of men, that the boaster may be excluded ; for he will not give his glory unto men. At the sounding of rams' horns, the walls of Jericho were thrown down ; with the jaw-bone of an ass, Sampson slew a thousand men ; with a sling and smooth stones David killed the Philistine giant ; and through unlearned men, destitute of scholastic acquirements, did the Saviour of man destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nought the understanding of the prudent,

\* 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

† 1 Cor. i. 21.

dent, confounding both Jews and Greeks, and introduced a spiritual system, in opposition to the powers, policy, and spirit of this world. He called into his service, "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence."\* By means of this sort great purposes were effected, and the world as it were turned upside down: light invaded the regions of darkness, and the kingdom of Christ made great advances in the earth, through the aid of his Spirit; but by departing therefrom, they lost this efficacious power—not all at once, but gradually. For we have reason to believe, that many pious men, during several centuries after the Apostles' days, beheld with regret, and with all their might opposed the torrent of corruptions which invaded the churches, but were overborne by corrupt men, who had crept in under specious pretences, and often condemned the truth, and established error by a majority of voices. Here the learned, the wise, and great men of this world, gained the superiority over the simple-hearted, who often had to wrestle with principalities, and with powers, and with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with spiritual wickedness in high places, loving not their lives unto death, were grievously persecuted, and many sealed their testimony with their blood. So in process of time, great obscurity prevailed, insomuch that little more than the shell of Christianity was left, and that clouded with superstition

\* 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28, 29.

flition and Heathenish innovations, so as not to resemble the original. It was in these dark ages, that preaching for hire was introduced, which in process of time became a lucrative trade to live by, and carnal weapons came in use among Christians, which had been wholly renounced in purer ages preceding. It was in the gloomy æras of apostacy, that Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, became the primary qualifications of men inducted into the ministerial office, without which none could otherwise be admitted. This was circumscribing the Holy One of Israel, excluding him in whom the sovereign right centered, and Pilate like, placing or writing those Oriental languages over his head. Thus having quenched the Spirit, and swerved from the foundation whereon Christ builded his church, which is the revelation of the divine will, against which the gates of hell could not prevail, it is no wonder that darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people.

Having briefly traced the steps of degeneracy, and the means by which Antichrist, the God of this world, through the medium of men whose stations rendered them conspicuous, and who sought more to establish their own consequence, than the government and gospel of Christ, subverted the faith; I shall now leave this part of the subject, and endeavour, as I may be abilitated, to point out by what means we may expect the gospel in its primitive, soul-saving efficacy, to spread and prevail, to the fulfilling of those prophecies respecting its universality.

If therefore the kingdom of heaven be within, as Christ declared, then it is in the heart that we must wait for its appearance; it is recommended to us in Scripture under various appellations, as the word nigh in the heart, the new covenant, the law written in the heart, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, a light shining in a dark place, the  
 grace

grace of God, the anointing, &c. which operates in the heart where it is received, as the "leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."\* It sanctifieth body, soul, and spirit. It is "like the refiners fire, and like a fullers soap, and shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."† This only is the preparation of heart, by which Christ qualifies ministers for the promulgation of his gospel and kingdom; and this renovation of heart is not only necessary for those whom he sends forth to preach the glad tidings of the gospel, but equally so to all the offspring of Adam; for we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God: and as Christ came to restore and redeem man out of the fall, up into the image or similitude of God, we cannot doubt his power fully to execute his glorious design, if we through an evil heart of unbelief refuse not to entertain him in his spiritual appearance, who said, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."‡ Here is the communion of saints; here is a partaking of the Lord's Supper essentially experienced, and here his office is "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquities, and to bring in everlasting righteousness."§ His coming into the heart may at the first be small, even as a grain of mustard-seed. Many have denied him admittance in his spiritual or second coming, because it was not with irresistible power, and wonderful revelations, but in a lowly, humble appearance, and in secret reproves evil thoughts, evil deeds, and all unfruitful

\* Matt. xiii. 33.

† Rev. iii. 20.

‡ Mal. iii. 2, 3.

§ Dan. ix. 24.



fruitful works of darkness. But unto as many as received him (the Apostle said) he gave power to become the sons of God: and all this is possible to every rational creature; for Christ gave himself a ransom for the sins of the whole world; and he who will not believe in the possibility of being ransomed, and set free from sin in this life, is an unbeliever, and is not benefited by his coming. To such he said, if ye die in your sins, where I go ye cannot come:—these oppose and retard the advancement of his peaceable kingdom: the daily cross, that great stumbling stone, and rock of offence, stands in the way, and as a flaming sword guardeth the entrance into the kingdom; so that the unconverted, the unsanctified, nor any unholy or unclean thing can ever enter; consequently can never be his subjects: for “except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven: whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”\* This is mortifying work, thus to be humbled, and to have all our acquirements and consequence laid in the dust, and to be reduced into the simplicity, innocence, and similitude of a little child; a state absolutely necessary to be experienced by every man and woman. It is the new birth, which Nicodemus marvelled at, though a master in Israel. Are there not many who are learned and wise, and as masters among the people, to whom this doctrine is equally strange? It is a being created anew in Christ Jesus. And these that are born of the Spirit, are children of the kingdom; and as they persevere in the heavenly race, they will experience a growth from the state of a child to that of a young man, and to a strong man, and an elder in Christ. And these being redeemed from the cor-  
ruptions

\* Matthew xviii. 3, 4.

ruptions of nature, and from the maxims, friendship, and spirit of the world, and being crucified to the world, and the world unto them, having put off the old man with his deeds, their affections are set on things above; counting all things as dross, and as dung, that they may win Christ. Being guided and governed by his Spirit, which breathes peace on earth, and good will to men, they cannot lift up a sword, nor any carnal weapon against any man, being well persuaded, that the nature and design of the gospel spirit is to save mens' lives, and not to destroy them: the ground of wars and fighting, which stands in the natural and fallen estate, being taken away, they can love their enemies, and those who despitefully use and persecute them: they feel great compassion and love to flow towards them; and their prayers often mentally, and sometimes vocally ascend to the God of the Spirits of all flesh, that he may hasten his sacred purposes, and cause the glorious light of the gospel more eminently to be displayed, and to break forth on the right hand, and on the left, that the mountain of the Lord's house may be established in the top of the mountains, that all nations may flow unto it, that they may beat their swords into plow-shares, and learn war no more.

And every man and woman, who through grace comes to experience this glorious translation out of darkness into the light of the Lord, enjoys internally the privileges which the gospel and government of the Prince of Peace promiseth; for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."\* But outwardly these are often abridged in their privileges, and persecuted by the men of this world, because the life of a follow-  
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\* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

er of Christ is reverse to the spirit thereof: "for he that is born after the flesh, persecuteth him that is born after the Spirit." Tribulations are attendant on the gospel; and he "that will live godly in this world must suffer persecution." This has been the lot and portion of the followers of Christ through many generations, and will doubtless, in a greater or lesser degree, continue to be so, until by a more general effusion of gospel light, that prophecy be fulfilled (*viz.*) "He will destroy in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations, and he will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth."\* What is this mountain which the Prophet frequently mentions, but the profession of the truth substantially experienced, and not literally held in an impure conscience, which shall rise above the mountains and hills of empty and lifeless profession? What is this covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations, but the prejudices, the unbelief and darkness, that is over the hearts of the people, so that they grope as at noon day, and receive not the truth? What is the rebuke of his people, but the rod of persecution which hath stained the history of many generations?—And what is the death that shall be swallowed up in victory, but dead and unsubstantial forms, and a profession of the truth held in unrighteousness? that brings not to the knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, whom to know is life eternal. This is not a literal knowledge only, but a knowledge revealed in the heart, the essence and substance of all religion. Those who attain this knowledge are Jews  
 God

\* Isaiah xxv. 7, 8.

in spirit; they are of the circumcision, who worship God in Spirit. By these, through the aid of his omnipotence, will the coming of the day of Christ be accelerated, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. But as the declension from primitive gospel righteousness was gradual, so may we expect the return thereof to be, and so hath it been for several centuries; there has been a breaking forth of light in pious men, who according to the degrees of it manifested to them, were faithful and valiant in opposing the superstition and idolatry of the Romish Church, for which they endured a great fight of afflictions, and many finished their course in the flames; and in the generations succeeding, down to the present time, light has increased and risen higher and higher, insomuch that the spirit of persecution in several nations is held in abhorrence; and as this divine principle of light and grace is admitted to operate, it will disseminate and spread into the dark corners of the earth, and by its efficacy penetrate through the covering, and rend the vail of prejudices and unbelief, whereby the hidden things of darkness will be manifested, and that busy, active part in man, which has had the pre-eminence since the Apostle's days in preaching, praying, singing, and a round of exteriors, will be seen to be the first nature, exercised in a fruitless toil.

We have reason to believe, that in the coming and spreading of this peaceable government, that prophecy will be as plentifully verified, as in the first ages of the gospel (viz. "And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants, and upon the handmaids in those days, will

I pour out my Spirit.”\* Doubtless many of these will have to run to and fro, and knowledge will increase, until his righteousness go forth as brightness, and his salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

If therefore the Lord's hand be not shortened, nor his ear heavy ; if there be no variableness nor shadow of turning in him ; and if it be iniquity that separates between the people and their God, and sin that hides his face from them, then in repenting and returning unto him, with full purpose of heart, he will return unto them ; for “ the Lord will give grace and glory ; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”† If so, then doubtless his church and people, as they adhere to his inspeaking word, will be replenished with all necessary gifts for edification, for building one another up in the faith, for the promulgation of righteousness and peace, for the propagation of the gospel among the Heathens, in order that the bow, and the sword, and the battle may be broke out of the earth, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, that he may reign for ever and ever.

In treating on this subject, I have not hitherto taken any notice of my opponent ; what he has wrote thereon appearing to militate but little against us, except in two cases. In speaking of the peaceable constitution of Christ's kingdom, wherein he seems to approve our conduct and sentiments respecting war, he queries of us where war is more strictly forbid than going to law—charging us with making use of the law as much as any other people, wherein I am satisfied he is mistaken, as our religious society, from its first rise, has manifested a great concern to discourage contentious and litigious dispositions, and as  
much

\* Joel ii. 28, 29.

† Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

much as possible to avoid going to law, especially with our own members, with whom they are not allowed that liberty, except in extraordinary cases; and in order thereto, any who have differences respecting interests or property, are directed by our discipline to proceed in an orderly, christian-like manner; first by going, or writing if at a distance, one to the other, in a friendly way; and if they fail of success, then to take one or two suitable and judicious Friends, when the injured is in like manner to make his claim, and those accompanying are to give their utmost assistance, to have the matter justly and speedily ended: if living at too great a distance, they are otherwise to proceed by writing; but if the matter appears too difficult for them, they are to advise the parties to choose referees, and engage themselves to abide their determination. But if either of the said parties refuse such advice or endeavours, they are to be complained of to the monthly meeting; of which complaint he or she is to be notified, and requested to attend; and the parties are there at liberty, or rather advised to nominate as before, and the meeting may add one or more, if the occasion appears to require it; but if the parties refuse to attend, and to nominate, then the meeting is to appoint a sufficient number of Friends to hear and determine the same, as speedily as the nature of the case will admit. But if either of the parties refuse to attend the arbitrators, and submit the case, or to abide by the judgment or determination of the Friends so chosen or appointed, such are to be dealt with as disorderly persons, that regard not peace, and that slight the order and unity of the brethren; and after due admonition, if he or she persists therein, such are to be disowned and testified against by the meeting. But if any find themselves aggrieved by such determination, they have a right to a re-hearing, except where bonds are entered.

ed into ; and if such still are dissatisfied, they are allowed the privilege of an appeal to a superior meeting. But where there are cases so circumstanced, that the fore mentioned orderly proceeding cannot be complied with, without a manifest damage to the creditor or claimant, that monthly meeting, upon due enquiry finding them to be truly so, are to allow such to have the matter tried at law, with this caution, that the parties on both sides do behave towards each other in brotherly love ; and in asserting their apprehended right, that it be done with decency and moderation, without anger or animosity, lest thereby they occasion the truth to be evil spoken of.

And as it is our duty to seek peace with all men, and to avoid giving just offence to any, our members are advised to avoid going to law with others not of our persuasion, angrily or in a passion, or without due consideration, and having first in a friendly way shewn his opponent the justness of his cause, and having offered to put the matter to a neighbourly reference, so that no just occasion be given to such to go to law with them ; but to shew a willingness and readiness to settle it peaceably between themselves, or to submit to a reference ; whereby it will appear, that the intention of our discipline is to discourage and prevent law-suits as much as possible, which our religious society as a body endeavours to maintain inviolate : but as our members are dispersed in various parts, some of them remote from the care of their brethren, we cannot account for their conduct individually ; but when it comes to our knowledge, that they act repugnant to the good order of the society, we labour to reclaim them ; and after due forbearance, if they prove refractory, we separate them from us, as persons unworthy of Christian Fellowship.

He



He further observes, respecting the addressees we present to Kings and Princes, saying, that he can see no other motive in it, than that they are meant to flatter, and to obtain applause and honour before the world—which I think is an uncharitable reflection. To find them expressed in decent and becoming language, is no error: the design of them in general is, to manifest our good will, loyalty, and peaceable demeanour as subjects; to express public acknowledgments of our gratitude to them, for the quiet enjoyment of our religious and civil liberties; carefully ascribing the honour unto God, who had disposed their hearts to moderation, and to assure them, that while we adhere to our principles, they have nothing to fear from us; in the doing of which, we hold up a testimony for the peaceable kingdom and government of Christ.

Now having in this essay (though not minutely particular) taken notice of the most material parts of F. Herr's publication, especially wherein he objects to our principles and practice, in which I apprehend the rest is generally included, except where he speaks of Noah becoming a Preacher of Righteousness, in a manner that to me is mysterious and unintelligible. I should not have supposed it improbable, if he had represented him really, rather than figuratively so; and that it consists abundantly more with the long-suffering of a gracious and merciful God, previous to the building of the ark, to command Noah to preach repentance to the depraved Antideluvians, and to forewarn them of the impending judgment, except they repented of their wickedness, than to cause the flood of waters to destroy them without such warning; in which case he would really be a Preacher of Righteousness. And as Chronologers place the command given him to build the ark 100 years before the flood came, it furnishes sufficient ground to suppose,



pose, that Noah was employed much of that time in some benevolent work of that nature, which entitled him to the denomination of a Preacher of Righteousness.

And now reader, having according to ability received, endeavoured to pomote thy instruction, edification, and advancement heaven-ward : if nevertheless human frailty should be presented to thy view, impute that to the author, to whom belongs blushing and confusion of face ; but if any thing herein contained should, through the divine blessing, tend to enlighten and excite in thee a hunger and a thirst after righteousness, ascribe that unto God only wise, who is the fountain of all goodness, and source of every blessing, the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, to whom belongs all glory, honour, and praise, now and for ever more.

I am thy friend and well-wisher,

BENJAMIN MASON.

F I N I S.

