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The Christian Experiences, Gospel Labours and Writings, of That Ancient Servant of Christ

Stephen Crisp

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CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCES,

Gospel Labours and Writings,

OF

THAT ANCIENT SERVANT OF CHRIST,

STEPHEN CRISP.

God giveth to man that is good in his sight, wisdom, and knowledge,
and joy.—*Eccl.* 2, 26.

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A

PREFACE

BY WAY OF

TESTIMONY CONCERNING STEPHEN CRISP,

AND HIS FOLLOWING WORKS.

ALTHOUGH my intimacy with our deceased friend was but of later years, yet I find something in my mind to write concerning him, and in commemoration of God's blessed power, and word of life that reached him, and made him through faith and obedience unto the Lord Jesus Christ, what he was; for that is it which is most worthy of praise, and without it we are nothing, nor able to do any thing that tends to our own peace, or the benefit of others.

And it was by this, the Lord in the morning of this blessed day, that he hath caused to spring from on high, visited his soul in this latter age of the world; wherein, after a night of darkness, and time of apostacy, he was graciously pleased, (by that divine and heavenly light, which he, in the beginning caused to shine out of darkness, to shine into the hearts of many, and gave unto them the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Christ Jesus, and made them possessors of this treasure in their earthen vessels, that were poor and despicable instruments in the eyes of the worldly wise and their own, yet fitted and raised up by the power of him that raised up our Lord Jesus from the dead, commissioned and sent forth by the Lord, in the evidence and demonstration of his eternal Spirit,) to publish the glad tidings of peace, to preach the gospel of life and salvation, and to turn people from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God; that they might know remission of sin, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

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And this ministry as it was of God, and these instruments being raised, and sent by him, he blessed their labours, and made them successful for the good of many. And by the ministry of one of these, though but a stripling, and young in years, viz. that servant of God James Parnell, that finished his testimony with his blood, and left many seals of his ministry in and about that very town of Colchester, where our dear deceased friend, Stephen Crisp was born, lived, was reached, and convinced of the blessed truth; (and by the same word that he preached, and was an able minister of,) was our worthy friend quickened, and made a serviceable minister of the gospel of Christ, and freely preached the same about thirty-five years; and travelled for that end, in many parts of England, Scotland, Holland, Germany, and the Low Countries, endured many hardships, was in several perils, and suffered imprisonment for his faithful testimony, for the precious truth, (as by his own journal of his life may more largely appear,) and through his exercise in the same, became capable to counsel and advise those that were under sufferings, and was ready to help them therein; and exhorted to, and practised charity, and was mindful to do good and communicate, a sacrifice well pleasing unto God; and also to assist many in their temporal affairs and settlement thereof; often pressing friends thereto, and to do it timely, that no differences, discontents, or trouble might arise after their decease. And was very serviceable in his advice to many widows, and helpful to fatherless children in divers respects; being endued with a good understanding, both as a man and a christian.

And he that endued him therewith, and gave him wisdom, preserved him in it, and blessed his labours in the gospel, and made his testimony serviceable to many, it being delivered in soundness of speech, with good demonstration, and accompanied with life and power; and the consciences of many were so far reached, that they have been made to confess to the soundness thereof, and to the power and truth it came from; and have been brought to be made witnesses, and partakers thereof, and

the life and virtue therein, through faith and obedience to the same.

He was also a man that was zealous for truth, and the several testimonies it led us unto, against the corrupt world, their ways, worship, vain fashions, and evil customs, and often exhorted friends to mind the Lord's Spirit, and therein to do his business, and not in their own; nor to boggle or decline their testimony for truth, in any respect, either against the men made ministers, forced maintenance, or their joining people together in marriage for filthy lucre's sake; or contributing to the repair of their worship houses; or against wars and fighting; and greatly disliked that any indirect way should be complied with by any, to shift or evade their testimony for the truth, in any respect.

And although, in the latter part of his time, he was through infirmity of body, unable to travel much, yet was he very diligent in frequenting meetings, and preaching the gospel therein, and to exhort friends to brotherly love, provoking them to good works, and pressing them to diligence, and an exemplary conversation, and to train up their youth and children in that way, plainness and simplicity that became the truth, and the humble disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord incline the hearts of all that have them, so to do, that none may contribute of that substance God hath blessed them with, and made them stewards of, to gratify any thing in their children, which may be to their hurt, or tend to impede them from succeeding their honest and tender parents, in that precious truth, the plainness, humility, self-denial, love and tenderness it hath led them into, that the blessing of God may be continued on our offspring, and from age to age, and one generation unto another, the Lord's worthy name may be praised, his truth exalted, and he renowned, who is worthy for ever. Amen.

And in this holy truth, to our comfort, and his great joy, am I well satisfied, did this faithful servant of God finish his testimony and course in this world. And on the twenty-fourth of the sixth month, 1692, being under much bodily weakness and pain, he was visited by his

ancient friend and brother G. W. who gave this account of the same, as the substance of some words spoke by S. C. the twenty-fourth of the sixth month, 1692, viz. "I see an end of mortality, yet cannot come at it; I desire the Lord to deliver me out of this troublesome or painful body: if he will but say the word, its done; yet there is no cloud in my way; I have a full assurance of my peace with God in Christ Jesus; my integrity and uprightness of heart is known to the Lord, and I have peace and justification in Jesus Christ, who made me so, (that is, upright to God.) Dear George, I can live and die with thee; and my dear love is with thee, and to all the faithful in the church of God."

On the twenty-seventh, being the day before his departure, S. C. said, "I hope I am gathering, (as his expression was understood,) I hope, I hope;" being then scarce able to speak out his words. G. W. near parting from him, asked him, viz. "Dear Stephen, wouldst thou any thing to friends?" After some pause, S. C. gave his answer, viz. "Remember my dear love in Jesus Christ to all friends."

And on the twenty-eighth of the said month, he departed this life, and died in the Lord at Wansworth in Surrey, about four miles from London, to which place he was carried for the sake of the air, from the house of William Crouch in London, in a litter, to W. C.'s house there: and being very weak, was accompanied by several friends on foot with the litter, lest there should be any want of assistance.

And after his decease, his body was brought to Grace-Church-street meeting house in London, where on the one-and-thirtieth, a great number of friends and others met to accompany his corpse to the ground, and many living testimonies were borne there, by faithful brethren unto the truth. And then his body was borne on the shoulders of his friends and brethren that loved him for truth's sake, unto the burying ground at Bunhill Fields, and there interred. And several testimonies were also borne there at the grave, to the truth, for the sake of those that yet remain; and that all might love and live in that

which makes lovely and living unto God and in his sight; and persevere in diligence and faithfulness in the Lord's work and service, and keep to that Power, and under the government of that Spirit which only is sufficient to enable us to follow the steps of them that followed Christ, and that we might run our race with cheerfulness, finish our course with joy, lay down our heads in peace, rest with the Lord for ever, and have a place in that kingdom that will never fade away. And that it may be so with all us that yet remain, is my sincere desire, and earnest supplication unto the Lord; and that we may always abide in that love, which is the badge or mark of our discipleship, in that Spirit which is the bond of our peace, in that Life by which we have been redeemed, in that grace and faith by which we are saved, and be armed with the whole armour of light, and walk therein; that fellowship with God and one another we may know, and the cleansing virtue of his blood that died for us we may experience, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And being so cleansed, may possess our vessels in sanctification, and continue in the life of righteousness, and in holy fear wait upon the Lord, to be filled with that wisdom that is from above, and clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and covered with zeal as with a cloak, and endued with a good understanding, and guided by his counsel, and be received into glory, and have the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls; is the sincere breathing, and tender supplication of him who wisheth the good of all men, and prayeth for Sion's prosperity, and the peace of Jerusalem, that God would make her an eternal excellency, and the praise of the whole earth.

And now having hinted at the author, commemorated the Lord's power, and commended his Spirit, Grace and Truth, by whom grace and truth came, I shall, courteous reader, recommend thee thereto, and earnestly beseech thee to apply thy heart to it; and let thy mind in the perusal of the following writings, be uprightly exercised therein towards the Lord, that thou mayest truly savour from what spirit they came, for what end they were writ-

ten; and so come to make a right use of them; and by thy daily exercise and waiting upon the Lord therein, and living obedience thereunto, mayest be fitted and enabled to succeed in that life, spirit, and wisdom, which he was endued with. And, dear friends, it is our great encouragement that yet remain, to be faithful to the Lord, diligent in his work and service, zealous for his name, and our respective testimonies for the sake thereof, because that blessed Power, Spirit, Life, and Wisdom, that raised up, fitted, furnished and endued this, and many more of our ancient, worthy, and honourable brethren, and made them so, blessed be his holy name, is still with us, and as sufficient as ever: and the Lord as willing to fill up the places of them he hath taken to himself, into the mansions of eternal glory, as he was in tender mercy favourably pleased to furnish them, for his work and service, that it may be carried on to his praise, and the honour of his worthy name, from age to age, and from one generation to another.

And therefore let us that yet remain, be faithful unto the Lord, and freely given up to follow him, and to manifest our love and respect unto our deceased friend and his works, by following that wholesome counsel, and Christian advice he hath by word and writing, freely and frequently given us; that so we may by the same spirit and power, be enabled to follow and succeed him in his work and service, for the precious truth.

So with the words of our Lord Jesus, the Way and Truth, I may conclude, viz. If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. And in that love I desire always to remain,

Courteous Reader,

Thy sincere friend and well-wisher,

JOHN FIELD.

George-Yard, London, the 14th of the 3d month, 1694.

THE
TESTIMONY
OF THE
MEN'S MEETING AT COLCHESTER,
CONCERNING
STEPHEN CRISP.

IT is sufficient for the righteous, that they know the Lord, and are known of him, and that their life is hid with God in Christ; such care not for popularity. Yet forasmuch as the noble acts of the righteous, by which they obtain a good report, are such as have been pleasing to God, and the names of such shall be had in remembrance. And therefore we find a constraint upon our spirits, to give this short testimony of the faithfulness of our ancient friend and brother, Stephen Crisp, late of Colchester, and unto that blessed gift which the Lord endued him with, beyond many in our day; and of his sincere labours and travels, who lived with us for many years, who was a man zealous for the Lord, his name, and truth, faithful and diligent in his work, and able to give counsel and advice to many states and conditions, and which he often did with a free and ready mind.

Some of us that have known him from the beginning, can remember how the Lord was pleased to visit him in the days of his youth, and begat desires in him after himself, and after the knowledge of the way of life; which did work upon him, so as to put him upon seeking and getting acquaintance with the best and most upright-hearted of those days, and was for a time a teacher among a separate people. In which way and state he continued, until it pleased the Lord, (for a distressed seed's sake,) to send his servant James Parnell, unto this town, in the year 1655, who by the word of

the Lord committed to him, (which clave rocks asunder,) among divers others, reached unto this our friend ; (he, with many more in these parts, being ready to cry out, What shall we do to be saved ?) and by whose ministry under God, he was convinced of the everlasting truth, and forthwith made profession of it ; and a great change was soon wrought in him, his understanding opened, and heart wounded before the Lord, in the feeling of that lively word in his soul, which is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart ; and then his former building came to be laid low, and he saw himself to have but a talk and notion of heavenly things ; and that though he had thought himself rich, he was but poor and naked, and that to a day of stripping he must come, and to deny himself ; and so he did, and sat down in silence under the cross to his own will, and waited for counsel and instruction to be ministered to him by the Lord : who after some time had such openness in his mind, as to impart now and then a word of exhortation to them that needed it, and visiting some neighbour meetings, was enlarged to speak a few words among them, and then returned home to his family, and outward calling. Thus continuing until the Lord further enlarged his gift, and that he came to know a further growth and increase in the truth, and in his testimony for it ; and then found drawings in his spirit into the north of England, and afterward into many other parts of it ; and into Scotland and Holland, and some parts of Germany, where he travelled, and was serviceable among them, the more, in that he had obtained an understanding in the Dutch language, in a very short time, of whose service there, in the divers visits that he gave them, we leave to our dear friends in those parts, to give account.

He had a large understanding given him, not only in spiritual, but also in temporal things, by which he was very serviceable to many widows and fatherless, and others, (as divers can testify,) being very ready and free to assist them ; and as he had freely received, did freely give ; and was therein not only serviceable to Friends, but also to others of his neighbours.

He was zealously and conscientiously affected for the peace and prosperity of Friends in every place ; and for that cause diligently laboured amongst them ; and when he was not able to ride or travel much by reason of his distempers, as in former days, he continued chiefly in this town of Colchester, and in the city of London, in the Lord's work and service, as long as strength and ability of body lasted.

He was of a constant, firm, bold mind and spirit, against all those that secretly or openly sought occasion to make rents and divisions among us in the churches of Christ, and laboured diligently to preserve the simple-hearted from being betrayed by their snares and cunning insinuations, exhorting them, (as did the apostle,) to mark those that cause divisions, and to avoid them, and to keep in the unity of the spirit, and in the sense of the grace received, that all might grow up in it, into a further discerning of the mysterious workings of the enemy that goes round about, and tries every way, to see whom he might devour.

He had a gift of utterance beyond many, sound in judgment and doctrine, and very convincing to the understandings of many that heard him ; for which cause, his testimony was affecting to many that were not of us, who would come to hear him when he was with us : and he would often call to people to come and try the sufficiency of the grace of God, (that a measure of it was committed to them,) and whether it was not able to save from sin, (yea, to the utmost,) all such as received and obeyed it. He divided the word aright, and turned many from darkness to light ; many mourners have been comforted by him, and many tender-hearted helped, through their inward exercises and conflicts of spirit, and hath been a strength to them in their spiritual warfare : but his testimony was as a sharp two-edged sword, to the rebellious, obdurate, and hard-hearted, to the piercing through them many a time : and his very outward countenance hath sometimes struck to the hearts of some, as some have since confessed : and some that have gotten into a spirit of enmity, have been made through the

power that did accompany him, to come and acknowledge the hurt which that spirit had done them; and that the Lord was with him.

And at taking his last farewell, when he was about to leave us, he was for several meetings before his departure, mightily opened in his spirit, in our public meetings desiring to be clear of the blood of all, (as he several times of late said he was,) labouring to speak to the states of all, and also to Friends' services to which they were called in their day, to keep truth's testimony clear from all unrighteous actions that might be committed by those that lived not in that they made profession of, and to set judgment a-top of them, saying, if we ceased to separate between the precious and the vile, the vile would overrun us, and we should become like other people; also he took notice of, and rejoiced in the love and unity that had been, and was among us, exhorting and counselling of us to be, and continue in the same mind, keeping the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace.

He was beloved of his friends, his townsmen and neighbours, and left or had not many enemies, at least more than apostates and false professors of the truth, who forsaking and turning their backs on God, no wonder such are envious, and opposers of his servants.

He was very tender and helpful to divers, who have been of late called forth into a public testimony, and into the same work wherein he was himself employed by his great Lord and Master Christ Jesus, being very tender and ready to help forward that which he found to come from the motion of the seed of life in any, and would speak a word in season to such. And his last testimony in our yearly meeting on that account, is worthy of remembrance.

And in his last being among us, he was very weighty in his visits in our private families, and much and often dropping some weighty discourse among us for our edification, furtherance, and growth in the truth.

For all which works sake, he was much esteemed, and was worthy of double honour; and we doubt not but is clothed with a large share of that honour, glory

and immortality with our God, which is the portion of all those that faithfully serve, and honour the Lord in their day, as he did.

Signed in behalf of our Men's Meeting at Colchester, the seventeenth of the Eighth month, 1692,

<i>Arthur Cotten,</i>	<i>Thomas Wear,</i>
<i>Thomas Bales,</i>	<i>Daniel Vande Wall,</i>
<i>Solomon Formantell,</i>	<i>Anthony Whaypool,</i>
<i>John Furly,</i>	<i>Henry Pumfret,</i>
<i>Samuel Cooper,</i>	<i>John Perry.</i>
<i>Richard Waller,</i>	

FROM

THE SECOND-DAY MORNING MEETING,

The fourth of the Fourth month, 1694.

BEING not willing to multiply many particular testimonies concerning our dear deceased friend and brother Stephen Crisp, and having unity with the foregoing accounts, in a living remembrance of that love, life and power that he was endued with, and of his labours and services in the gospel of peace, in the church of Christ, and of his travails and sufferings for propagation and preaching the same, we hereunto subscribe our names, and tenderly desire that all may love, live, and have their minds sincerely exercised towards the Lord, in that which teacheth how to rightly prize, esteem and make use of the Lord's mercies, and the labours, services and writings of the ministers and servants of Christ, in whose love we remain

Servants of Christ, and well-wishers to all men,

<i>George Whitehead,</i>	<i>John Whitehead,</i>
<i>Francis Camfield,</i>	<i>William Bingley,</i>
<i>John Vaughton,</i>	<i>Samuel Waldenfield,</i>
<i>John Edridge,</i>	<i>Fran. Stamper.</i>
<i>Ambrose Rigge,</i>	

THE
TESTIMONY
OF THE
YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,

Held at Amsterdam, the Fifth Month, Anno 1693, concerning
our dear friend, and Servant of Christ Jesus,

STEPHEN CRISP.

BEING acquainted with the intentions of our dear friends and brethren in England, to commit to posterity, in a collection, the writings of that eminent servant of God, and faithful minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Stephen Crisp, whose ministry in and through the power of God, was effectual unto many; and amongst the rest, to us also in these eastern countries, viz. Holland, Friesland, Embden, Hamburgh, Frederickstadt, Dantzick, Palatinate, and Crevelt: and we having been no small sharers with our friends in England, &c. in the blessed benefit of his acceptable service, do give also our testimony, (in this collection concerning him,) in a true and faithful account of his services, labours and travels in these parts, and to bless the Lord for his continued care over his church and people here, who sent him first amongst us, about the time that it pleased God to take from us our dear and well-beloved friends, and his faithful servants, and ministers of the gospel, William Ames, William Caton, and John Higgins, who had it chiefly upon them to preach the truth, and watch over the little flock of Christ in these countries, and to minister unto the believers thereof in these parts, according to the heavenly gift committed to them. We say, we have cause to bless the Lord, and esteem his Divine hand of providence, that about that juncture of time, the Lord should move upon the spirit of this our dear friend S. C. in the powerful drawings of his love, to turn his face towards us. And in the movings of that love and life in which he then began to recommend himself to us, (and in which he still lives among us,) he was made willing to put his

shoulders under the burthens that he was to bear in these parts, on the truth's account; and that in such a degree, that he made it not only his work to come and visit us sometimes, and thereby give us opportunities to be refreshed and comforted in his company, in our meetings and private discourses, (as we have also been with many others of our dear and beloved friends from England, from time to time,) but also he very diligently took notice of all the occurrences in which truth was concerned, and was not weary of labouring in the spirit of wisdom and understanding, (which God was pleased to endue him with in a large measure,) both in words and writings, in the spreading of the truth, in doctrine, and stopping the mouths of gainsayers, and turning back the calumnies and falsehoods which were often cast upon the truth, and return it upon the heads of its enemies and opposers; and also in counsel, information, admonition, exhortation and advice, both in public and private preaching the truth very acceptably in the Low Dutch language, and assisting divers ways many that wanted it, in the ordering of their concerns belonging to this world, for which also the Lord had greatly furnished him with a capacity beyond many others: and when from time to time, his service for God's truth called him from hence, he left us always that comfort, that he did not draw his heart from us, (which was very fatherly towards us,) but held a constant eye upon us, and truth's and our concern here, and was always ready, as much as that outward distance, and his service in England would permit him, to assist us, as when he was present among us. And when he came to Holland, he also generally went to Friesland, where he visited some there that were in a measure convinced; and others that were willing to hear his testimony for the truth, even before there was a meeting settled in that province, with dear Josiah Coale, in the year 1667. Afterward also he went to Groninghen, Embden, Hamburgh, and Frederickstadt; at Leuwarden he visited some Friends that were but a little before imprisoned there for coming into Friesland, contrary to the edict there published, forbidding any Quakers coming thither. Against which persecution he

wrote his two books, the First and Second Part of the Outcry against the Persecution in Friesland.

In other places thereabouts, he preached the gospel, to the strengthening and comforting God's heritage in those parts, being in the year 1670. In the year 1667, he visited the small company of Friends, then living at a place called Creysheim, in the Palatinate: also he went to Heydelberg, the residence of the prince elector Charles Louis, to acquaint him with the unrighteous dealings of the magistrates of Creysheim, in taking from Friends, three or four times the value of goods for an imposition, which Friends for conscience sake could not pay; and was friendly received, and discoursed by the prince; whereby Friends were somewhat eased in their sufferings. Another time he made a journey into the county of Meurs, to the town of Crevel, where a meeting was set up. Also he visited some well-affected people at Weesel and Cleef; and Anno 1685, he gave us his last visit here in Holland. And though his heart was with us to the end of his days, yet his bodily weakness and infirmities growing upon, and disabling him from performing such travels, prevented him from manifesting such endeared love to us in such manner as he used to do before. And so at last, he having finished his service, and done his work, (for which the Lord had raised him up, and assisted him with his power, presence and wisdom to perform,) he is entered into the rest of the righteous and faithful followers of the Lamb, having passed through many exercises both inward and outward, which to mention, we shall leave to others, who were more fully acquainted with them. And we dare not repine for the loss of his outward company, but rest satisfied in the will of God, giving thanks to him, who hath blessed us in the enjoyment of his service of love, being still partakers of the blessed effects thereof; and hope the Lord of heaven and earth, will be pleased to raise up many others, to stand up in the places of such faithful labourers in his vineyard.

Signed in behalf of, and by order of the Quarterly Meeting abovesaid, by

JOHN CLAUS.

A
JOURNAL
OF THE
LIFE OF STEPHEN CRISP,
GIVING

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS CONVINCEMENT, TRAVELS, LABOURS, AND
SUFFERINGS, IN AND FOR THE TRUTH.

OH! all ye saints, and all ye inhabitants of the earth, let the name of Jehovah be famous among you, for there is no God like unto him; and let his mercies and judgments be remembered and recorded from generation to generation; for infinite is his goodness, and his loving kindness unspeakable. And although no man can fully recount his loving kindness to him reached out, yet let all men testify of his goodness, and declare of his mercies by which he is engaging the sons of men to himself and winning and gathering again the scattered to the true rest. And therefore, well said David, "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High; I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember his wonders of old. I will meditate of all thy works, I will talk of thy doings." Psal. 77. ver. 10, 11, 12. And who can feel his goodness, and partake of his love, but it will constrain a testimony to him? And in the sweet remembrance of his manifold innumerable mercies, I am even overcome. For my whole life hath been as a continued series of mercy and goodness, and all my days hath he been my upholder; when I knew him not he was nigh unto me; yea when I rebelled against him, he ceased not to be gracious; his covenant stood with his seed Christ: and for his sake he spared me. His long-suffering and patience was extended towards me, else I had been cut off in the days of my gainsaying. But oh! well

may I say he is a God gracious and merciful, long-suffering and patient, full of compassion. Oh! let this his name be proclaimed to the ends of the earth, and let the ears of the heathen be opened, to hear the sound of his praise.

And surely the Lord hath had an eye of tender compassion upon me, from the day that he formed me, and hath appointed me to his praise, and to witness forth his goodness, for so soon as I can remember, and so soon as I was capable of understanding, he made me to understand that which consented not to any evil, but stood in my soul as a witness against all evil; and manifested that I should not lie, nor steal, nor be stubborn, nor be disobedient, but should behave myself in meekness and quietness, and set truth before me, as that which was better than falsehood; and this same witness even in the days of my childhood ministered peace and boldness unto me, when I hearkened to the counsel of it; but there was a contrary nature and seed in me that was of this world, and not of God; which inclined unto evil, and unto the way and manner of this evil world, as most of all suiting the carnal mind; and an eye began to open in me that saw what was acceptable with man, rather than what was well-pleasing to God.

And that eye being daily ministered unto by the various objects, and examples of vanity, a delight sprung up in that which was evil, and my senses became exercised with vanity, by which the pure seed became oppressed and grieved from day to day, and began to cry out against me; and condemnation began to be stirred up in me, and fear entered, where before, no fear was, and the pure innocency was lost; and then having at any time done or spoken any evil, then the light, (or pure principle,) in me would manifest it to me, and show me, that I ought not so to have done: and I felt condemnation, which how to escape I knew not; but then the evil spirit that led to transgress, would always stand ready to help in this need; and sometimes stirred up the subtilty in me, to plead a reason for what I had done, or a provocation, or a good intent, or else to deny, or at least to

mitigate the evil of my deed, and so to stop the mouth of the witness of God, and to see if I could escape the condemnation of the witness of God and procure my own peace. But alas! this was a miserable help, for the light would often shine through all this, and quell my reasonings; and showed me, when I was but a child, that in the pure reason that is from God, there is no reason for any evil, let provocations, temptations, or examples be what they can, or will; and so was I often stripped naked from all my reasoning and coverings; and then I learned another way to get ease from the judgment, and that when I was very young, about seven or eight years old, I would use when judgment overtook me for evil, to yield that it was so; and therefore thought I must do something to please God again, and so hereupon I learned to pray, and to weep in secret, and to covenant with God for more watchfulness, and so then I thought for a season I was as one unburthened from my weight; yet this best state was accompanied with many doubtings and questionings, whether my evils were blotted out, or no: especially when I saw that I was again overtaken by the evil spirit, and led into evil thoughts, words, or actions, for the witness cried even then to have my whole mind given up to the Lord, and that in thought, word, and deed, I should serve him, but I knew not that it was from God; but this I knew, that I wanted power to answer the requirings of that in me, which witnesseth against evil in me, and this I lamented day and night: and when I was about nine or ten years old, I sought the power of God with great diligence and earnestness, with strong cries and tears; and if I had had the whole world I would have given it, to have known how to obtain power over my corruptions. And when I saw the carelessness of other children, and their profaneness, and that they did not, (that I could discern,) think of God, nor were not in trouble, though they were far more wicked than I, in their speech and actions; ah Lord! thought I, what will become of these? Seeing so heavy hand is upon me, I can find neither peace, nor assurance of thy love.

Then the enemy would tempt me to rest, and be quiet,

in that it was better with me than with others, and my reason wrought strongly to make up a peace to myself herein, but the pure witness followed me, and left me not, but pursued me night and day, and broke my peace faster than I could make it up, for my mind was in my own works. And I could see no further, I heard talk of a Christ and Saviour, but oh! thought I, that I knew him.

My ear was lent to the discourses and disputations of the times, which were very many; and one while I let in one thing, and another while another. Sometimes I heard men dispute that God sees no sin in his people; then I said, surely I am none of them; for he marketh all my transgressions. Otherwhile, men talked of an election, and a reprobation of persons before time; and that I considered diligently, and thought, if that were so, and I could but get so many signs and marks of an elect soul, as might bring me to quiet, then I would keep it; and not be so tossed as I had been. Then I grew a very diligent hearer, and regarnder of the best ministers, as they were reputed; and went with as much diligence and cheerfulness to reading, and to hearing sermons, as other children went to their play and sportings. And when I heard any one treat upon that point of election; and how a man might know if they were elect, and would in their dark wisdom lay down signs of a true believer, and signs of an elect soul, then would I try myself in their measure, and weigh myself in their balance, and so gather up a little peace to myself, finding such things in me as they spoke of for signs; as, a desire against sin, a loathing myself for sin, a love to them that were counted the best people, a longing to be rid of sin, &c. But alas! here was yet but the blind leading my poor blind soul. This was not the balance of the sanctuary; and when I had gotten a little peace and quietness, and thought to hold it, alas, it would soon be shattered and broken, and when God's pure witness arose in me, that I must be weighed in the true balance, oh then I found I was much too light; then anguish would again kindle in me, and a cry was in me; Oh whither shall I go? and what shall I do? that I

may come to a settled state, before I go hence and be seen no more. And in this woful condition, the thoughts of death would bring a dread over soul and body; and trembling and horror was often upon me, fearing that I was set apart for a vessel of wrath for ever, and must bear the fiery indignation of God for ever. And oh, that word for ever, would often be terrible to me, but how to prevent it I knew not; for now I began to perceive my own insufficiency, and my want of God's power, and that it was not in my own power to keep myself out of sin, and the wages of it was death, so that I was in a great strait, sometimes thinking I had better give over seeking, and sometimes thinking, if I perish I had better perish seeking, and here the good got the upper hand for a season, and I became a diligent seeker, and prayer, and mourner, and would often find out the most secret fields and unusual places, there to pour out my complaints to the Lord.

When I was but about twelve years old, my general and constant cry was after the power by which I might overcome corruptions, and although I heard the teachers of those times, daily saying, none could live without sin, and the doctrine of perfection holden as a dangerous error, yet that did not abate my cry; though indeed it did often weaken my belief of obtaining; and so made my prayer almost faithless, and so without success. But I knew that without the power of God I must perish, let them say what they could, and I could not reckon myself saved while I was captivated with a corrupt and rebellious nature, let them all say what they could: for I remembered the words of Christ, He that committeth sin is the servant of sin, and that I knew was I. And in this iron furnace I toiled and laboured, and none knew my sorrows and griefs, which at times were almost intolerable, so that I wished I had never been born, or that my end might be like the beasts of the field, for I counted them happy, for they had no such bitter combat here as I had, nor should not endure that hereafter, that I feared I must endure after all, for I did see my misery, but I saw no way to escape. Then I thought I had best not keep my mi-

sery so close, but disclose it to some that may be might help me; but well might I say miserable comforters I found them all to be; for then they would bid me apply the promises by faith, and suck comfort out of the scriptures; and tell me of the apostle's state, mentioned in the 7th of the Romans, and tell me it was so with him, and yet he was a servant of Jesus Christ, and such like deceitful daubings as they had daubed themselves with, in like manner dealt they with me; not considering how the apostle called that a wretched and an undelivered state, as I might well do mine. But all these things took but little place in me, my wound remained unhealed, and he that wounded me and was able to have healed me, was nigh me, and I knew him not; but I went groping in that dark and dismal night of darkness, seeking the living among the dead, as many more did, but it was so dark that we that did so could not see one another. And as for the priests and professors of those times, the most of them would boast of experiences, and of zeal, and of assurances of the love of God, and what comfort they enjoyed by thinking or meditating of the suffering of Christ for their sins, &c. Alas! thought I, I could think of these things as well as you, but my wound still remains fresh, and I see that I am as one of the crucifiers, while I live in sin, for which he died, and my soul longed after some other kind of knowledge of him, than that which was to be attained by reading, for I see that the worst, as well as the best could attain to that; but I durst not lean upon them so much as I had done, but then I began to be somewhat more loosened in my mind from the priests, (though I left them not wholly,) but now began to find out the meetings of those then called Separatists, and to hear their gifted men so called, whose doctrine I took notice, savoured more of zeal and fervency, than most of the priests did, neither did I see them so covetous to make a gain of preaching, not yet being come to see how they coveted greatness and applause of men, but I was often affected with their preachings, but still the former bond was upon me, and they yet strengthened it: to wit, that if I were not elected, I could not be saved, and how I

might know, no man could tell me to my satisfaction; so the fear of this would often dash my comfort, and then I began to take notice of the loose walking of such Separatists, yea, even of the teachers among them, how that they were not yet redeemed from foolish jesting, from idle words, from anger and passion, and sometimes it broke out brother against brother, and so ran out to parties, and to breaches and schisms, and rending their churches, which they often both built and pulled down with their own hands, I also saw how unconstant they were, sometimes letting in one doctrine, sometimes another, tossed with winds: but not a word could I hear how I might obtain power over sin. Over some sins and some lusts I had, but over all I had not; and nothing else would satisfy me.

Then I began when I was about seventeen or eighteen years of age, to seek yet further, and hearing of a people that held forth, the death of Christ for all men, I went to hear them, and after some time I came to see that there was more light, and a clearer understanding of the scriptures among them, than among the former; so I began to be conversant with them, and frequent in their meetings, and came to be established in that belief, that there was a dear Son of hope, and way or means of salvation prepared for all people, and none positively by any eternal decree excluded, as by name or person, but as unbelievers and disobedient. So this ministered comfort a while, and I set myself to believe, and to get faith in Christ, and to reckon myself a believer, and found it a hard work, even too hard for me, though I cried aloud many times to have my unbelief helped: yet when I saw sin prevail over me, alas! said I, where is that faith that purifies the heart, and giveth victory; mine is not such. Then would the pure witness of God arise and testify against me for my sin, and the more my understanding was enlarged, the sharper was my judgment; and now it grew so sharp, that I knew not how to endure it so well as I had done in my childhood; but the rough and rebellious nature being now grown strong, and I in the prime and strength of my youth, and seeing how others spent their time in pleasure and vanity, a secret lust and desire kindled in

me to partake of their cup; yet for a time I was kept in, as with a bit; and rather took delight to take notice of the varieties of wits, and inventions, that had been in foretime, which I found by books, being much given to reading, and so gathered many sayings and sentences of wise philosophers and sages, and in part obtained the knowledge of many ages gone before me; and these things I thought were as an ornament fitting me for discourse, and for the company of wise men. And alas! all this while self stood uncrucified, and all that was gotten was but sacrificed and offered up for the obtaining a reputation to self, which should have been kept in the cross, yet this served me a while to feed that unwearied searching, seeking soul of mine withal; and many things I met with became as a life unto it for a season, and I began to bless myself, that my time was no worse spent. And in this time I found two drawings, one strong drawing and enticement was into the world, wholly to give myself up to the pleasures, delights, and vanities of it: and another drawing was unto godliness, watchfulness, seriousness, &c. And I, poor man, knew not what to do, as to religion; I saw divers, and felt a religious inclination in me, as I had done from a child, and could have been well content to have taken up some form of religion, but was sore discouraged, because I could see none of them hold forth that which I wanted, either in their life or doctrine, (to wit,) power over corruptions, without which I knew religion would be in vain, and not answer the end for which I should take it up; so I desisted taking up any form, and kept in the wild field of this world, and wandered up and down, sometimes to one sort of people, sometimes to another; taking a sharp inspection into their lives and doctrines, though I confess, I left my own garden undressed, until many noisome weeds overgrew. And so that I began to loose my tenderness of conscience, which I had had, and began to take pleasure in the company of the wicked, and in many things to become like them, and came to be captivated more than ever, with mirth and jollity, and oft would sing when I had cause to howl and mourn, and fell to gaming and pastime, and

presumed upon the mercy of God, and had a secret belief, that God would one day manifest his power, and bring me out of this state; and therefore had often a dread upon me, of running so far into wickedness, as some others did, and was kept from many gross evils that my companions ran into; and herein was the infinite goodness of the Lord manifest, which when I came to see with a true eye, it broke my heart; yea, my heart and soul praiseth the Lord for his mercy, who kept me when I knew him not. And though provocations and temptations were many, that did attend me, yet out of divers abominations was I preserved, and I must say and acknowledge, as the Lord said to Abimelech, it was the Lord that preserved or kept me, so this kind of course of life went on for a season, about two or three years, until a weariness came upon me thereby; for many times in the very midst of all my mirth, the hand of the Lord would be heavy upon me, and his righteous judgment would kindle in me, and put a stop to my course, and then would I lament me in secret, and sometimes complain to others of my sore captivity and slavery to sin, and often would I be arguing, and conferring with them that were counted experienced Christians, how peace and assurance might be attained; some would say by reading and applying promises, but that way I had tried so often and so long, that it took now but little with me, for I saw I was in another state than that unto which the promises were made. Others said the only way was to be obedient to the commands and ordinances of Jesus Christ, and to be conformable to the primitive saints, in walking in church-order and communion, where every one had the strength of many, and all the church bound to watch over every member. To these counsellors I hearkened, and was willing to do any thing, to find the power, and reproach should not keep me back, so I took up that ordinance, (as they called it,) of water baptism, expecting then to have found power more than before. And my will wrought strongly to bridle and keep down that airy part and sinful nature, and for a season strove to uphold and maintain myself to be in a better state than before.

though the virtue that should sanctify and wash me I did not feel, my mind being abroad, and the reasons that kept me were not the operation of the pure love of God in my heart, and his grace prevailing in me, to teach me, but rather an eye to the reputation of my religion, and that I might not seem to have run and acted all in vain. But these reasons held but for a season, before the temptation grew too strong for my will, and the devil entered his own ground, and prevailed upon me, and led me captive into sin and evil, and drew me into vain company and vain sports, and delights, and pastimes again as before; so that I sufficiently saw I wanted what I wanted before, and had grasped but at a shadow, and caught nothing but wind, and that my baptism was short of John's, who did indeed baptize with a baptism of repentance, and prepared the way of the Lord, and made his path straight; but mine did not so much, and therefore was much more short of the baptism of Christ, in which the fire was to be found, that should burn up what was offensive to God, and grieved his holy Spirit, and then fill me with his Spirit, which takes delight in nothing that is corrupt. This baptism I saw was wanting, and therefore a dissatisfaction began to grow up in me, both of myself, and of my way; and I testified unto the elders, so called of the church, that God would shortly overturn all our worships and religions, which stood in outward and carnal things, and would make known some way a-top of them all, that should stand for ever. When they inquired what that way should be, I confessed I knew not, but waited to see what it might be. And about those days many exercised themselves in talking and discoursing of a people called Quakers, after whom I listened, but though I hearkened with great diligence, I could hear no good report of them but much harm, and many false and wicked lies were cast upon them; only this I took notice of, that they suffered cruel mockings, and grievous sufferings patiently; now I did expect, that when the way of God was made manifest, it would be hated and persecuted; yet I thought that should not at all deter or affright me from owning of it, and walking

in it, if once I knew it. But forasmuch as I heard they held perfection in this life, that was a thing the old wisdom of the serpent could not reach nor join with, but I reasoned against it strongly, in that dark fallen wisdom in which many are still fighting for sin, which is the devil's host, whom I now see to be no better than the host of Magog, fighting against the Lamb, and his innocent life, saying in their hearts, Rule thou in heaven if thou wilt, for on earth thou shalt have no place; no, not one soul to bear rule and sovereignty over. And I can but pity thousands who are fighting the devil's quarrels in this matter, but having faithfully laboured with them in my generation, I leave them that are wilful and stubborn opposers, who will in nowise receive that which is perfect in this life, to receive the wages of imperfection in the life to come. But I say, in this same fallen wisdom did I reason divers ways, too many now to name, against the truth, the same whereof I had heard as the Scripture speaks, while I was in death and in the way of destruction. But a messenger of this truth I had not seen, but longed much to see one, wishing night and day, that our parts might be visited by them, as I had heard others were: and at last the Lord sent his faithful servant and messenger of his everlasting gospel, James Parnel, to to our town of Colchester, about the Fourth month, 1655, and in the 27th year of my age, who came in the name and power of the Most High God, in which he turned many to righteousness, both there and in other countries before, of whom some remain, and many are fallen asleep. When I saw this man, being but a youth, and knew not the power nor spirit that was in him, I thought to withstand him, and began to query and seek discourse with him; but I quickly came to feel the spirit of sound judgment was in him, and the witness of God arose in me, and testified to his judgment, and signified I must own it; it being just and true, and I the same day and hour testified, that all our rods of profession would be lost or devoured by his rod, alluding to that of Moses, and the magicians of Egypt, which is and shall certainly come to pass: so that day I went to a meeting, and heard him

declare the everlasting gospel, in the name and authority of the Lord, which I could not with all my wisdom and knowledge withstand, but was constrained to own and confess unto the truth. And here at the very first of my convincement did the enemy of my soul make trial to slay me, and that after this manner, that seeing my wisdom and reason was overcome by the truth, I could not therewith withstand it, therefore I received the truth, and held it in the same part with which I withstood it, and defended it with the same wisdom by which I resisted it, and so was yet a stranger to the cross that was to crucify me; and was at liberty in the discoursative spirit, to lay out my wits and parts for the truth. But I soon felt my sacrifice, (though I offered the best my earth would afford,) was not accepted, but something else was still called for; and a cry was in me which called to judgment, and the earth that had long covered her slain, began to be moved, but not yet removed out of its place, and great were the strugglings of my thoughts, and a great desire kindled in me how I might comprehend the truth in my understanding, as I had done the doctrines and principles of other religions; but all my labour therein was to no purpose, for a death was determined upon that wisdom from the Lord; so I saw my labour in vain, my fishing could catch nothing, all that night while I wrought in the dark; and had not the guidance of the Light.

So in this state I continued a month or two, but then a swift sword was drawn against that wisdom and comprehending mind, and a strong hand gave the stroke, and I was hewn down like a tall cedar, that at once comes down to the ground.

But then, oh the wo, misery and calamity that opened upon me! Yea, even the gates of hell and destruction stood open, and I saw myself nigh falling thereinto, my hope and faith, and all fled from me, I had no prop left me to rest upon. The tongue that was as a river, was now like a dry desert; the eye that would, or at least desired to see every thing, was now so blind, that I could see nothing certainly, but my present undone and

miserable state. Oh! then I cried out in the bitterness of my soul, what hath all my profession profited me? I am poor and blind, and naked, who thought I had been rich and well adorned. Then saw I the well-favoured harlot stript, and the great whore was brought into remembrance before God; and her judgment was come, and how to escape the fire of the vengeance which broke forth, I knew not. Oh, how doleful was my nights, and sorrowful was my days! my delights withered even in wife and children, and in all things, and the glory of the whole world passed away like a scroll that is burnt with fire, and I saw nothing left in the whole world to give me any comfort; my sun lost her light, and my moon was darkened, and the stars of my course were fallen, that I knew no more how to direct my way, but was as one forsaken in a howling desert in the darkest night; and when I saw what God had done, (for I believed it was his doing,) I was ready to cry, I am forsaken for ever, and never was sorrow like mine, my wound is incurable, and my sickness none can heal. Alas! my tongue nor pen cannot express the sorrows of those days in which I sat me down in silence, fear and astonishment, and was encompassed with sorrow and darkness; and I knew none to make my moan unto: I heard of joy and salvation, but could scarce think that ever I should be a partaker of it, I still wanting that living faith, which the apostle said, was of the operation of God, who raised up Jesus, the true seed, which seed I still felt groaning in me to be delivered from the burden of sin, and from the oppression of the carnal mind. So after long travail, strong cries, and many bitter tears and groans, I found a little hope springing in me, that the Lord in his own time would bring forth his seed, even his elect seed, the seed of his covenant, to rule in me; and this was given me at a time when a sense of my own unworthiness had so overwhelmed me in sorrow and anguish, that I thought myself unworthy of any of the creatures; forasmuch as I was out of the covenant of God, and hereupon was tempted to deny myself of them: then did the hope of the resurrection of the just spring in me, and I was taught to wait on God, and to eat and

drink in fear and watchfulness, showing forth the Lord's death till he should come to be raised to live and reign in me, so then I waited as one that had hope that God would be gracious to me; yet something in me would fain have known the time how long it should be, but a faithful cry was in me: which called that to death: and upon a time being weary of my own thoughts in the meeting of God's people, I thought none was like me, and it was but in vain to sit there with such a wandering mind as mine was, while though I laboured to stay it, yet could not as I would; at length, I thought to go forth, and as I was going, the Lord thundered through me, saying, that which is weary must die; so I turned to my seat and waited in the belief of God, for the death of that part which was weary of the work of God, and grew more diligent in seeking death, that I might be baptized for the dead; and that I might know how to put off the old man with his deeds and words, and imaginations, his fashions and customs, his friendship and wisdom, and all that appertained to him, and the cross of Christ was laid upon me, and I bore it. And as I came willingly to take it up, I found it to be to me, that thing which I had sought from my childhood, even the power of God; for by it, I was crucified to the world, and it to me, which nothing else could ever do: but oh, how glad was my soul when I had found the way to slay my souls enemies; oh, the secret joy that was in me in the midst of all my conflicts and combats, I had this confidence, if I take but up the cross, I shall obtain victory, for that is the power of God through faith to salvation, and as I have found it so in some things, so I shall do in all in due time; then the reproach of the gospel became joyous to me; though in those days it was very cruel and grievous to flesh and blood, yet I despised it, and that for the joy that was now set before me, of which I had some hope I should in time be made a partaker, if I abode faithful; and that was my great care night and day, to keep so low and out of the workings of my own will, that I might discern the mind of God, and do it, though in never so great a cross to my own. Yet the enemy of my soul followed me

close and very secretly, and taking notice how willing I was to obey the Lord, he strove to get up into the seat of God, and to move as an angel of light, to betray me, and to lead me into something that was like the service of God, and many sore conflicts did I meet withal before I was able in all things to distinguish between the workings of the true spirit and power, from that which was but transformed; but forasmuch as I had now surely tasted of the love and goodness of God, I trusted in him, and committed the keeping of my soul unto him in singleness of heart; and manifold and daily were his deliverances made known to me, beyond all recount or remembrance of man, for which, oh my soul, praise thou the Lord for ever, who cared for thee in thy infancy, and kept thee in the days of thy distress.

So the more I came to feel and perceive the love of God, and his goodness to flow forth upon me, the more was I humbled and bowed in my mind to serve him, and to serve the least of his people among whom I walked; and as the word of wisdom began to spring in me, and the knowledge of God grew, so I became as a counsellor of them that were tempted in like manner as I had been, yet being kept so low that I waited to receive counsel daily from God, and from those that were over me in the Lord, and in Christ were before me, against whom I never rebelled, nor was stubborn, but the more I was kept in subjection myself, the more subject were evil spirits made to me, and the more I was enabled to help the weak and feeble ones, so the eyes of many came to be upon me, as one with whom counsel and understanding, in some measure were: and the church of God in those days increased, and my care daily increased, and the weight of things relating both to the outward and inward condition of poor friends came upon me, and being called of God and his people to take the care of the poor, and to relieve their necessities as I did see occasion, I did it faithfully for divers years, with diligence and much tenderness, exhorting and reproving any that were slothful, and encouraging them that were diligent, putting a difference according to the wisdom given me of God, and still minding my own

state and condition, and seeking the honour that comes from God only : and a cry was in me to keep on my spiritual armour, for all enemies were not yet put under my feet, so I kept my watch, not knowing well where the enemy might appear, but after a while I found his appearance once more to be very sharp, and that upon this occasion.

About the year 1659, I often felt the aboundings of the love of God in my heart, and a cry to stand given up to his will, (which I thought I was, not knowing or foreseeing what the Lord was intending to do with me,) but his eye saw further than mine ; this love and tenderness, and bowels of compassion wrought so in me, that it extended even to all men on the whole face of the earth, so that I cried in spirit, oh that all men knew thee and thy goodness ! And upon a time, as I was waiting upon the Lord, his word arose in me, and commanded me to forsake and part with my dear wife and children, father and mother, and to go and bear witness to his name in Scotland, to that high professing nation : but when that came to pass I found all enemies were not slain indeed ; for the strivings, strugglings, reasonings and disputings against the command of God, that I then met with, cannot be told or numbered. Oh ! how I would have pleaded my own inability, the care of my family, my service in that particular meeting, and many more things, and all that I might have been excused from this one thing which was come upon me, that I thought not of, or looked not for. But after many reasonings, days and weeks by myself, I thought it best to speak of it to some of the faithful elders and ministers of this everlasting gospel ; not knowing but they might discourage me, and something there was that hoped it, but contrarily they encouraged me, and laid it upon me to be faithful ; so then I gave up, and acquainted my dear wife therewith, which began me a new exercise, the enemy working in her strongly to stop me. But in much patience was I kept, and in quietness, and went and visited Friends' meetings about Essex, and part of Suffolk, chiefly to see them, and to take my leave of them, and in some meetings the Lord

would open my mouth in a few words to the refreshing of Friends, but I rather chose silence, when I might so, the winter drew nigh, and something would have deferred it till next summer. But the Lord showed me it must not be my time, but his time; then I would have gone by sea, but the Lord withstood me, and showed me, it must not be my way, but his way; and if I would be obedient he would be with me, and prosper my journey, otherwise his hand would strike me; so I gave up all, and with pretty much cheerfulness, at last I obeyed, and about the end of the Seventh month I went forth, and visited the churches of Christ.

As I went along in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, I quickly perceived the Lord was with me more than at other times, and my journey became joyful, and the more, in that though I were but weak, poor and low, yet God gave me acceptance among the elders of his people, and in every place my testimony was owned, and divers were convinced of the everlasting truth; then I marvelled, and said, Lord, the glory alone belongs to thee, for thou hast wrought wonders for thy name's sake, and for thy holy seed's sake. So I got into Scotland in the Ninth month, that year, and travelled to and fro that winter on foot with cheerfulness: many straits and difficulties attended me, (which I forbear to mention,) it being the time of the motion of the English and Scottish armies, upon which came the revolution of government, and the bringing back king Charles the Second into England. Well, about the Eleventh or Twelfth month I returned and travelled into the west to Westmoreland, part of Lancashire, and so to the southward, and in about five or six months time, was by the good hand of God brought home to my wife and children, and relations; in all my journey being sweetly accompanied with the presence of the Lord, and his power often filled my earthen vessel and made my cup to overflow: praises for ever be to his name, saith my soul.

And in all my journey I lacked not any thing that was good for me, but as it was my care in singleness to serve the Lord, so was the tender care of the Lord over me,

and he supplied me with whatever was needful in my journey, yet all along a secret hope did live in me, that when the present journey should be accomplished, I should be freed from this service, and have liberty to return to my calling and family, but contrarily it proved; for when I had been at home a few days, it lay upon me to go up to London, to visit the brethren and church of God there, so I went in great fear and dread of God into that city; and having continued there a few days, departed northward again at the commandment of the Lord, and found my ways prosperous wherever I went, and great encouragement did I daily receive from the Lord, who blessed my labour of love, that besides the peace and joy I felt in myself, I saw the effect of my labour and travail of my soul in divers places made manifest by divers being turned from darkness to light, and from serving the devil's power unto the power of God: but still trials attended me and a prison became my portion, nigh two hundred miles from home, and great and grievous threatenings were breathed out against me, and the same spirit which wrought in the persecutors, both in their cruelty and subtilty, strove to work in me also.

But I cried to the Lord, and he helped me, and my faith failed me not, but I fulfilled my service and testimony; and at length was delivered, and several thousands more, by a public proclamation from the king, and then returned to my own house, after about eight months absence, and my heart was set to serve the Lord, who had been good unto me; yet this hope of being freed from this kind of service, lived long in me, for I found the work every day more weighty than other, many false spirits rising up and transforming themselves into the likeness of truth, yet were enemies to the life of truth, which were the worst enemies of all: and I saw that Zion's enemy that could no other way prevail, was now trying if by a false pretence of holiness and obedience, he could deceive and beguile the simple; but I cried to God, to give me a discerning heart, and in understanding to comprehend the snare of the enemy, and that I might be a help to the weak, and he did so; and I saw the

foundation struck at by the enemy, and I grew zealous for the Lord and his house, and testified freely against the secret deceits of the enemy; but, this occasioned me yet more exercise and sorrow too; divers who saw not the depths of the workings of satan, judging my zeal and fervency against that contradictory spirit to be needless. But in meekness and patience, the Lord kept me out of the warring and striving mind, for I dare not strike them whom I knew to be my fellow servants, but them that pretended to be so, and yet served and promoted another interest; them I often wounded with the weapon God had given, and they that came to love the judgment, were sealed, but many perished in their rebellion and stubbornness; and the Lord arose and blasted the work of the enemy, and opened the eyes of many that were darkened, and they came to see the end of that which had been the troubler of Israel, and peace, unity and true love was restored in all our borders; then was my joy full, and my cup did overflow with praises and thankfulness to God, who had had regard for his heritage and people, and had delivered them from the devices of the wicked one. For my soul grew daily in love with Zion, and there was nothing in all the world so desirable to me, as the prosperity of the gospel, and the spreading and publishing his name and truth through the earth; and so this love constrained me to travel with great diligence from country to country, to make known what God had done for my soul, and to publish the day of the Lord; yea, the day of redemption in which the captivity of the spiritual Israel should be brought back, which did prove glad tidings unto many, who received the report and believed it; they came to behold the revelation of the holy powerful arm of God to their souls' satisfaction. And in most parts of England where I travelled, I found a daily adding to the church, such as were like to be saved; and hereupon my joy increased, and I began to be more freely given up to the work and service of God, and to the ministry of the gospel.

And about the year sixty-three, I was moved to cross the seas, and to visit the seed of God in the Low Coun-

tries, which I did with cheerfulness; and though in an unknown land, and with an unknown speech, yet by an interpreter sometimes, and sometimes in my own tongue, I declared the truth to the refreshing of many, and to the bringing back some from error; and having accomplished that visit, I returned in peace to England. And after a while, being required of God, I again went down into the north country, and labouring in the word and doctrine with great diligence and fervency, along, or near unto the sea-coast, and so down to Newcastle, and something beyond; and being led by the Spirit, I came back again another way more eastward through the land, and found all the way the plant of God's renown flourishing and growing, meetings enlarged, and the hearts of Friends enlarged in love to me and mine to them; then being returned, a great weight came upon me concerning the great city of London, greater than ever before; and I went up full of might and power, and did daily, (as the Lord opened my mouth, and ordered me,) warn them of the abominations and wickedness that ran down among them like a stream, and declared the judgments of God at hand upon them, for their great wickedness, which followed speedily both by war and fire, and many more calamities. And after this, about sixty-seven, was it required of me again to go into Holland, and my dear companion Josiah Coale went with me; and we travelled to and fro, and visited the churches about three months and returned. Then went I again into the north of England, my heart being abundantly drawn out towards the noble seed of God in those parts, and my love and tenderness of heart towards them, made all travel and labour, and perils easy; because I still saw the tender plants of my heavenly Father in a thriving and growing way or condition, and I felt the virtue of life daily springing in me, which was given me to water the heritage and garden of God with; and so soon as I was clear, I returned, having more and more still the care of the church of God coming upon me, which constrained me to diligence, and to be as swift as I might be, that so I might be as serviceable as possible in my generation,

and might keep myself clear of the blood of all men, which I found to be no easy or slight work.

But I being safe returned, and finding the presence and power of the Lord, yet leading me to and fro from country to country, unto which I was obedient, not of constraint now, but of a willing mind; counting his service a freedom, feeling myself freed from the cares of this life, having now learned to cast all my care upon him; and after a year or two years travel thus in England, the Lord laid yet more of the weight and care of the affairs of his people in the Low Countries upon me, and I found drawing towards them; and in the year sixty-nine, I went over and visited the meetings, obtained divers new meetings, and they set up a Men's Meeting among them, to see to the good ordering and governing of the affairs relating to Truth, and Friends. And this time did it please the Lord to open my understanding abundantly, that I began to declare in their own tongue the things that God had committed unto me to minister; and several received the everlasting gospel, and were brought to feel the power of God, by which they are saved from the world, and the polluted ways therein. Then being travelling in those provinces of Holland, Friesland, and Groningen, &c. I was moved to pass into Germany, to which I gave up in the Fourth month that same year; and by the way met with many perils and dangers, by reason of the horrible darkness, popery, cruelty and superstitions of those lands and dominions through which I travelled, so that sometimes it was as if my life were in my hands, to offer up for my testimony; but the Lord preserved me, and brought me upon the fourteenth day of that month to Krisheim near Worms, where I found divers who had received the everlasting Truth, and had stood in a testimony for God about ten years, in great sufferings and tribulations, who received me as a servant of God; and my testimony was as a dew upon the tender grass unto them. I had five good meetings among them, and divers heard the Truth, and several were reached and convinced, and Friends established in the faith. It was also just in an hour of temptation and

time of trial among them, that the Lord had cast me there; for the prince of that land, called the palsgrave, had imposed a fine upon them for their meetings, to wit, four rix dollars the year for each family, which they, (for conscience sake,) not paying, he sent an order to take the value in goods; whereupon his unreasonable executioners came and took away the treble value, but they suffered the spoiling of their goods with great joy and gladness, and counted it a happiness that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name's sake, who had called them to the knowledge of his blessed truth, and to bear a testimony in that dark desert, to the light of the Lord Jesus.

So I went to Heydelburgh to the prince of that land, and had a good opportunity with him, and laid before him the danger of his proceeding on in persecution; he heard me with a great deal of friendliness, and discoursed things at large with me, and in several things promised it should be better, as it did also after come to pass. So having finished that service in Germany, I returned, and being come into the Low Country again, I went to Groningen, where divers had believed in the name of Jesus, the light of the world, whom when I had visited in the power of God, and strengthened in the faith, I left, and returned through Friesland to Amsterdam, where, by reason of my now speaking in their own language, meetings grew exceeding great, and many strangers came flocking in, and a great openness I found in the country; but being necessitated of the Lord to come for England, I left them to the word of the grace which they had received of God, which was able to keep them; and came over into England in the latter end of the year, and went towards London, in order to visit the churches in the western parts of England, whose faces in the outward, I had never seen, though long desired it. So passing from London, I went through Berkshire and Wiltshire, having had many precious meetings with the Lord's people, I came to Bristol, where I found a people, among whom my soul was greatly refreshed; and I stayed with them about a week or nine days, and in a

true sense of the Eternal Power, in which the true fellowship always stood, we took leave one of another, and I departed, and travelled that winter with my companion in the gospel, Samuel Cater, through Somersetshire, Devonshire and Cornwall, to the Lands-end of England, visiting the churches in those parts to our mutual comfort; and I returned by Plymouth, visiting the south sea-coast even unto Portsmouth, then coming through Hampshire and Surrey, came to London, and so to Colchester again, to the gladdening the hearts of God's heritage in that place, many of whom have with me many a time rejoiced and given thanks to him that liveth and reigneth for ever, for my preservation through all perils and dangers, and the multitudes of deliverances of which I was daily made partaker. So being moved of the Lord, I appointed a meeting at a place called Chelmandiston, where divers had received the truth and testimony of God through me his servant; and there a priest who two years before, betrayed me to the ruler, and got me into prison; now the same procured a warrant to have me cast into prison, and I was so in the First month, 1670, in Ipswich jail; and being committed to the said jail for being at a conventicle, (so called,) upon the statute of the 14th of king Charles, which saith, "If a person convict of a conventicle, shall pay some sum of money not exceeding five pounds, or lie in prison some time, not exceeding three months;" and the judge of assizes, R. Rainsford, in his haste and passion, not regarding the law, but his own will, committed me to lie in jail until I would pay five pounds; and afterward being convinced of his error, he wrote an order for my release at three months end. And I being released, was drawn forth in the love of God, again to cross the seas about the Fifth month, 1670, and went to Holland to visit the remnant there that had believed, and to strengthen their faith, and for some weeks preached the gospel in divers cities unto the inhabitants and strangers, who came in great numbers oftentimes to meetings, hearing there was one that spake in their own language; and many were reached, and some overcome by the power of Truth; and the hand of the Lord was with

me in a blessed manner, to the refreshing my soul and filling my vessel, and the overflowings of my cup made many glad.

Then about the Seventh month, it arose in me to go to travel eastward, and to visit those dismal dark countries in the lower parts of Germany, and the borders of Denmark and Sweden, where the Lutheran religion bears sway, and darkness, and wickedness in the strength of it therewith. Oh! the weight and burden I felt many times, as I travelled through their towns and cities, where it might well be said, none did good, none considered their ways, and none thought upon the name of the Lord as they ought to do; but all manner of wickedness abounded, among whom I and my companion Peter Hendricks, were as signs and wonders, because our manner and conversation, our words and discourses carried nothing but judgment to them, and sometime we gave them books and papers of Friends, and left with them. And though the rage of many kindled against us, yet the Lord made way for us, and we had a safe and prosperous voyage, and came to Hamburg, and had a meeting upon a First day with those there that were convinced, and then went down into the dukedom of Holstein or Holsatia, belonging to the kingdom of Denmark; and having travelled two days journey, about seventy English miles from Hamburg, we came to Frederickstadt, where we found the brethren met together to wait upon the Lord, upon the fourth day of the week, who received us joyfully, with whom we sat down and were refreshed in the fellowship of that blessed gospel which is ordained for a blessing to all nations, tongues, and kindreds, who believe and obey it. So after that we gave forth a meeting publicly in the city, to be on the Sixth day, unto which many of the city came, and particularly, the skout or chief magistrate, and the messenger or sergeant of the city, and the power of God was much manifest among us, and much brokenness there was among the people, and they received the doctrine of Truth with much love and tenderness.

On the first day of the week, in the morning, we had a

meeting again with the brethren, and such as were convinced, and a great openness was among us from the Lord; and in the afternoon we had another public meeting, at which were about an hundred people, and every one's mouth stopped, and though liberty was given for objection, yet none was made.

These things troubled the minds of some professors and teachers, who had enmity in their hearts against the Truth, insomuch that two of them came towards evening and desired a dispute with me, which being granted, about forty or fifty persons came in to hear, and for an hour or two, we spake together, and the power of God was over them, and they were divided between themselves, which when the most moderate saw, he went away, and the other, to wit, one Eppinghooft, stayed till he made his folly manifest, to the most that were in the room, in particulars too large here to relate. So Truth stood over them, and the city was in a tender, cool and loving frame, and divers were added to the church, and to the faith which saveth; and the city hath remained in such a frame ever since, and hath been visited by divers brethren, as Thomas Green and William Penn, who have had good meetings amongst them to their mutual refreshment.

So on the second day of the week, we met together early in the morning, and committed each other to God, with prayer and supplication; and they accompanied us to the Jider, which runneth by the city, and there we parted in that love which never changeth, and set our faces again towards Hamburg, whither we came safely the next day; and after we had visited Friends there, we took boat and came over the Elbe, and by waggon came to Bremen, where we left several books, and we passed back to Oldenburgh, and so to Embden, where being upon a first day of the week, it lay upon me to go to an assembly of the ministers, (a kind of baptists,) where after one Hert Jansen had preached, and the prayer time was over, (for they speak no words in prayer, but all kneel down and are silent, every one praying in his own mind as seemeth good to him,) I say, after that,

I stood forth and spake in the Dutch tongue about half an hour, exhorting them to come to God's witness, that they might feel judgment set up in them, to cleanse them, and to prepare them for the Lord, &c.

After this, the preacher stood up again and vindicated and maintained by scripture what I had said, exhorting them to receive my exhortation. The same evening divers people came together at the house of one Remelkie, a poor maid, who had neither hands nor feet, a devout woman who sought after the way of God, and received us gladly to her house, where I was moved to declare the truth of God among them; and after that we had some words by way of dispute and parted lovingly. The next day divers of them came again to us and kept us company; and about mid-day we parted very friendly, and I with my companion took shipping for Delfe-Siele, and so came to Groningen, and had a meeting with Friends to our mutual refreshment, and thence came to Lea Warden, where the Friesland lords had a law to put quakers in the bridewell for five years, that should dare to come into their province of Friesland, by which law they had taken three Friends of Amsterdam and put them in prison, and made an order that no quakers should go in to visit them; which when I understood, the zeal and love of God sprung in my heart, and set me over them and their wicked law, and I took a pen and wrote to their lord president, and told them they had done worse than heathens; and seeing they had made a law to imprison all quakers, there was I and two more with me, who were come to visit the prisoners, and desired liberty so to do; for we feared God more than them and their law, and were come to fulfil our Christian duty to our brethren, whom they had so unjustly cast in prison. The president carried the letter to the council, but the Lord limited them, and they let it pass by and did not lay hands on us; so we appointed a meeting in the city, and having tarried there several days, we came to Workum, and took shipping for Amsterdam, and came there on the First day morning, about the beginning of the Ninth month.

And being come again to Friends in Holland, we had many precious meetings together in divers cities, as Alkmaer, Haerlem, Rotterdam, &c. and a young man having heard in Switzerland where he lived, that he had a brother in Holland turned quaker; in his zeal came down thinking to turn him, but the Truth prevailed upon him, the first and second days he heard it declared, so that he owned it, and became obedient to the cross, the first week he was there, to the great comfort of Friends, and most of all of his brother; so I having travelled through the meetings and visited Friends; in the Tenth month I committed them to the Lord, and to the word of his grace, and returned again to England, and went to and fro visiting the churches in London, and in divers parts of the nation for three or four months. At which time, I understood that divers exalted spirits were gotten up among them that had believed in Friesland, who began to set forth strange doctrine among Friends, and sought to unsettle the minds of them that had newly received the faith among them, and had begun to seduce them from their meetings, and to wait upon, and to mind strange motions and imaginations which hath been the ruin of many in former ages, who were not grown to a discerning. So the zeal of God moved in me against that spirit, and the love to the tender seed drew me again over the seas, which was of great service to Friends and the Truth; so I laboured greatly to inform the minds of Friends, of the depths of that ranting spirit, and whither it would lead and where it would centre. I having had long experience of it here in England; so the power arose among Friends, and they began to note such as were disorderly and unruly, and to call them to an account, and took great labour and pains with them, to regain and recover them out of the snare of the devil, making many journies and visits to them, which proved not ineffectual, divers being helped and brought back; howbeit, some were hardened and waxed worse and worse, and turned against the power of God into enmity and opposition against Friends; so that a necessity was upon Friends to clear themselves and the Truth, of them and their evil

works; and the more, because we saw that the mind in which they were so vainly puffed up, was fleshly, as afterward appeared. So Friends called them to their general Men's Meeting, but they refused to come; then Friends journeyed to them time after time, to warn them, and to exhort them to turn again to the Truth which they were fallen from; but when no counsel would take place with several of them, Friends put out a paper against them for the clearing the Truth.

And after these things I came to England again in the Fourth month, 1671, and travelled through several counties, being much rejoiced to see the peace, unity and courage that was among the people of God after the sore persecution that had been among them; and passing up to London, and so back again to Colchester, where having a sore sickness nigh unto death in appearance, it came upon me to go into the north country to visit the churches in Yorkshire and Bishopric, &c. where I had not been for three or four years, by reason of my much being beyond the seas, but the love of the Lord abounded in my heart unto those dear Friends northward; and I was pressed in spirit till I had cleared myself of all things that lay upon me in my own country. And upon the 31st of the Eighth month took my journey forward, and going through the Isle of Ely, found dear Samuel Cater who was pressed in spirit to visit Friends in Scotland, and so became my companion as far as Newcastle.

Through several places we travelled, to the refreshment of ourselves, and many more; and the Lord delivered us out of the hands of the ungodly informers, who were then very brief throughout the nation, upon the account of the new act which was made to fine us, for speaking in meetings, twenty pounds the first time, and forty pounds a time after; which law made them greedy in all parts, but in all places they were, through the wisdom and power of God frustrated, and though the winter was very sharp, and my body now through much affliction very weak, yet was I marvellously supported through that journey; and having parted with my honest compa-

nion at Newcastle, I turned westward and came southward another way than I went; and so to London again, where having visited Friends, I returned to my outward habitation again at Colchester, to the joy of my poor wife and Friends, who had longings for my return as I had again to see their faces, which desires, the Lord to our comfort answered, about the Twelfth month, 1671.

And having continued visiting Friends to and fro, the fore part of the year; about midsummer I took shipping for the Low Countries again, to visit the flock of God, where I laboured and travelled about three months in Holland and Friesland, in the time of that great consternation and confusion that was upon them, by reason of the great and sudden progress the king of France did make upon the United Provinces; and, howbeit, the foundations of their pomp, power and glory were then shaken and ready to be overturned; yet I saw the foundation of satan's kingdom stand very fast among them, and the people instead of turning to the Lord by unfeigned repentance, grew worse and worse, and debauched themselves more than ordinary by drinking, gaming and sporting, and the burden thereof came upon me, and I was made to cry out against them in the power of the Most High, and warn them to repent, and put away every man the evil of his doings. And I wrote down the counsel of the Lord as it was manifest in me, showing them the cause of their misery, and where the remedy must be: and I caused it to be printed and made public to those countries, and many copies were given to the chief rulers and commanders; so I cleared my conscience in the sight of God concerning those nations for that time, and left them, returning for England about the Eighth month, 1672.

And having been some time at my own home, and visited Friends in divers countries, went to London, and parts adjacent, preaching the everlasting gospel, and witnessing the grace of God, in Jesus Christ, which shined forth to gather the elect seed out of the house of bondage and darkness. And the Lord was with me daily to the rejoicing of thousands, and to my daily encourage-

ment; for by his mighty power were many strong oaks bowed, and many subtil foxes prevented of their prey, and many wandering sheep brought home who had long longed to find the fold of rest, whose souls will ever live with my soul in his covenant to praise him world without end.

And having spent about six months in this manner, I found it upon me from the Lord again, to pass over the sea, and to visit divers places where Truth had been little or not at all sounded; and in particular, that hard-hearted city of Embden in East Friesland, where one John William Hasbert, a doctor of physic, received me with great cheerfulness; and I had a meeting in his house upon the First day of the week, about the latter end of the First month, 1673, where many people of divers persuasions did hear the Truth declared in great plainness and simplicity; and after some time those that were convinced, were drawn in love to God to assemble together, to worship God in spirit and in truth, and in the silence of that fleshly wisdom that can speak when it listeth, and say what it listeth; and at the first, there sat down about ten persons in Hasbert's house to wait upon the Lord, and when this was noised about the city, the wicked one stirred up the priests and rulers against them, and they stirred up the rude and ignorant people to assault them, mock, reproach and revile them, and the rulers fell quickly to fining, imprisoning, threatening and banishing those weak and tender plants in almost an unheard of manner. Banishing some, sixteen or twenty times, spoiling all they had, save their clothes, at last fell upon them also; taking away their coats, hats, breeches, gloves, aprons, &c. and driving them through the streets almost naked aboard the ships that were to carry them away; all which and much more by the mighty power of the Lord, did these innocent, harmless lambs bear with great patience and quietness, and were not dismayed at all at these cruelties; for the Lord had regard to his name and to their innocent cry, and supported them, and doth support them, and they have found it true that they that wait upon the Lord have renewed their strength: blessed be the Lord for ever.

So returning thence from Holland into Friesland, I continued about three or four months, and published the glad tidings of salvation in their own tongue to all that had an ear to hear; and about the same time were divers great pillars, both as to state and religion shaken, and divers of those who had been in great places in government, were convinced, and their understandings were opened concerning the way of Truth, and began to struggle and contend for it in that wisdom that was from beneath; whom I faithfully warned and counselled in the love of God, not to seek to comprehend the Truth, but to wait in lowliness to be comprehended by it, and gathered into the precious life thereof. But oh! the cross, the offence of the cross, they could not bear with, but sought divers ways to satisfy themselves with the owning the doctrine and words of Truth, and loving Friends who walked therein; but came not down to the simplicity of the gospel, (excepting one of them,) nor to be separated from the world, nor from those things in which the world's fellowship stands, though they were brought to confess the way of Truth, and to cry out of the load that lay upon the soul. Howbeit the sound of their convincement did tend to the advantage of the gospel, and many came to meetings, and that of the most honourable; and some were convinced of divers ranks, qualities and persuasions, especially in Rotterdam, where meetings then grew very large, and Truth came to have a good esteem in the hearts of many who had hated it and us without a cause. So after I had spent three or four months in those parts, and found myself clear, I returned for England against the general meeting in the Fourth month, and travelled with great diligence through divers countries, and went again to Bristol and visited the churches in many parts of England to my and their great refreshment; and the Lord was with me, and gave me utterance and wisdom as I stood in need, for he kept me poor in spirit and low in mind, and I knew that my dependance was upon him alone, who knew well how to order both me and my service; and he gave me judgment to rebuke gainsayers, and to

stop the mouths of them that opposed themselves: so continued till about the Fourth month, 1675, at which time I understood the former openness did continue in the Low Countries; and I was drawn in the love of God again to go over thither to visit them, and to behold their order, which I did to my great comfort, and found the noble plant flourishing, and a living testimony opened and raised up in divers of them that had believed; and they spake of the goodness of God in their congregations, warning all men that they might turn to the Lord by unfeigned repentance, and wait to see his salvation.

And hearing of the great sufferings of Friends at Embden, I went thither to visit them, and hearing of a law they had published, of twenty-five pounds fine for every one that should harbour a Friend in his or their house; I desired to see it, and took it and wrote a book to the hard-hearted rulers and priests, and answered their wicked mandate with sharp and sound judgment, and caused it to be delivered among them; and the power came over them, and they laid not hands on me, nor did me any harm, though I was public in their city two days, and known by many of them; after which their fury abated, and Friends began to have some more freedom than formerly.

And about the Eighth month, 1676, having travelled through the provinces, and visited many places and cities, I returned in the will of God to my own home; finding my body much decayed and disabled from travel and labour more than formerly: yet satisfied in the will of God who laid no more upon me, than he gave me ability to perform; and as he hath always been abundant in goodness to me, so he is to this day, blessed be his name for ever. And this I can say, my delight is to do his will, and my joy is that he hath counted me worthy to bear his holy name and testimony among the sons and daughters of men. And oh! that all men would fear the Lord, and walk in the way of his righteousness, that they might come to have the evidence and testimony of his goodness in themselves! So I passed that winter in visiting the churches in Essex and Suffolk, and some-

times at London, where it pleased the Lord to appear with me for his name and tender seed's sake, to the conviction of several, and strengthening of many, glory be to him alone for ever. And the winter being over, I felt drawings to pass again over sea, finding a particular care and charge laid upon me concerning those parts, in which the Lord had given me great encouragement, and I saw I had not laboured in vain, praises be to his name.

And about the First month, 1677, I took shipping for Holland, where I found Friends very well, and in good order; and their men and women's meetings were become a delight to them, as having not only enjoyed the Lord's presence in them, but had also seen the great benefit that had come thereby, and the ease they had of the weights that had formerly lain upon them; and having several times visited their meetings in Holland, I went over into Friesland, to Harlingen, where many Friends of that county met me upon a First day; and we had two precious and large meetings, and many professors came to hear, who had nothing to say against the testimony of Truth. So having seen Friends there, and finding myself unable for long journies, I returned for Holland, and having staid there with great joy and comfort in seeing Truth's prosperity, I, about the latter end of the Third month came back for England, and passed for London, where I was most of that summer and in the parts adjacent. And then the Lord put it into my heart again to visit the meetings round about Colchester, where I lived, which with much pain and trouble of body, (though with much joy in spirit,) I accomplished, and found Friends in most places well, and where I found the subtle, crafty serpent seeking to scatter and to divide God's heritage, I reproved it with great plainness and confidence in the Lord, who had showed me the mystery of that iniquity; and how that the enemy of Truth sought to cover himself with Truth's words, and under pretence of leaving all to the power, would usher in a spirit of liberty to lay waste the blessed testimony of God, and scatter his people out of the good order into which the gospel, (the power of God,) had brought them.

And in the service of my God, after this manner, I continued at and about home most of that winter, waiting upon the Lord to be led and guided in my service and testimony according to his will; for I found that though through long experience, my senses were exercised in the service of God and the churches; yet I had nothing to trust to, as a guide or leader, how and after what manner to minister in the church of Christ, but the same that led me in the beginning, even the immediate operation, of the power that brings forth in the will of God all things suitable to their season, that the glory might be to the power, and the praises to him that gives it, for ever and for ever more.

And after the winter being over, the Lord renewed my strength, and having further service for me to do, gave me ability.

And about the First month, 1678, I found some powerful drawings in the love of God to go down once more into Yorkshire, where I had had much service for the Lord, but had not been there for about six or seven years. So I went down to Hull, and visited the churches about Holderness and Hull, and Beverly, Malton, and York; in all which places I saw the glory of the temple of my God shine forth in great splendour, notwithstanding all the rage of the adversary; and I had a precious service in every place, and the hearts of many were opened, and the souls of many dear Friends were truly refreshed, and the bread of life was plentiful among us to our mutual joy and rejoicing in this journey. My soul was greatly comforted to see so many of the ancients, and honourable men and women abiding in their places, and growing up in the house of God as fellow-helpers in the gospel with us: so after about seven weeks tarrying in those parts, I committed them to the grace of God, and returned for London to the Yearly Meeting, where having tarried a week or two, I returned and set things in order in my own house.

After which I again crossed the seas, and went to labour in his little vineyard there to my great refreshment; and going over about the Fourth month, 1678,

continued there till about September the same year, in which time the Lord laid it upon me to go up southward to divers cities upon the Rhine, where several had received a notion of the Truth in a talkative mind, but were not come to a sense of the cross and dying of Christ Jesus, nor to a separation from the foolish and vain customs and salutations that are in the world. I spake with several of this sort of people at Cleeves and Wesell; at the latter place I had a meeting upon a First day about the harvest time there, where several heard Truth declared in the plainness and simplicity of the gospel, and a love was begotten in them. But oh! the cross, the cross, that was and is very hard to that mind that would fain inherit both kingdoms! Great struggling there was by divers of them to argue themselves into a liberty, to abide in the customs of the world, and to walk in and obey the light of the Lord Jesus also. But in vain was all that labour, and ever will be, for the disciple must be as his master; and he sought not nor received honour of men; and I having answered the witness of God in them, was not studious how to feed their curious inquiring minds concerning things beyond their states and conditions, but parted with them in the love of God and true breathings to the Lord, for the bringing forth in the Lord's due time what he had begotten; and so committed them to the grace of God, and returned into Holland, where it pleased the Lord to visit me with sickness for several weeks. And I finding myself clear of all those parts for the present, I caused a boat to be prepared and brought to the door of my lodging, and I lay down in it, being very weak, and so was conveyed to Rotterdam, where my strength was so much renewed, that I went into their meeting on the First day, and for about half an hour declared the Truth of the gospel among them, exhorting to a steadfast abiding therein unto the end, and shortly after got into the packet boat for England, and so to my own house, still remaining very weak, and freely given up in the will of God, that if my service were ended, I might lay down my head in the will of God in my own habitation after all my trials and travels. But the Lord was pleased to restore me, so

that I was able to go and ride about and visit the meetings about home, and also got twice to London in that winter; where my joy was to behold the brethren that live in the unity of that power that shall bruise satan and his work under foot, and lay waste his kingdom. So having visited some of the assemblies of the Lord's people in Hertfordshire and other places, and cleared myself of what lay upon me in the city; I returned to my place in the will of God, remaining as a servant waiting to be ordered, and as a child waiting to be fed of him who is the father and fountain of all my mercies, blessings and deliverances, to whom be the glory for evermore.

And the next summer finding no necessity lying upon me as formerly, I went not over sea, but after the general meeting was over, it lay upon me to visit Friends again at Bristol and thereabouts, being at that time under a deep sense of some great exercise that the church of God was in, by reason of some who under a pretence of exalting the power, sought to make void the wholesome order and government which the pure power had led us into, crying down formality and men's orders, &c. And when I came there, I found that this licentious spirit had hurt many, and grieved many more; and a weight came upon me, and I laboured in the power of the gift that the Father had bestowed upon me, in meekness and patience, dealing with every one in sincerity, labouring to show them that were concerned, whither the tendency of that work would reach, even to the throwing down of that hedge that God had built about his heritage, and laying waste the work of the power under pretence of crying up the power itself; and by crying down men's orders, would draw from the gospel order, and from the blessed fellowship that was in it. And it pleased the Lord to give me an open door among them, and many were tender, and became more watchful; though others in the mean while, made but an ill use of all the tender dealings in the love of God, and sought thereby to strengthen themselves. And after about twenty days I returned, and came to London; and towards winter, I returned homeward, where I continued in the peace of God, hav-

ing my blessed reward with me, which no reflections of the adversary could take from me, and was exercised according to my ability, in visiting the assemblies of the Lord's people in Essex and Suffolk, where it lay upon me; and in helping and assisting the Lord's people according to my ability, both in their spiritual and temporal concerns, as the Lord God of my life gave me an understanding; for I gave up the ordering of my spirit unto him, and he opened me in many things relating to the affairs of this world, that I might be as a staff to the weak in those things, and might stand by the widow and fatherless, and plead the right of the poor. In all which, I sought neither honour nor profit, but did all things freely, as I received of God, and he whom I served, was my reward, so that I lacked nothing. Therefore who would not praise the Lord, and who would not trust in his name?

And when the winter was over, I went again to London, and into Hertfordshire, and places that way, visiting the flock of God, and stayed till our general meeting was over, and then found drawings to visit the little remnant beyond the seas, in Holland and Friesland, and continued among them, and in those parts, about three months. In which time it came upon me in the great love of God, to visit a little innocent remnant that had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and professed his name in Crevelt, in the land of Meurs, who for their testimony had suffered many things and grievous, and been several times banished from house and home, and made to wander with wife and children to seek harbour or shelter in strange cities and places. These I found now returned to their dwellings, and was joyfully received by them, and much refreshed in them, beholding their faith and courage, and their steadfastness in the testimony they had to bear for the Lord. I tarried with them about three days, and had several precious public meetings in the city, and sounded the day of the Lord's tender visitation in the ears of many of the inhabitants, who generally behaved themselves with great sobriety and moderation, neither mocking nor scoffing, nor evilly intreating us; which is rare to find a people so moderate in those parts,

which is in the borders of the dark Romish religion, and as it were intermixed with it: but I speak it to their praise, no man evilly intreated me, and the Lord's power was over all, for which we blessed and praised his name. And having comforted and strengthened them that had believed, did commit them to the grace of God, and left them, and returned again to Holland another way, through the Spanish Netherlands; where I saw great abominations and idolatry, and worshipping and praying to images, &c. which grieved my soul; and I could not but declare against it in several places, as the Lord made way. And being come back to Holland, I soon made way for my return home, and cleared myself of the meetings in Holland, and took shipping for England, and got home on the 11th of September, 1680.

And soon after it pleased God to visit me with a sharp fever, which brought me in appearance nigh to the grave; in which his presence was with me, and supported me, and refreshed my soul many a time, so that death was not terrible to me; but I found myself quietly given up in the will of God, whether to live or die I was contented. But after about ten days the fever was abated, and I perceived that my days would be yet added unto; in which I was well satisfied, having a constant resolution fixed in my soul, that whether my days be few or many, to spend them in the service of God and his dear people, who are to me, as my mother, my brother, and my sister, yea, as my own children, finding a natural love in my heart to all my father's children, and a true love to the brotherhood. And my God hath put it far from me to despise the case of the poor, or to respect the rich in judgment, but according to the gift and understanding given me, I have walked with a straight foot in the gospel; the honour of all, with the praise of all which, belongs alone to him that hath wrought it, yea, his own work praiseth him, and shall praise him who is worthy, both now and for evermore.

And after it pleased God to restore me to a measure of health and ability, I spent the following winter in visiting the meetings about Essex, and went to Yarmouth and Norwich, where I had not been for many years; and be-

held the work of the Lord arising again in that great city, and many were made tender by the powerful impression of the word of God. And having stayed thereabouts in Norfolk about a month, I returned again in peace, rejoicing in the prosperity of the Lord's work, and came by Ipswich, and so home. And shortly after it came in my heart, in the workings of the love of God towards his people, to take a journey once more into Yorkshire, which proved to the mutual refreshment of me and many more. For coming to York a few days before their Yearly Meeting, I went to Scarborough, whereby many Friends both of Whitby and Burlington, and the country around about, had opportunity of coming to me, when I, through bodily weakness, could not go to them, as I had formerly done: and much service I had for the Lord and his people there, both in some particular cases, as also in the general and public testimony of the gospel. And then returning to York, and staying there a few days with them at their general Yearly Meeting, I went then to Hull, and into Holderness, and tarried thereabouts till about harvest time; and then finding myself clear of those parts, I returned to York, and thence to London. And after some days and weeks stay there, returned home. And by this time, was again overtaken with great pains of the stone and other distempers, which brought my body very low, and little was expected by any, but my departure. And I found myself given up to the will of God, which I knew was best of all; and if my service in this world was at an end, I was content to leave it; and if the Lord of the great household had more work for me, I knew he could and would raise me up, and so he did in his own time; and I grew again able to go abroad, and got to our Quarterly Meeting in December, and then after to visit Friends in Harwich and Ipswich, and some other places, but was for the most part of this winter, 1681, about my own dwelling at Colchester, where I saw my desire in part answered, concerning several who were brought to the acknowledgment and profession of the Truth, whom I hope the Lord will build up by his power, and by the operations of his Spirit; for he alone can give the increase to whom the glory and praise alone doth belong.

The next year, 1682, having spent the summer mostly about home and at London, about harvest it came into my heart, in the dear love of God, to go visit his church and people again, at, and about the city of Norwich, that I might be a means of strength and refreshment to them, in the sharp trials and sufferings that I was sensible was then coming upon them to try their faith and patience. And the same day I came into the city, I went to their meeting; and there came one called a justice, with constables and the informers, and a great rabble of wild and ungodly men, who seemed as if they would devour us, and hauled me, with about a dozen friends, to their judgment-hall, where the mayor and aldermen met: and divers practices were used to ensnare me, and bring me into bonds; but the Lord God of my life was with me, as in former days, and gave me courage and wisdom, by which all their snares were broken. But not having had opportunity to clear myself yet in public, I went the first day, was a week following, (after I had visited some country meetings,) to their meetings in the city, where the Lord appeared wonderfully to bind and limit the adversary; so that the meetings were very large that day, both before noon and afternoon, by reason of country Friends coming thither, and abundance that were not Friends: and all was quiet and peaceable, for which we gave thanks to God, who we knew was the author of it, and had set his divine power as a hedge about us for his name's sake. And I saw in the light of the Lord, that the Friends there, were as soldiers, with their armour on, well prepared for the approaching conflict, which came forthwith sharp upon them, after I was come from them, which they have borne and suffered with great faith and courage, to the glory of the Lord, and the confounding of their adversaries: and the Lord hath appeared with them and for them, both supporting them in their sharp sufferings, and sometimes giving them some intermissions thereof; so that they are kept alive to his praise, that hath quickened and preserved them. And having finished what was upon me there, I returned home, and continued at and about home that winter, and was visited with some weakness of body; and in the spring, found

drawings upon me once more to visit the flock of God in the Low Countries. So went first to London to the Yearly Meeting; where though the enemy had opened his mouth wide to devour us, and much persecution was raised against our peaceable assemblies, and we were often deprived of the benefit of our meeting places, yet none could deprive us of the Lord's power and presence, which was evidently manifest amongst us; and the blessed fellowship of life was felt and witnessed to our great joy and consolation; for which high praises were offered up to God, through Jesus Christ, in the humility of our souls. And the Yearly Meeting of London being over, I went with divers brethren of Dantzic, Amsterdam and Friesland, towards Holland, to be at the Yearly Meeting there at Amsterdam, which is three weeks after ours at London. And taking shipping at Harwich, we arrived safely at Rotterdam, where having visited Friends, we past together to Amsterdam; where a pretty many Friends from divers parts were come together, and we had a precious and comfortable meeting, in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bond of peace; which made our hearts glad, and tended to confirm the weak and feeble ones, and to the establishing the testimony of Truth in the hearts of them that had believed in Christ Jesus. And my God gave me understanding to open the mysteries of his kingdom, according to their capacities, to our mutual joy and refreshment. So our dear friends, brethren and sisters, departed to their several habitations and testimonies, to Dantzic, Holstein, Hamburg, and Friesland, &c. encouraged in the work of the Lord, and strengthened in the inward man.

And soon after Friends were departed, it pleased God to visit me again with a very sore fit of the stone-cholic, which brought me very low in the outward man; and it continued so with me several weeks, with some small intermissions; so that I was wholly disabled from visiting the meetings at Haerlem, Alkmaer, and in Friesland, &c. But continuing so weak, and finding myself clear, in the Sixth month, 1683, I set my face again homeward, and the Lord made my way prosperous; and while I was upon the

seas, I voided the stone that had so long been an exercise to me, and by the good hand of God I was brought home; where in a short time I had a greater exercise to be tried withal; for it pleased the Lord to call away from me my dear wife, who had been indeed a meet help, and a faithful and loving wife to me, about five and thirty years; and had with a firm faith trusted in God, and had her eye to him in all our sufferings, trials, and tribulations, and had seen before her departure how all had wrought for good unto us, and was satisfied in his will. And in this exercise I found the good hand of God bowing my spirit to his will; and I murmured not, but praised his holy name that had let her continue so long with me, and had made her so great a comfort to me in all my afflictions. And hereby doth the Lord work, to the fitting and preparing of my spirit, to give up all things visible and mortal, that at last mortality may be swallowed up of life; and that I, and all his dear people may see this work perfected, is my earnest travel and labour.

And after my dear wife's departure, I found the Lord still with me, supporting me in his blessed work he had called me unto, and my eye was unto him to guide my way. And in the latter end of the year, 1684, I received an opening in the Truth, that the Lord would give me another wife, to be both a comfort and a careful nurse to me; but about the same time, I saw that the Lord had a service for me beyond the seas in the summer coming. So I went first to London, and having stayed there the Yearly Meeting, and been consoled and refreshed by beholding the glory of God that from day to day appeared, and in beholding the love and unity that increased among the brethren. I then went over to Holland, accompanied with my dear friend, whom I had seen would be given me to wife, and divers other Friends both of Holland and England; and the Lord prospered our way, and we came there to their Yearly Meeting, where we found the old enemy had been trying his old stratagems, to lay stumbling blocks in the way of the weak, and had caused some to stumble and fall; and a spirit of enmity was gotten up very high, and pretended their matter should be heard at the Yearly Meeting: and so it was,

and the love of God wrought wonderfully for their restoration, which after several days labour, was so far effected, that they with joy and thanksgiving came back, and laid by all their weapons of war and contention, and were again brought to a tenderness towards God and his people, to our mutual joy and rejoicing. And while I was in Holland, visiting the meetings there, I heard there was a door opened for the Truth, in a little city in Friesland, called Mackum, which I had long desired: so I went thither, and preached the everlasting gospel among them; where I was received with great kindness, and the witness of God was reached in several, and a love raised to the Truth, which in the Lord's time will bring forth good fruit.

Then returning into Holland, and having cleared ourselves of what lay upon us there, we did in the Sixth month, 1685, return for England; and in some time after we signified to our Friends and brethren what was in our hearts, in relation to marriage, which was approved unanimously among them; and in the Lord's due time, which was upon the first of October, 1685, we took each other in marriage, and found the Lord with us in it, blessing his own work, and hath indeed manifested it, that we are of God's joining; and he hath made us a blessing in his hand one to another, and true yoke-fellows, both in respect of our own affairs, and in the affairs of his church and people: for all which, I find my soul engaged to speak good of his name, to bless him, and praise him, and to say with his servants of old, his mercies endure for ever; for indeed she was a woman beyond many, excelling in the virtues of the Holy Spirit with which she was baptized, as she showed forth, both in life and doctrine, which made her to be a sweet savour throughout the churches of Christ, and was a pattern of patience and holiness, discharging her place as a tender and watchful mother to her children, and as a careful and loving wife to me. But alas, as the greatest enjoyments of temporal blessings have their end, so it happened unto me, for it proved the pleasure of the Lord to try me whether I could part with, as well as receive this great mercy; for in the beginning of the year, 1687, she fell into bodily weakness, and continued so two or three months, and

upon the ninth of the Third month, she slept with the faithful in the Lord, in a perfect resignation to his will, making a blessed end, to my great joy and consolation: for although it was hard to flesh and blood to part with so precious a companion, and to be left alone in my old age, accompanied with many infirmities of body, yet feeling fellowship with her in the joy into which she is entered, gives me great satisfaction; knowing right well her portion is with the righteous, and her eternal inheritance is amongst the just, where sorrow, snares and temptations cannot come.

And after she was buried, I went up to London, and conversed among the brethren three months, where the Lord was pleased to bless my service unto many, and then returned to Colchester, where I continued great part of the winter following. And in the year 1688, I went up again to London, and visited meetings thereabouts, as I found it upon me, and also some meetings at my return in Essex and Suffolk. And then about the Eighth month, I went again to London, and was there in the great revolution of government; and sometimes as I was able of body, laboured with other Friends, with the parliament that then sat in the year 1689, to get those penal laws by which Friends and others had suffered, to be suspended; and by the good hand of God, an act was passed to that purpose, which hath proved greatly to the ease of tender consciences. And after the Yearly Meeting of Friends in 1689 was over, I returned again to my habitation, and continued there the whole winter, not being able of body to travel by coach as I had done, many infirmities growing upon me, yet found daily renewing of strength in the inward man, and the word of the Lord lived in my heart, to the refreshing my soul, and the souls of many tender babes that lived and grew by the milk of it; and in this is my fellowship with the living, and my labour, travel and prayer, that all may be kept in the feeling of it, for this living word abideth for ever.

After which, he spent his time mostly in Colchester and London, in the service of Truth, and finished this life the 28th day of the Sixth month, 1692.

A
WORD OF REPROOF

TO THE
TEACHERS OF THE WORLD,

Which may be of use for the trial of their ways, and standing, that all who are willing to be undeceived, may come to an understanding to know what sort of men in this nation they are, who serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies, who in words profess God and the scriptures, but in life deny both.

WITH
AN INVITATION AND WARNING

To them and all people, to turn from iniquity, and serve the living God, whose service is not known, but in the light; neither is any service or worship accepted by him, but as it is acted in obedience to his measure which is Light, and hath lighted every one that cometh into the world.

Howl ye Shepherds, and cry, and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the Flock; for the days of your slaughter, and of your dispersion, are accomplished, and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel. Jer. 25. 34.

Written by a friend to all people, and a lover of the Light, and the ways thereof, whose outward name is
STEPHEN CRISP.

THIS is written to go abroad amongst the parish teachers and their flocks, and is serviceable for them to consider of; for the Lord God of heaven and earth is arising in his mighty power to plead the cause of the poor and needy, and to deliver the lambs from the teeth of the wolves and the lions, who catch for the prey; and to make a separation in the flocks of the idol shepherds; and behold his voice is uttered from Zion, and his word goeth forth from his holy habitation, who dwells in the light, and in it is his voice heard, which shakes the earth, and makes its inhabitants to tremble.

Therefore all people fear the Lord, and mind that of him which reproves sin and evil in the secret of your hearts, which is the grace which hath appeared unto all of you; but hath not yet taught all of you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, but in the lusts of ignorance do remain, looking at a man without you to be your teacher, and so know not the Lord to be your teacher: and for your sakes who are simple, in whom there is any desires, is this given forth, that you may see your teachers tried by their own rule, and found too light and too narrow: therefore all be warned for time to come, and in the fear of the Lord will you come to know the beginning of that wisdom which comprehends all those heaps of teachers which feed the itching ears.

S. C.

WORD OF REPROOF, &c.

THIS word is unto you, oh ye priests! in vain is all your coverings; for the light of our God is risen, and hath discovered you, and his power hath rent, and is rending your coverings, and his controversy is proclaimed against you; and he hath brought forth his little army, which is little in your eyes, but is a mighty host in the power of his spirit, upon whom he is fulfilling his promise, that one shall chase an hundred, and ten shall put a thousand to flight. And as our forefathers did, so do we, (in this day of our God, in a spiritual sense,) by faith turn to flight the armies of the aliens, and stop the mouths of lions, and obtain promises, &c. And you yourselves are witnesses in your practices, who are not able to stand, but often flee, when the life of God ariseth in any to speak to you, though in contemptible instruments in your eyes, and so have many hundreds of you been put to flight without sword and spear: and then you run from your worship, to the house of your armoury, where you are fitted with the weapons of the beast's warfare, (as whips, stocks, prisons, and such like,) in whose army you are found fighting against the Lamb and his army; by whom you shall be overcome, and your carcases cast into the open field. And now is your works of darkness, and great swelling words of vanity, brought to light, and there tried and judged, which is our rule to try and judge withal. And seeing you say the scripture is your rule, whereby things ought to be tried and judged; you and your works shall be tried by the scriptures also, that so you may be condemned by both.

First, Ye say ye are ministers of Christ: nay, but ye are his ministers whom ye serve and obey, and whose work ye do. Now sin is the work of the devil, and to destroy it in the flesh, was Christ made manifest in flesh: and you that deny the destruction of sin in this life, you

deny it in flesh; for he that departeth this life, goeth out of the flesh, and leaveth it, and so you deny the work of Christ, whose ministers you say you are; and he is no servant nor minister of Christ, who denies his work. Now read and consider, sin, and the man of it, is against Christ; and the ministers of him who is against Christ always strives to keep up, and to uphold that which Christ and his ministers strive to destroy and throw down, which is sin in the flesh: and so here it is plain, that you who strive to uphold sin, uphold Antichrist, whose ministers ye are.

Again, Christ said to his ministers, Go ye forth, &c. But where is your going forth? when some of you have purchased to yourselves places, and some have gained by flattery, and some do hold by force and tyranny a certain place, circuit or quarter from whence ye seek your gain, and there, are not ashamed to sue by title, as rector, incumbent, or lecturer of such a place. Oh horrible! that ever such should say they were ministers of Christ! Yea, and some of you can boast and glory in your shame, saying in your declarations, you have been there in such a place some twenty, some thirty, some forty years. Was ever such a thing heard of concerning any of the ministers of Christ? Were not they approved in their ministry, by trials, by travellings, by hardships and dangers, both by sea and land, in want, in heaviness, &c. But you have chosen the pleasures of sin, and to live at ease in the flesh; but destruction and misery shall overtake you in a day when you are not aware, who will not be warned.

Again, Christ said to his ministers, All power is given unto me, and I am with you: He did not say, all power is given unto me, and I will give it to the magistrates; and if any come to oppose you or your doctrine, go to him, he shall defend you; but they had the witness in themselves, and the power was with them, and is with them to the end of the world, which stops the mouths of gainsayers; which power is the power of Christ, which the ministers of Christ have according to promise; and the power of Antichrist, the ministers of Antichrist have,

which is manifest in persecuting, in violence, in tumults, and such like; which power is your defence, who say, ye are ministers of Christ, and are not; but are ministers of Antichrist, and so proved liars and condemned, and witnessed against, both in the light and by the scriptures.

Secondly, You say you preach the gospel.

Nay, that is not the gospel of Christ you preach, but another, which he that bringeth is accursed: for the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe. But what you preach is not so: no, not to them that believe it, who preach that they cannot be saved. So if they believe what you declare, they must believe they cannot be saved while in this life: and so it is not the power nor gospel of Christ which you preach, but the power of darkness to keep all in death out of the faith, which gives victory, and through which the creature comes to know the gospel, and the power which saves and redeems up to God.

Again, The gospel is everlasting, and none can preach it, but they who have received it; but you whose knowledge stands in carnal arts and sciences, and inventions, which came in time, and must perish in time, your knowledge cannot receive the everlasting gospel, when it is preached unto you, much less preach it unto others; and in that knowledge do you corrupt yourselves and others, and are like to perish in your corruption together, except you turn to the light which was before corruption, that it may show you corruption, and lead you out of corruption, that ye perish not; for to such as are in the perishing way which is corrupt, the everlasting gospel is hid.

Again, That which you preach, is not free nor without charge; but the gospel was so, and is so; and as long as the force and violence, and pride and covetousness is found amongst you, which makes that which you preach burdensome and chargeable to the people, cease calling it the gospel of Christ; for if you do call it so, the light in all consciences condemns you, and the practice of Christ's apostles condemns you, and the scripture declares against you, and your condemnation is just, and shall abide for ever.

Thirdly, You say you preach the Truth.

Nay, that is not the Truth you preach, for it sets none free; for many have abode in your doctrine and worship a long time, some twenty, some forty, and some sixty years, and yet are not set free; but you have brought them to believe, that they cannot be freed, and so have caused them to err from the right path, and such may die in their iniquities; but their blood will be required at your hands, who have beguiled and deceived them.

But Christ Jesus, the Light of the World, who lighteth every man that cometh into the world, that all men through him might believe, he said, If ye abide in the Truth, the Truth shall set you free. He is the Light, the true Light, and the Truth that sets free; and you who deny the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and yet say you preach the Truth, you are liars, and the lake is your portion except you repent.

Again, What you preach you sell, and so are declared against expressly in scripture, seeing you say you preach the Truth: for what saith it? Buy the Truth, and sell it not. Read your condemnation all you who make bargains for that which you call Truth; and let the light in your own consciences judge, whether you do not deny scripture, yea or nay.

Fourthly, You say, he that preacheth the gospel, ought to live of the gospel.

I answer, he unto whom the gospel of Christ is committed to preach, none can hinder him of living of it; for it is his life, and he needeth not an outward law to hold up his livelihood. Neither did any that ever preached the gospel, make use of any such power; but their power they had, and they have alone from Christ Jesus, both for the inward and outward support. Have we not power to eat? have we not power to drink, saith the apostle, who was a minister of Christ? But he had not power to make bargains with any people for a certain establishment of a sum of money, and then to seek for an augmentation besides, as some of you do, and then to sue at law for default of payment: and if it were paid, then to spend it in voluptuousness upon his lust as you do; some in the lust of drunkenness and gluttony, and some in

pride, in satisfying your lusts in clothes and in building, and some in covetousness, making a god of money : so you have chosen to yourselves gods which shall perish with you, and they shall not save you ; but your nakedness and your shame the light hath discovered, who have refused to be covered by it ; and while ye live in pride and gluttony, in envy and covetousness, in strife and contention, this is not to live of the gospel, but this is the fruit of the corrupt tree which is for the fire.

Fifthly, You say, the labourer is worthy of his hire.

Yea, but he must have it of him that sets him to work, and hath profit by his work. Now he that worketh for one man, and would have hire of another, who set him not on work, this is unreasonable ; and so is it for a man to exact wages for his work, when none hath profit by his work, as is seen at this day among you priests, who are out of the reasonableness and good order which most men besides yourselves are in, in this respect.

Therefore be ashamed and amend your ways, and labour with your hands the thing that is good, that you may come to eat of the fruit of your labour, and be satisfied ; and be not always like the greedy dumb dogs that can never have enough : for now is the day come which hath declared your work, and you are comprehended and fathomed, and measured with an equal line, and your coverings are too narrow, and the feet of your image is smitten, and the stone is increasing to fill the whole earth ; and then shall not your place be found, and the recompence of your labour will be destruction, wo and misery, which ye shall receive of the hands of the righteous God, the judge of heaven and earth, who will judge every one of you according to your doing ; and then shall all your hard speeches which ye have uttered against the innocent, be returned into your own bosoms, and ye shall know that ye were warned, and the light in your consciences shall in that day testify unto God's righteousness in your destruction.

This is given forth from the spirit of Truth, for the manifesting and rebuking of the spirit of error, and written in obedience to the commandment of the Lord in the year accounted, 1657.

S. C.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND:

WITH

A Word of Reproof to the Priests and Teachers and Officers therein, for their many corrupt doctrines and practices; also a warning, and general Invitation to all People, that live under their tyrannical Government, to come to the Truth, which will free them from the bondage they have long lain under; and to the Light which will show them the way to escape being longer partakers of their sins; and so they shall escape being partakers of the plagues which shall shortly be poured forth without mixture upon them, which continue in their ungodly deeds and works of darkness, in Rebellion against the Light that makes them manifest.

Herein is their Church made manifest: 1. In its Foundation. 2. Its Members wherewith it is builded. 3. In its Officers. 4. In its Doctrines, of God, of God's Word, of Faith, and of Election. 5. In its Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, (as they call them.) 6. In its Discipline.

With an exhortation to all people to come out from amongst them, to that which makes them manifest, which is the true Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the world.

Written in love to the simple-hearted in that Nation, and in witness of the Truth, and in Testimony against the False Teachers, and their false Doctrines, Ways, and Worships; by one who desires that People might be brought to the Truth in their inward parts, to worship God in that, by the leading of his own Spirit, that so they might be accepted; who am known among men by the name of STEPHEN CRISP.

TO the several presbyters in Scotland and to every member of them, and to the Scottish church in general is this directed, and sent as a word of reproof and warning from him who is the head of the true church, which is pure and undefiled, and sent by, and given through his servant, who being a member of that church, and

participating of the power and wisdom of the head, (according to the proportion of a member,) do thereby comprehend your church, of which I am not a member; and in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, the true head, do hereby reprove you of your adultery and hypocrisy, and several other spots and wrinkles that are in and upon your church, which now with the light are made manifest. And in the fear and name of the Lord, do warn you to return, and come to that which maketh manifest and maketh clean, before ye be cast upon the bed of misery and perpetual sorrow with Babylon your mother, and Jezebel your prophetess, by the power of whose sorceries and enchantments, in and among her merchants and disciples, many poor people in this nation are seduced and deceived, and kept from the anointing, which teacheth freely the Truth, which no lie is of, nor springs from, and they whom you keep from this which teacheth freely that so they might buy or hire teaching of you, among whom they are ever learning, and never learned, nor brought to know the Truth which makes them free that abides in it. These I say, can never know the true church which is the ground of Truth, in which none can be pillars, but such as overcome sin, and transgression and death which entered thereby, and came over all men; in which state God's church is not. And there are but two states, namely, the state of sin and transgression, the wages whereof is death; and the state of redemption from sin, which is through the power of the resurrection from the dead, which is the state of the church; between which two states is an absolute antipathy; for they that are in the transgression, are not in the church, for then it would be spotted; and they that are in the church, are not in the transgression, because the church is in God where transgression cannot be; and they that are holden in sin and death, are not risen from the dead, and they who are made partakers of the resurrection and life, which is Christ, they are not holden in sin, but the same power that raised up Jesus from the dead, raised them from the power of sin and death, and being thus raised, makes them members of the church, which is pure and undefiled,

which is separated from the sinners and from sin, by the mighty operation of the cross, which is the power of God, by which we are translated from death to life, from sin to righteousness, from being members of the harlot and her church, to be members of Christ and his church; and this is the church which we own and witness.

Now as concerning your church, I have not a few things against it, but even many, wherein you are to be reprov'd, and must be amended or rather changed, before you can justly be called and accounted the church of Christ, or any part thereof. Therefore listen a while and give attention, ye priests and presbyters of Scotland, who have a long time been talking of reforming, and amending, and purging, and making clean your church; and I will declare unto you your way which ye ought to take, to accomplish that which you so much pretend for, and cannot yet accomplish, nor indeed ever can, till that be removed, which hath and doth hinder a right and thorough reformation.

Now the first thing in your church, that is presented to my understanding, to be reprov'd, is the foundation thereof upon which it is builded, it not being the same, which the church of Christ was, and is builded upon, as will thus appear.

The foundation of your church, is that which stands in the fleshly part of man; namely, forms and names of the things the saints wrote of, without the power, which are attainable by the fleshly wisdom of this world, by which God is not known, nor the body which is the church discerned; but he that can get the saints words to speak, although he be out of their life, yet such are accounted fit members of your church; and of such members, and upon this foundation is your church builded, the saints words being the chief corner-stone thereof. But Christ said, he would build his church upon that which the knowledge of, came not by flesh nor blood, but by revelation from God his Father which is in heaven; as you may read in the 16th of Matth. 17, 18. And this is the rock which is now made manifest by revelation, through the spirit, which thing you deny to be in these days;

and so are not builded upon what comes to be known so, but upon that which the knowledge of comes by flesh and blood; and you that have laid another foundation for your church, than what is by revelation, your foundation must be razed, and your church must fall, the pillars whereof are already shaken, and shall shortly be removed.

Therefore come all to the true foundation, which was and is the foundation of the true church, which is Christ, the Son of the living God, who is the light of the world, and lighteth every man that cometh into the world with the true light; and let that be the beginning and foundation of your building, and that which will stand for ever. This was before transgression was, and before will-worship was, against this the gates of hell cannot prevail.

This is the corner-stone which ye builders have rejected, and do still reject, [the Light,] and so rejecting it, are building Babylon, (as it were,) which is now confounding; and ye are put to a stop, and can proceed no further; for the people see your confusion in many parts of the nation, and begin to love and embrace them whom you have cast out of your church, who have the Light for their foundation, which answereth the witness of God in all; and whosoever builds, and not on this, their building shall come to naught, and the builders shall be ashamed, for that which should uphold them, will come a-top of them, and break them to pieces.

The next thing reprovab^{le} in your Scottish church, is the matter whereof it is composed. And in this also are you contrary to the true church, the spouse of Christ; for your church is composed of evil and ungodly men and women, whose hearts are delighting in ungodly practices, as swearing, and lying, and cozening, and dissembling, and scoffing, and scorning, yea, in striking and beating the innocent, such is your church made up of; dead stones, whose hearts are as an adamant, their mouths filled with cursing, and their tongues filled with venom, and their hands filled with violence. These are your materials with which ye have builded, but the Lord God of light and power, is making you bare and manifest, and by his

power is throwing you down, where shame shall cover your church, where the scorers shall be scorned in the day of their calamity, and the strikers shall be stricken with a rod that will break them to pieces. The sword of the Almighty is drawn, and shall wound them in their inward parts, that have wounded his children in their outward bodies, and grieved his Holy Spirit; and then shall howling and lamentation come upon your church, but there shall be none to pity; for the double reward of your doings to God's children, shall shortly come upon you, and that is the word of the Lord to you.

But if you demand, how is all this proved that your church is composed and made up of such persons as these? I answer, I prove it thus, not only by the hearing of the ear, nor by what I have seen of you, in the eternal light of the Son of God before my coming among you; but also being an eye witness of your behaviour towards me, who, when I have in obedience to God, and love to your souls, but proclaimed the fear of God amongst you, in one of your mass-houses or markets; what an offence hath it been counted by you, who are of the Scottish presbyterian church, some crying kick him, kick him, knock him down; and such like language and usage have I and many of my brethren and sisters found amongst you: as in particular the behaviour of the people of Dalkieth, on the 13th of the Ninth month, 1659, may witness; where, had not the soldiers appeared as a stop to your murderous purposes against me, your works of mischief had more appeared; but your spirit is seen and known to be of one nature with the scarlet-coloured whore, who thirsteth after, and is drunk with the blood of the saints. Besides, there needs no greater proof of this charge against your church, than what hath and doth proceed out of your own mouths, who are daily confessing yourselves to be such kind of people, and so are judged out of your own mouths, as all such slothful servants ever were. Doth not your priest say that ye are all going astray, every one after the lusts of his own heart, and hath forsaken God the fountain of living waters, and digged to yourselves cisterns that can hold no water, and

that your hearts are estranged from God, regarding lying vanities? And many such like things might be mentioned from your own mouths, the breath whereof as fire shall devour you. Now if it be not so, why do you say so, lying against your own souls? And if it be so, how can your church be the church of God, pure and undefiled, unspotted, and without wrinkle, or any such thing? Answer for yourselves, or cease from deceiving yourselves and others with the name, church of God, for with him dwelleth no iniquity.

Now if the Light were the foundation, then would none be counted fit members of your church but such as walked in it; and so your fellowship would stand in the Light as the true church-fellowship did and doth: but evil doers, as scoffers, liars, proud, covetous persons, strikers, fierce despisers, railers and persecutors, such hate the Light, and deny and reject it, and so may be continued in your church-fellowship, which is in sin for term of your lives, and shall be continued in the inheritance of utter darkness in the end, where shall be weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth for ever.

Another thing reprobable in your church, is the officers thereof, they being in all things contrary to the qualifications signified by the scripture of truth; as ye might well see, if the God of this world, the prince of darkness, had not blinded your eyes, a little of the disproportion between them, and the officers spoken of in the scriptures. (For sake of the simple, who desire to be informed,) I shall instance; and first of all concerning your presbyters. For the presbytery which the scriptures speak of, who laid their hands on Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 14, were such with whom was the power of God, as was manifest by Timothy's receiving a gift by the laying on of their hands, who had received the gift of God themselves, and had also received power to communicate the same; but you who are proud men, and covetous men, who usurp authority, and presume to be called by the name, and deny that power to be extant with you, or any else, or that any can be immediately called or gifted for the ministry, you are of that sort mentioned in Titus, i.

16. Who profess ye know God, but in works deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate; for these qualifications do belong to such men as ye profess yourselves to be, which I shall set down, and then let all sober people judge, whether ye be reprobate unto them, yea or nay.

1. They ought to be blameless, and whether ye be so or not, be your own judges, who say, none can live without sin, and so consequently not without blame, for all sin is blameable; so in this particular you have excluded yourselves. Then watchful; but what do you watch for? except it be opportunity to promote your corrupt honour, or to augment and exact your ungodly gain. Then of good behaviour, that is not to rail, and to curse, and to stir up people to tumults, and to stoning those who are not of your judgment; this is evil behaviour. Then given to hospitality; as to this, let the poor people who in your parishes go in cold and hunger, while you live in fulness and idleness, bear witness against you. Then apt to teach. In this also are ye far short, who must take a week's time to study, to teach the people two or three hours, and yet cannot get your devised studied stuff to hold together, but one while is confirmed that, which it may be the same day, or shortly after, you will deny again. Then not given to wine, no strikers. How many of you have been guilty herein, in drunkenness, and striking, and setting others on to strike, would be too tedious to mention here; but who desires to be informed of them and their manners, let them in sincerity take notice of them, and they shall come to understand their spirit; also some of their works of this nature, are already printed and presented to public view. Then not greedy of filthy lucre. And in this particular, how far your greediness hath appeared beyond all that have gone before you, let the sufferings of them, who for conscience sake, could not put into your mouths, bear witness against you. Again saith the apostle in the 7th verse of that 3d chapter of the 1st of Timothy, he must have a good report of them that are without; but how far are ye short of this, who cannot keep up a good name amongst them of your

own church, but your covetousness and deceit are manifest among them; notwithstanding your tyranny doth much stop their mouths, and blind their eyes, that they yet see not so much of your deceit, as shortly they will come to see.

But in brief, the description of the church officers in the whole scriptures of the apostles, is that they be blameless; which ye say none now can be; and that they be filled with the Holy Ghost, and with faith; which ye say they cannot be; for sin must have a room in them, then they cannot be filled with the other. And that they hold the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, which ye say they cannot do, for some sin must remain, and that defiles the conscience. That they should be gentle towards all men, in meekness, instructing them that oppose themselves: but out of this and all these qualifications ye being found, your officiating must be like your officers, and your officers are like the members, a body fit for destruction together, which the Lord is appearing against in his mighty power, to cut off head and tail, root and branch together.

2. The doctrines of your church also are reprobable and corrupt in many things, contrary to the scriptures. And first in your doctrines of God, whom you say is to be known and believed on, as in the distinguishment of three persons; and herein ye teach contrary to the scriptures of Truth, which ye say is your rule, and by it are all such dreamers and deceivers judged, and by the spirit which gave them forth, which speaks no where of three persons, as ye imagine and teach, but declares of the only wise God, who is one in his being and substance individual, infinite, who divideth all things, and to every sort their portion, who limiteth all things, and is not limited; whose power and spirit is inseparable from him, who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh, who by his power createth, and by his spirit quickeneth all living creatures, whose power is the Christ, and whose spirit is the holy and eternal life which they partake of, who wait for his appearance in his power; and these doth not the scriptures call three persons, but the one witness in the

heaven which you are all ignorant of, who dream and divine to the people, of a distinguishment of persons in the Godhead; therefore cease your deceit ye deceivers and soothsayers of Egypt, and come to the light that shines in the heart, that by it you may come to the true knowledge of God your Creator, and of his power by which ye were created, and of his spirit by which he quickens into newness of life, all those who fear him, and wait for his salvation, which now by the light is making manifest.

3. Your doctrine concerning the word of God, is altogether reprovably, who teach people to believe, that that is the word of God that can be bought and sold for money, and the knowledge thereof attained by human learning, namely, the scriptures, (or outward writings,) of the prophets and apostles, that you say is the word of God, and they that say otherwise, you say must be cursed. But will not this return upon your own heads, who preach contrary to the scriptures, which saith Christ is the word of God? Now if he be the word of God, then the scriptures are not, except they be Christ, which if you think they be, declare your meaning plainly; and if you know any other Christ than the scriptures, then call ye him the word of God, and call the scriptures a declaration, according as they are called by them that wrote them, who knew the word of God itself, which ye being ignorant of, have as it were changed the glory of the incorruptible and immortal word of God which abides for ever, into the similitude of writings, which had a beginning in time, and must come to an end; and in the end shall you know the word of God to be that which searches your hearts, and judges your ungodly thoughts and purposes; this shall abide with you in the end, for this was in the beginning, which the scriptures were not, and this is it by which the scriptures and all other things came to have a being; so that if the scriptures must be called the word of God, because the word came to the saints, and bid them write them, or make books thereof; then, may not Noah's ark, or Solomon's temple or the priests garments, or any other thing of the like nature, be called the word of God,

because by it they were commanded to make them? And furthermore, that which is the word of God, is that which was made flesh; and if you can tell how or when the scriptures were made flesh, then declare it, or else let that be called the word of God henceforth, that did become flesh. Again, without the word was nothing made that was made; and if the scriptures be this word, then declare to us how you know that they were before the creation; for that which maketh, must needs be before the things that by it are made. Further the word of God, saith the apostle is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, dividing between the soul and the spirit: but if this be the scripture, then tell us what is the reason that your souls are not thereby divided from the spirit of iniquity and deceit that rules over them? But ye imagine that death only can make that division, as if death were more powerful than the word of God. Oh ye blind and ignorant priests and people! how long will ye regard lying vanities, expecting life where it is not to be had, and like the pharisees of old, think to have eternal life in the scriptures, but will not come to Christ whose life is your light? Turn your minds into your own hearts, and feel if God's word, (which is as a hammer,) be not striking at some or other of your sins and corruptions, and wait then to feel the sharpness of it, to cut and divide you from your sins, that so you may witness the word in your flesh, (and not in a book,) to destroy the works of the devil, that the word in the heart ye may know, which liveth and abideth for ever, when that by it is destroyed, which cannot abide for ever, which is your sin, which hitherto hath separated you from the knowledge of God and of his powerful word.

4. Your doctrine of faith is reprovab^le, and you in it found contrary to the true ministers of Christ; for you preach that faith cannot be without sin; and you say it is heresy and error in any to say that it can; now this I say, if ye knew the true faith which is saving, ye would see that it is contrary in all things to sin, and would know, that instead of an impossibility to separate them, it would be impossible to unite them; for faith saith the

scriptures is the gift of God, and the gift of God is perfect, and God and his gift hath no concord with sin, but giveth the true believer victory over it.

But as for your faith which ye say cannot be without sin, it is therewith corrupted, and is not the like precious faith which the saints obtained, by which they wrought righteousness, and were accepted with the Lord, without which it is impossible for you to please him, though ye perform never so many performances; for this faith which is mixed with sin, which is the faith of the church of Scotland, is not that by which the just lives, but among you who profess this faith, is the just slain in your own particulars, by the sin which ye continue in, and say ye must continue in as long as ye live: so ye are far short of the saints hope, which brought them to purify themselves as God is pure, and your faith, and hope, and confidence, which is thus mixed with sin and unrighteousness, is excluded from leading any of you into the inheritance of the promise, which is eternal life; for it is the feigned or made faith, which hardens the heart, and continues you in the transgression, and begets in you a bold confidence in your dark imaginations, which shortly shall fail you, and ye shall be stript of your faith and hope, and be left naked, to your perpetual shame and confusion. And therefore all that desire to come to the true faith which gives victory over the world, and that which is in the world, they must first come to that which true faith is placed in, which is the light wherewith Christ Jesus hath enlightened every one that cometh into the world; and that all men through him might believe: and Christ himself said that they should believe in the light; and this is it which doth secretly make manifest and reprove the works of darkness, which are done out of the faith, and are displeasing to God; and who believe in this light, they must believe against sin and the power of it, and so as they abide steadfast in the faith, watchful to that in which they have believed, then the power of this faith comes to be felt in the creature, that as they have believed against sin, so they come to receive power against sin; for according unto their faith, so happeneth

it unto them, and according unto your faith who believe you can never be made free from your sins, so also will it happen unto you ; so long as ye abide in that belief, ye shall abide servants of sin, and so free from righteousness.

5. Concerning election ; and herein have ye erred exceedingly from the Truth, and with the Truth ought ye to be reprov'd and judg'd, who hold forth in your church that God hath respect'd a certain number of persons to himself, without cause or quality in them seen or considered, and that these he hath elected unto salvation, by an unalterable decree, that they shall be saved from the wrath of God, and that all the rest are under an irrevocable decree of damnation ; for when no way of salvation is left, nor any effectual means found for the salvation of them, that doctrine is not of God, but of your father the devil, who was a liar from the beginning ; if he telleth a lie, it is of himself, but if ye tell a lie it is of him : and from him has this doctrine sprung, who rules in the kingdom of darkness, and desires that none might come to the knowledge of the Truth, nor be saved : and so hath set you to preach this doctrine outwardly unto ignorant people, (who generally have believed it,) while he in the mean time is secretly suggesting in some of them, that they are elected, and so what sin soever they live in, cannot mar their election, seeing it is without condition or qualification, and man's works cannot alter nor change God's decrees. And many such like reasonings as this learn they from the deceiver within, and from the deceivers without, and he also is persuading others that they are not elected, but are of the greater number, which the priests say, no salvation nor redemption is for ; and so they may take their course, and spend their time in pleasure, for they can but go to hell in the end ; and all their godliness and soberness, and strictness, and abstinence from pleasure, and whatever they can do, cannot change the purpose of God concerning their damnation. And so by these and such like means and instruments doth the devil uphold his kingdom, and keep you from preaching Him, or believing on Him, who is the way to the Father,

Christ Jesus; the Light of the World, who lighteth every man with the true light, with which he may see that which was wrought in darkness, (which is the reprobate state,) and be led out of it according to Christ's words, who said, I am the light of the world, he that believeth on me, shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life: he said not if the elect believe on me, but [he that] a general term to every one that cometh into the world, and is enlightened with this true light; and this is the love of God to the sons and daughters of men, who wills not the death of them that do die, [mark] them are reprobated that do die; but God wills it not, but rather that they should turn and live. But ye that preach this doctrine, ye would live without turning, but the sword of the Lord is drawn against your life, and shall cut it off, for it stands but by an imagination of such a decree, as by which sinners might be saved in their sins: and then you shall know, that the way of salvation was set open to you, in that the light shined in your hearts; but ye rejecting that way, and seeking to establish a way of your own; so ye became excluded, and shut out of the kingdom after long talking of it.

And therefore all ye people of Scotland, and to whomsoever this shall come, of what people or country soever ye be, consider in the fear of God, whether ye be lighted with a light that doth make manifest your evil deeds, and words, and purposes in the secret of your hearts, yea or nay; and if ye find such a thing, then mind diligently its working in you, for in it are the reproofs of instruction, which the scriptures say is the way of life; and the way of life is but one, and having found it, every one in your own particulars, then no longer follow nor hearken to the deceivers, who for a long time have beguiled you, leading you from the Light, the Way, the Truth, and the life of men, and so kept you in death and darkness, where salvation is not to be found. And these have told you, that they have preached the gospel to you for the salvation of your souls, and yet tell you also, that as many of you as ever shall be saved, were saved before you were born. Then to what purpose is all their preach-

ing to you, if they cannot convert a reprobate, nor an elect person cannot sin unto condemnation; where then is the use of their ministry, which they have so many thousands of marks, and hundreds of pounds a-year for? If they answer and say, this is the means to gather in them that are elected, I answer, God will not lose any for want of means, and therefore he hath afforded the means freely, without money or price, to all the sons of men: who hath so loved the world, that he hath given his only begotten Son, a means and a way of salvation, for as many as believe on him; and he is the grace by which the saints were and are saved, which appeareth to all men, and bringeth salvation near unto all, without respect of persons, who are taught by him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and righteously in this present world: but if ye still continue to be taught by them that turn the grace of God into wantonness, and despise that which shines in the heart, to lead out of sin, which it makes manifest, then shall you perish in your gainsaying; and in the day of your calamity and misery, ye shall know and confess to your unspeakable sorrow and torment, that a prize was put into your hands, and a way of life was declared and made manifest; but ye loving your sins and iniquities, your delights and pleasures, which the light and way of life appeared against, were unworthy of this free salvation; and so your condemnation ye shall confess to be of yourselves in that day, when God the righteous judge will be clear of all your blood; and then saying God is partly to blame, and man is partly to blame, that men go to hell, will not serve turn, which one of the chief priests of your Scottish church affirmed, (Henry Foreside, priest of Lingich,) but his folly and many such blind guides is now made manifest with the light, which they are risen up against; but they shall not proceed much further, for their skirts are discovered to their shame.

Many more of the doctrines of your church are reprovable, and for condemnation with the light; which light, as the diligent reader comes to mind in its working and breaking forth, he shall see and be able to mea-

sure and try your doctrines with, and will be able to comprehend your deceit in many other of your doctrines, which now I am not free to insist upon. As of sanctification, in which ye allow an unsanctified part to remain, and so never bring people to know nor to hope for the thorough cleansing, which the saints witnessed, except it be after death, when no such work can be wrought. And also your doctrine of justification in sin will be seen, and God's righteousness will be cleared against your lying and deceit: and so of adoption, and resurrection, and glorification, and what else is preached amongst you, will be seen with the light, by them that love it, to which I commend them, in whom is sincerity of heart, and shall proceed a little further to your ordinances.

1. And first concerning that rotten tradition which you call an ordinance or baptism, namely, your casting a few drops of water upon the face of an infant of about eight days old; this you call an ordinance, but could never yet find out the institution thereof by Christ nor his disciples, for any sign or signification whatsoever; much less can you prove it to be the one baptism, neither can you prove that ever any such thing was done by any of them: so ye have neither precedent nor precept from the holy men of God; and therefore well may I call it a rotten tradition, that hath not so much as a precedent to support it, except it be a popish one, from whence it was derived, from the whorish church of Rome, your mother, whom you rail against in words, and obey in her unwarrantable practices, and with her shall you have your portion. Now this conceited charm or trick, of casting a few drops of water upon children's faces, you call baptism, wherein you have proclaimed to all understanding people, that from the greatest of you to the least, you are all ignorant of the baptism the scriptures speak of, which had a time and service, and ended in that which abides for ever; and so being ignorant of them, have in their room set up a conceit and tradition, which hath not so much as the least ground in the scriptures of Truth, neither is mentioned therein; nor was it invented many years after; and then it was instituted by the pope, obeyed by the

papists, and since continued and observed in your Scottish church, which from thence is sprung: but the true baptism is that which was instituted by Christ, and is owned and witnessed by the saints, and denied by the Romish and Scottish churches, which baptism is into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which name is a strong tower, and all that are baptized into it, find strength in it, and help against temptations; and in the time of trouble, find deliverance by it; and this the saints witnessed, who witnessed the one baptism, by one spirit into one body; for saith the apostle in Rom. vi. 3, 4. "For so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life; now in that he died, he died unto sin;" and they that are baptized with the one baptism, they are planted together with Christ in the likeness of his death which is unto sin, ver. 10th. and such also come to partake of the resurrection and life which is in Christ Jesus; and in that they live, they live unto God and not unto themselves, having crucified the old man with his deeds, and have the body of sin destroyed; and henceforth being dead unto sin, they serve it not, but witness the baptism which now saveth, making clean the conscience in the sight of God, by the washing of regeneration.

Now all people that desire further to know of this one baptism, which is a dying unto sin, and a cleansing or washing from the filthiness both of flesh and spirit, you must turn your minds to the manifestation of God's spirit within, which is given freely of God for you to profit withal; and with it will you see the spots that remain upon you, notwithstanding your outward traditional baptism, of what sort or manner soever it be; and also it will give you to understand, that the baptism which is the answer of a good conscience, and which is the similitude of Christ's death, which is unto sin, is yet wanting; and so by waiting in that which maketh manifest those things which ye should die unto, then will ye feel the name of God revealed in you, which is the strength and

power which only is able to kill sin; and trusting and believing in this, the true faith comes first to be witnessed, and then the one baptism which cleanseth and purifieth, will be witnessed, which bringeth into the everlasting covenant which God is making with his holy seed, which he is now gathering from under all the shadows, and also from among all the inventions of men, to serve him in meekness and fear in that worship which is inward in the spirit and in the truth.

2. The next thing is your imitable custom of eating and drinking bread and wine, which you call a Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and in this imitation stands much of your dark fellowship and communion; but no warrant from scripture have you for any such practice; for Christ and his apostles never commanded swearers and liars, and covetous persons, and fighters, and persecutors, that they should observe any such thing at any time, such as ye are; for whenever ye eat or drink, it is unworthily, as ye yourselves sometimes confess, and so your damnation must needs be the greater.

Notwithstanding, Christ the same night he was betrayed, gave his disciples his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink, (figuratively,) who afterwards were to partake and enjoy him, in that which was signified by the bread and the cup, when he took bread and blessed it, and said, take eat, this is my body, which they took and eat, and discerned his body, of which they were members; and as oft as they did this, they remembered him, who said, I go away, but I come again: and so also the cup, he said was the new testament in his blood which they then participating of, and keeping in remembrance him who died, who was to be raised up from the dead through faith and patience, they come to have the new covenant in their hearts, which was the substance of the figure in the blood, they being first therewith sprinkled from an evil conscience, and washed in their bodies with pure water, which is one with the blood: but how far ye are from this state, let God witness in your consciences, and your own mouths bear witness. Now notwithstanding Christ did institute such a thing as this among his disciples,

who had followed him in the regeneration, and had continued with him in his temptations, this was nothing to them who believed not on him, neither is it any thing to you who are cursing them that bear witness to him, that he is come a light into the world, and hath lighted every man that cometh into the world, and that witness he is come again the second time without sin unto salvation, according to his promise; these you curse and persecute. So your cup is not the cup of blessing which the apostle speaks of, 1 Cor. x. 16, which is the communion of the blood of Christ, (which cleanseth from all sin;) neither is that bread which they break, the communion of the body of Christ; for Paul saith, they themselves were the bread and the body, which is but one; but this he said he spoke to wise men, and if any have an ear, let them hear; but as for your part, ye are so foolish and unwise, that the bread ye break, is material bread, (which feeds nothing but the carnal body,) which is no part of Christ's body, that is hid from your carnal eyes, and sealed from your carnal imaginations; and if his second coming, which is without sin ye cannot truly believe, his first coming only will not save you, and your bread and wine will never bring any of you truly to know nor remember his death, nor to show it forth; for in that he died, he died unto sin: neither will his coming be unto salvation, when he appears again unto you, but unto damnation, who discern not his body, but curse and persecute his members. But all that desire to know the supper of the Lord in sincerity, they must come to the Light in the heart, which cometh from Christ, and that will show them that which hath crucified Christ, and slain the Lamb, and oppressed the just in their own particulars; and then the fear of God being placed in the heart, and the want of Christ being felt, who by sin and through transgression is crucified afresh, then shall you secretly come to feel a hope of his resurrection; and so then as oft as ye eat and drink, it will be in the fear of God, and in remembrance of your own unworthiness; and also in remembrance of him who is come to sanctify the creatures; which as he comes to be raised to life,

which hath been slain in you, this appearance is the second appearance which is without sin unto salvation; and till ye witness this, as oft as ye eat and drink, do it in the fear of God, and in remembrance of Christ, so showing forth his death till he comes, who when he comes, will show forth his own life, who is God over all, blessed for ever, amen.

And these two you call sacraments, which term you have as little ground for out of the scripture, as you have to practise them; but are delighting yourselves in the works of your own hands, and giving names to what you idolize, like the heathens and idolaters before you. But if you say they are obliging mysteries: I answer, how comes it to pass, that you who have been so long exercised therein, are no nearer obliged to God, but remain in the alienation of your minds, such strangers to him, that one of your own priests said to a company of you in my hearing, that the lowing of oxen, and the bleating of sheep, would give as good an account of what God and Christ was, as your answers would do, if ye were asked. But your idols shall be broken, and their names shall you be ashamed of, as they were ashamed of the groves and the green trees, under which they had worshipped their idols, whom God confounded before you. And then your water and wine, and cakes, and such like things which you call sacraments, and your mass-houses, which you call churches, signed with the pope's cross, your predecessors, these things will but all add to your shame and sorrow. Therefore whilst you have time, lay aside these carnal and foolish traditions, and come to the Light which lets people see over them all, to the one baptism itself, and to the supper, (and table of the Lord,) itself, and to the church itself, which is in God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as you may read, 1 Thes. i. 2.

And lastly, the discipline of your church, doth appear contrary to the discipline of the true church; and in this particular ye have so far proceeded already, within these few years, that ye have thereby much manifested yourselves even to many, who did not before see you; for this

many have looked upon, as a tail of a scorpion with which you have sought to vent that sting and venom which lodged in your hearts, against the true church, which ye could not vent with your tongue nor hands; but this also will the Lord cut off, that the scorpions shall hurt no more. Your sting begins to decay, and your force to fail you, and people begin to walk safely in the path of peace, and in the way of righteousness, notwithstanding your tail or your tongue, to the grief of your hearts, which is filled with mischief against the righteous in the land: but the Lord is their deliverer, and according to the evil of your desires against the innocent, even so shall your reward be.

Now the true church, they did observe, that if any that was called a brother, should be a fornicator, a railer, an extortioner, a covetous person, an idolater, or a drunkard, with such a one not to eat. Now if you would observe this in your brotherhood, ye would quickly be scattered one from another; your priests suspended for their covetousness, and drunkenness, and railing; the people suspended for their fornication, and idolatry, and extortion, and railing, and fighting, and many other misdemeanors, your communion would soon fall: but you who are a body or church so called, made up of such as these, ye take another course to uphold your fellowship; for if any who have been one with you in these things before mentioned, doth come to see with the light wherewith Christ hath lighted them, that these things are displeasing to God, and so dares not go on with you any longer in them, but declares against your idolatry, your covetousness, your railing, it is with such a one that you will not eat nor drink, nor buy nor sell. Oh! abominable depth of satan! this is the way you have found out to keep people from believing in the Truth, and from departing from your corrupt and cursed practices. In short, this is as your fathers the Jews did, who were the crucifiers of the Lord of Life; if any then did confess him to be the Christ, that said, I am the light of the world, who lighteth every man that cometh into the world, they must be cast out of their synagogue; [mark] out of the

synagogues of the unbelievers and crucifiers. Such as ye, who cannot, and will not have any fellowship with them that believe in the light, that they may be made children of light, your latter end shall not be like unto theirs, except ye repent.

Furthermore, the apostle exhorteth the Corinthians, to deliver the incestuous person to satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that his soul might be saved in the day of the Lord; but he did not intend the destruction of his body, as ye wickedly do, who thirst after blood, to assuage the flame of your envy: but the Lord will quench that flame, and ye that desire blood, shall have blood to drink: but the apostle fought not with flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness, and against incest, and fornication, and idolatry; but ye make war against the flesh and blood, and seek the destruction of the outward bodies as much as in you lies; but those who believe in the Light, and trust in the Lord, the God of our salvation, the power that saveth out of sin and unrighteousness, them will he deliver out of your bloody hands, and from your cruel teeth, and from the reach and venom of your hurtful tail. But it may be you will say, although we have cast out of our church, of whom you speak, yet they are heretics, and it was Paul's counsel, that one that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject. I answer, if this were observed among you, there would be none found to reject; for all would be found to be rejected: and this is the reason, that whosoever comes to be members of the true church, doth reject you, because of your heresy in doctrine, and corruption in conversation. But after that way which you call heresy, worship we the God of our fathers, who wrote the holy scriptures by inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and according thereunto, we believe in the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; which (our) belief you call heresy; and we believe that this light wherewith every man is enlightened, is a sufficient light to lead all that follow and obey it, to eternal life, and this you call heresy. And that this light is the perfect and heavenly gift of God, and

whosoever yields himself into the obedience of it, shall thereby be translated from darkness and the works thereof which is sin, and be brought to live righteously and holily in this life; and this also you call heresy. And many more things, which in the scriptures are declared, and by us believed and witnessed, do you call heresy; as may appear in a book lately published by the presbytery at Edinburg, to their shame, called a Testimony against the Petition for Toleration; wherein your envious and bloody spirit is sufficiently set forth to every judicious reader, against the life of the scriptures, and to whomsoever is come into it: but your Cainish spirit is seen, and your end is at hand, and your reward shall be according to your works.

And now all ye people of Scotland, in whom is sincerity and simplicity, unto whom this shall come, consider in the fear of the Lord, where you are, and whom you are joined with, and against whom ye take part, while ye abide in this church; and search the scriptures yourselves, and see whether these things be so or not, and come out from amongst them, and partake no longer of their sins, lest you partake also of their plagues, which are near coming upon them; and praise the Lord who hath spared you until now, and caused his light to break forth to discover their ways and works of darkness, before ye are overwhelmed by his judgments. And as in sincerity ye come to try these things with the light, in it ye will see more light, and by it an understanding will be opened in you, to see into their abominations and deceits, beyond what is here declared. But if ye reject this the day of your visitation, then shall ye be shut up in darkness, and your ignorance shall increase; and your hearts shall be hardened, and ye made fit for the indignation and wrath of God, to be poured forth upon you, when the measure of your iniquities shall be filled up.

While you have time, prize it, and while you have light, love it, and believe in it, that you may be made children of it.

S. C.

A

LETTER FROM STEPHEN CRISP,

TO THE

MAYOR OF COLCHESTER.

FRIEND,

IT is in my heart in love, to lay these few things before thee; and it is not my purpose to aggravate thy mind against any, by hard speeches, nor to crave or procure any thing but what is as just for thee to grant, as it is for us to have: but in consideration of the weighty charge committed to thee, and the many difficulties that thy charge is accompanied with, and the little experience that thou or any man can have, in wading through such difficulties, they being occasioned by things newly happened, even but now, in the latter part of our age. And so, if thou shouldest hastily and unadvisedly act, there might be enough cause, and too little time for repentance. I say, considering these and some other things, I could not well omit spreading these few lines before thee, which if they be received in love, as they are written, I have my end and my desire concerning this matter: but however, my reward is with the Lord, who knows the simplicity of my heart, which I also desire to manifest to all men.

Therefore, seeing the Lord God of heaven and earth is the Supreme Counsellor, both of kings and potentates, and of them that are under them, and that none that depart from his pure counsel, know how to rule or be ruled, (which I think none will deny,) and that God hath sent his Son Jesus Christ into the world, to declare his will and counsel unto the sons of men; and that his counsel, yea his command is to men, that as they would men should do unto them, so they should do unto others.

First, then, whether thou would willingly, (if not a magistrate, but of a different persuasion from the magistrate,) that that magistrate should violently persecute thee for that thy persuasion. And secondly, if thou be of a persuasion concerning the worship of God, and believest that he requires such things at thy hand; then if men should require the contrary of thee, whether it would be safe for thee to forsake and relinquish such thy persuasion, and desist such thy practice only for that reason, because thou art required thereto by men greater on earth than thyself? And thirdly, whether the witness of God in thy conscience, be not more answering to our lives and conversations though we do not conform, than it is to the conversation of them that live in prophaneness and wickedness, and yet do conform? And, if so, then if thou shouldst turn thy sword upon us, and let the wicked walk on every side unpunished, as they have done, whether thou actest not contrary to the witness and testimony in thy own conscience, and so art found kicking against the prick, which will prove a hard work in the end.

Again, the apostle Paul saith, Rom. xiii. 3, Rulers are a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well: therefore if the sword comes upon us justly, we must have done some evil: but our not being actually subject to a command of man, (which was never commanded for the Lord's sake,) is not an evil in itself, and that which is not evil in itself, no man nor men can make evil by forbidding it. It was as lawful for Daniel to pray to God after the decree was sealed, that none should pray to God or man, save to the king, for thirty days, as it was before; and he practised that which was lawful in itself, notwithstanding the decree which called it unlawful. And it was as lawful for Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego to keep from worshipping an image, and bowing to an idol after the proclamation and the great noise of music, as it was before, and they did so, notwithstanding that which called it unlawful. And it was as lawful for the apostles to preach in the name of Jesus, after their being forbid-

den by the rulers, as before; for that which is good and lawful in the sight of God, can never be made evil or unlawful by any man or men whatsoever: and such who are exercised in that which is good in itself, need not fear the magistrate nor his sword, for such shall never suffer by it, till the sword and judgment be turned backward. And if so, let such go on, patiently continuing in well-doing, committing their cause to God, who will plead it in his own time.

Much I have to say of this nature, but I shall endeavour brevity, and not too much spend thy patience; consider also how little profitable violence and cruelty can be in any way to thee, or hath been to them that have gone before thee; and on the other hand, how little detriment, moderation hath been to any that have been exercised therein; and let the fear and the dread of the God of heaven rest upon thee as it ought to do; else thy government will not shine nor be honourable, but be extinct in reproach and obscurity, (in the eyes of sober people,) as well as others; who for want of having regard to the Lord and the afflictions of his people, and for want of pleading the cause of the oppressed, hath become a praise to evil doers, and a terror to them that did well, so much as carnal weapons and violence, and wrath of man could terrify them; and hath ministered cause of rejoicing to none but the rude and ungodly, who though they be now formal with you, would as soon and readily be forcible against you, if they did see it stood with their lust and ungodly liberty: for being of no good principle in themselves, they are like the waves of the sea, and now the wind is with you they roll before you, but if the wind were against you, they would roll upon you as fast, though it were to your utter ruin and contempt. And remember the times and seasons are in the hand of the Lord; he commandeth the winds and they blow, he gathereth them again, and they are still; he causeth the thunder to utter forth his voice, and the lightning to consume as he listeth; that the sons of men might fear, and not count themselves established but by him. And as

concerning us his poor and suffering servants, who are bowed to the burden of his cross, and dare not but follow him, though in a cross to our own wills and the wills of others, and had rather incur the wrath of man by obeying him, than God's wrath by obeying man; we have committed the innocency of our cause to the Lord, and this we can and do witness for the Lord, that he hath supported us, so that we have not fainted, neither are we weary, neither shall we while we continue doing his will, for his peace and presence is with us, and that is our reward, and the renewing of our strength and confidence. And though grievous have been our sufferings, as thou knowest, and I believe more than thy heart hath assented to oftentimes, yet do we not murmur nor repine at the good hand of our God, who hath suffered you to try us hitherto. But, whereas it is now come to thy lot, to bear the burden of government of this numerous people, I cannot but exhort thee to wait on God for wisdom how to go in and out before them, and to put on bowels of mercy and compassion, and let not the weapons of cruelty be found in thy habitation, nor the devisings of mischief, (against the innocent,) be found in thy heart; for if there be this, I tell thee in the name of the Lord, that all those devices shall fail, and not bring to pass the effect intended by them, and shall in the end leave a curse and withering upon thy name, and a blasting upon thy blessings. Thou art now the third mayor in this town since some of us were committed to prison for no other cause than being at a peaceable meeting of the people of God: and one leaves them bound, and another leaves them bound, and now it is the work that lies before thee to unloose the unjust bonds of the innocent, and to ease and not aggravate the afflictions of the afflicted, which will be a work acceptable with the Lord. And in so doing thou wilt, (as thou oughtest to do,) weaken the hands of the ungodly, be a refreshing to the sober sort of people, who are weary of beholding such grievous persecution, even such as suffer little of it: and this is the way wherein thou and thy house may be blessed. So I

have cleared my conscience to thee in true love, and my reward is with the Lord; and if my advice finds acceptance with thee, I have, (as I said,) my end. But however I am content in my portion, which is my inheritance in life and immortality, with them that are sanctified through faith in Christ; on the trial of which faith, I suffer bonds, and have done these forty-eight weeks, in the moat-hall in Colchester, where I remain a lover of thy soul, a friend to just power, and obedient to all good and wholesome laws, but a witness against unrighteousness.

S. C.

The 1st of the 8th month, 1664.

ANOTHER

LETTER FROM STEPHEN CRISP,

TO THE

MAYOR OF COLCHESTER.

FRIEND,

THOU art now become the ruler of a great and numerous people, among whom the light of knowledge and understanding hath plenteously shined; and many amongst them have exercised themselves more in matters of religion, than ever thou hast done, and are come to be fixed and settled upon something as a principle, in which they make conscience of their worship towards God: and their testimony of this principle, and their profession which hereupon they do profess, is dearer to them, than all that they have in this world: and these are not like unto those teachers and people, who being joined to no principle nor religion in themselves, do stand ready to take up a religion from any body that becomes greatest. And so, whatever carnal profession is but backed or promoted with the carnal sword, these carnal professors are ready for it; and so the former grows old, and is not esteemed worth the owning; and so will this be, as soon as the carnal or temporal sword is withdrawn from it, as it was before. But these men-pleasers and time-servers, are an abomination to the Lord, who changeth not, neither doth his worship change.

And friend, such who are come to be fixed as aforesaid, upon a principle of religion, which is certain and immutable, unto which the scriptures of Truth, and the testimony of their own conscience bear them witness, thou must not think that they can be so easily turned aside from that unto which they were so hardly, and with so much inward travail and labour brought; for

many of us have known a going through a vale of sorrow and tears, before we were thus established ; and the testimony of our religion is not a light thing, that we took up at the pleasure of man, and can lay down at the will and pleasure of man. Nay, it is not thy frowns nor threats, thy imprisoning nor amercements that can deter us, nor weigh down the weight of that which is so weighty, that we can depend the safety of our immortal souls upon it, which is the weightiest matter of all.

And therefore friend, consider in coolness, what a work thou hast lift up thy hand to do, and in what power thou doest it ; and whether it be able to hold to the completing thy purpose, or nay. Did ever any fight against God and prosper ? And did not the work of all persecutors prove fruitless, to the shame of them that have been exercised therein ? Therefore, cease thy works, and be still a little, and see if thou canst find out any matter against us, except in the matter of our God. And if that be the matter, I tell thee, thou hast a people to deal with in this town, whose God and worship is dearer to them than their natural lives : and if thou shouldst so shut them up, and deprive them of that comfort to their outward man, which God allows, and nature requires, as to bring any to the laying down their lives for their testimony ; yet the thing thou strikest at, would still flourish more and more, and the assemblies of them that fear the Lord, will yet daily increase ; and so thy purpose, and theirs that so much prompt thee on to this work, will be frustrated ; and then anguish and vexation will begin to take hold on thee, and he that is thy greatest backer in this work, must stand by himself, and thou by thyself, and shall not be able to help one another, and both he and thou will have a reckoning to make, that will be too heavy for you. Friend, this in true love to thy soul, was upon me from the Lord, to write to thee, and do heartily desire it may be as tenderly received as it is written ; then will the effect be good to thee, which is the desire of me who am thy friend, though thy prisoner.

S. C.

AN

EPISTLE TO FRIENDS,

CONCERNING

THE PRESENT AND SUCCEEDING TIMES;

Being a Faithful Exhortation and Warning to all Friends who profess the Truth, to beware of the manifold wiles of the enemy, and to stand armed in the Light of the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, (against his assaults,) that so they may be ready to answer the call and requirings of the Lord.

Also something signified of the Misery of the Succeeding Times, that all may be prepared, and that the evil day may not overtake any unawares, but such as turn away their ear from counsel.

By one who is a Traveller in the way of Peace, and hath good will towards all men, and more especially to the Household of Faith,
STEPHEN CRISP.

Let him that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.

DEAR FRIENDS,

YOU whom the Lord hath reached unto in this the day of his love, and hath made known the way of Truth and righteousness to you, through the raising up of that holy living witness of himself, that long lay hid and buried in you, and hath brought you to a secret feeling of something in you, that is worth the minding and regarding; and the Lord causing this to appear in the day of your seeking, as a light discovering darkness, and its power, by which ye were formerly holden, and given you by his spirit a sense and secret hope, that in this light, the way of deliverance was to be attained unto; this hope made you not ashamed of the light which be-

fore you hated, but you came to know and embrace it, even while others still hated it, and you for its sake : yet your hearts being affected with the hope that did appear therein, could not but so far join unto it, as to make public profession of it for its own sake ; and for no other end or design, or interest at all, but with resolution in that light, to wait for the salvation of God. Dear Friends, it is you aforementioned, that both now, and for some days and weeks, my heart hath been deeply exercised concerning, even night and day ; and the aboundings of the Father's love, doth often overcome me, and draw me forth now to say and write these things unto you for your admonition and establishment. And indeed it is you who did thus rightly own the way of Truth, and knew your believing to be the gift and mercy of God to your souls, that I do aim at ; for those that have taken up the profession of the precious Truth upon by-respects and sinister ends, and but for reasons propounded in their carnal minds, though I do pity them, yet I have not much at this time to say to them but this ; The day shall declare them, and their garments shall not hide them.

But you, oh, my Friends ! who had fellowship with us in the deep travails of our beginnings, and did come to Truth the same way, and have known the power and virtue of it, many times overcoming you in your inward man, which hath made you cry out, Lord, evermore give us of this bread ! and hath made you as a watered garden. Oh, Friends ! how shall I express or signify unto you those longings, those ardent desires, and earnest breathings of my soul, that you, even you, might abide to the end of all trials, tribulations, and adversities, and might inherit that crown of immortality that is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and might not by any means be bereft thereof ; this is singly my travel in body and spirit, that you might be kept and preserved out of all the subtle snares of the wicked one, who hunts for the souls even of those that have believed. And, therefore, in dear and tender love, I have a few things to write unto you, for the clearing of my conscience, and discharging my duty in the sight of the Lord ; and the Lord give you all a tender and an un-

derstanding heart, that both you and I may yet have cause daily to praise the Lord in the glorious light of his salvation, which he hath manifested among us, by the revealing his son Jesus Christ; to whom belongs dominion, honour, and glory, for ever, amen.

And first, dear Friends, it is in my heart, to put you in remembrance of that by which we were called and convinced, which as a foundation principle was laid in and among us; and it being unchangeable and unalterable in itself, doth therefore admit of no alteration or change in those that are rightly kept to it.

It was a light which arose in our hearts, and shined forth from God, the father of lights, carrying in its appearance the nature and property of God, both in its condemning evil, which the enemy had sown or planted in us; and owning, allowing, and justifying every thing that was good and honest, just and equal; even those thoughts in our hearts, which were of turning towards the Lord, and seeking his righteousness; these thoughts were justified and encouraged by the light, and all of a contrary nature discovered and judged, as they were brought to it to be tried. Now this light did our souls rejoice in, as they had good cause, though it took away our former rejoicings; our pleasures in vanities and iniquity died; our glory in this world withered, our friendship with the sons of men decayed, and we stood in the light and saw all these things, and were not sorry at it, but waited daily to see these things more and more brought to pass; neither was there a permitting our thoughts to go out, how we might prevent those damages, or repair these losses, but the cross of Christ was indeed our glorying or rejoicing. And the hope that was before us, did make us despise the pleasures, treasures and honours, friendships and delights of this world. And in those days, you grew into a feeling of the heavenly joy, where the hundred-fold was witnessed in your bosoms, and the zeal of the Lord was kindled by his own spirit in you, against whatsoever this light of Jesus in the conscience did witness against: and the Lord beheld your integrity and blessed you, and multiplied you, and added to your

strength and stature ; and then did the fruits of this glorious work abound among you, in three more general and special effects ; by which effects, or by their continuance among you, let all now come to search and try themselves, that so, dear Friends, those that have continued faithful in them all, may persevere in like manner to the end : and those who upon true search do find that they have failed, and fallen short in all or any of them, may make haste to repent, and to turn to that which was the root of them all, that they may not be found as fruitless and withered branches, in the day that cometh, lest they be cut off, and utterly consumed, and blotted out from among the living branches of the vine : for a day cometh, that Truth will look into the fig-tree for fruit, and leaves will not defend it from the curse and blasting.

The three especial fruits that did spring forth from this blessed root, and were and are to continue and increase in us, and among us to the end, are these.

1. Purity, manifested in a godly conversation.

2. Unity, manifested in dear and tender love one towards another.

3. Faithfulness, manifested in bearing a constant and faithful testimony to the things we had received and believed, though it were unto great loss and sufferings.

And against all these, doth the wicked one appear, to see if he can make you barren concerning them, and that with divers wiles and subtleties, that he may prevail on you, and not be known to be the enemy, but might so overcome you, as that you might both submit to him, and then plead for him and his snares and wiles, as being just, right, lawful, prudent, convenient, &c. But oh ! dear Friends, let all be watchful and diligent, to wait in the sense and true feeling of that seed that never fell nor was beguiled ; and you will, (even the least of you,) see and comprehend his workings and transformings, and be delivered from them.

1. Purity and holiness was a fruit in you, which doth yet flourish in many, (blessed be the Lord,) who are as watchful and careful to approve themselves in obedience to the light of Truth in their inward parts, as ever, and

find as great a necessity both of trying and judging with its judgment as ever; these having thus waited, have renewed their strength unto this very day, and do mount up as upon the wings of an eagle; these are neither weary in running, nor faint they in their walking: but alas! Friends, even these do know with how great and manifold assaults they have been assaulted, and know and see with sorrow of heart, how the assault hath prevailed upon some, by working into the mind a secret liberty and supposed enlargedness, whereby a carelessness hath entered some; and they having no keeper but the measure of light revealed in their hearts and consciences, so soon as they came to be persuaded to slight the reproofs of that, they soon erred; and this supposed liberty entered, that now, after so many years strictness and circumspection, they should not need now to stand so straitly to try things and words as at first, because now a day of more liberty was come. And this liberty secretly prevailed against that pure fear that once was placed in their hearts, and against the very obedience of Truth, inwardly in the subjection of the mind, and then it became manifest outwardly; the actions sometimes blameworthy, the words and speech again corrupted, and run into the old channel of the world, like them again; and the single pure language, learned in the light, in the time of their poverty and simplicity, almost lost and forgotten, and so the work of God which he wrought, in a manner laid waste. And then when this liberty is entered and made use of, as aforesaid, oftentimes a secret subtlety ariseth against the judgment of Truth, either from within, or from any outwardly, that are grieved with this loose and careless kind of speaking or acting; which subtlety leads to contend for it, against the judgment, telling the creature, why these things are but small things, and little things, and what! we must not strain at a gnat, and such like. Oh my Friends! beware of these evil suggestions of the wicked one. How came they to be small and little things, seeing they were great things with us in the beginning? And how comes an offence in this nature to be light now, seeing it was heavy in the

beginning? Oh let not the greatest mercies of our God so fill us, as to make us slight or forget the least obedience; but rather let the continuance of his mercy, the more quicken you up unto a zeal for his name and Truth in all things, to be found doing and speaking according to the rule of righteousness, which ye learned in the light, in the day of your being low and little; and then nothing will rise up and be exalted in the multitude of God's mercies, but that holy birth which lives in purity, when it is at the highest. And so that life of righteousness will shine forth more and more, which glorifies God, and seeks his honour. Dear Friends, that ye might be kept so unto the end, is the breathing and travel of my soul; and that where this neglect hath entered, and this aforesaid corruption either in speech or action is to be found, that ye would receive the word of exhortation in meekness and fear, in which it was written unto you: and may redeem the time, for the days are and shall be evil, and none will hold the mystery of the faith, (that saves from falling in the evil day,) but such as do keep the pure and undefiled conscience, which none can do, but by persisting and continuing in the daily sanctification of the spirit, and belief and obedience of the Truth.

2. A second fruit that was brought forth from this good root, was unity and love one towards another; which blessed be the Lord, is precious preserved in and among many to this very day; who are so sensible of the divers operations of Truth in them, to be all by one spirit, that they are still kept of one heart and mind, given up freely to serve the Lord in singleness of heart in their generation; and are in this good work as strengtheners and encouragers of one another. But notwithstanding the enemy hath been exceeding busy, to lay waste and destroy this blessed effect also, and that under divers pretences, which the Lord still discovered by his own Light and Spirit in his people, who have singly waited upon him; but many have been his wiles, sometimes fitting and preparing vessels to rise up in the fleshly and sensual wisdom, and to traduce and bring in corrupt and evil doctrines, to try who were not sound in the faith, that

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they may draw them aside into a heat and zeal for something which had not its root in the Truth, and which they that abode in the Truth could not own, but judge and condemn in the name of the Lord. Which when such saw, they took thereat occasion of striving to propagate and promote that which they saw withstood; so having lost subjection to the spirit of Truth in themselves, which would have kept them in unity in the body, and having also lost and laid by their subjection to them that were over them in the Lord, they then grew stubborn and wilful, and proceeded in more zeal for that which stood in opposition to the Truth, than ever they did for the Truth itself; and these sometimes have prevailed, to the subverting whole households, and have turned several from the faith and simplicity that is in the gospel, who, as well as those that subverted them, have lost the fellowship of the saints, and the savour of life, either in themselves or others. And then the enemy persuaded them, all are dead to the life but themselves: and so they grow to have a tickling joy in what they do and say, in obedience to that perverse and singular private spirit, and so grow up to speak evil of dignities, and are unruly, and dare to speak against heaven, and them that dwell and inhabit in it, whom God makes to shine as stars in the firmament of his power. But alas! for them, my soul pities them, when I see how they sport themselves with their own deceivings; but the day of the Lord is among his people, which hath and doth make them and their spirit manifest, and their fruits also have made them manifest.

Another way that the enemy seeks to break the unity, and dissolve the bond of amity, is by sowing a seed of jealousy and prejudice in the hearts of such in whom he can get an entrance; that so they may cease from the true and unfeigned love, and that upon a pretended reason, because of this or that which is supposed or imagined, in the evil parts in themselves against others; giving heed to evil thoughts or surmises, which break forth many times in whisperings and tale-bearing; which though the thing supposed to be evil, were really so, yet this is not

to be allowed or given way to among you, but to use plainness one towards another, and single-heartedness; and to shut out the evil one in this his subtle appearance also. Oh! dear Friends, remember how the Lord hath dealt with you, and deal you so one by another. He hath not sought occasions against you, but hath long borne and suffered, and exercised much patience and tenderness towards you; yet plainly reproving the evil in you, and not treasuring it up against you. Oh! Friends, be like-minded one towards another, that the enemy of your peace and concord may be defeated, and you preserved entire to one head, even to Christ Jesus; that ye may be one, and the name of the Lord may be one among you; and that which tends to the making cold your love, may be judged in all; and so brotherly love will continue with you to the end.

Another way which the enemy works, to scatter and to bring from this unity, is, by leading some who have believed, into some sin and iniquity, which the body, (that are in the Truth,) are constrained to appear in judgment against for the Truth's sake; and yet notwithstanding the party so sinning, being above the witness in themselves, which would bring them to own the judgment of the Spirit of Christ in his church, they exalt themselves above the judgment, and seek to gain to them such whom they can enter by their words and complaints, to take part with them against the judgment, and those that passed it. Such were those whose words did eat, (the apostle said,) as a canker, of whom the believers in those days were to be aware; for commonly such as have gone from the power that should have kept them clean and upright, they will also turn against the power in those that abide in it, especially if they be drawn forth to reprove and rebuke them. But let all such know that is not the way to be renewed; and let all that take part with any that work iniquity, know, that they do but defile their own souls thereby, and do but rend themselves from that body which they cannot prosper out of. And therefore, dear Friends, beware of joining with that in yourselves or in others, which the power goeth against,

let the pretences be what they will; for that which doth evil, will always be apt to sow evil complainings of others; and such as are in the unsatisfied murmuring against judgment passed upon them, are much to be feared; for they thereby render themselves to be the more guilty, and yet the further from repentance. But, dear Friends, watch in that which gives you a living feeling of the living body, which is the church, that in all things you may demean yourselves as true members of it, serving one another in love, and submitting yourselves one unto another for the Lord's sake; that in all plainness and singleness, as becometh the Truth, you may seek to preserve the unity which the enemy of Truth and peace doth envy; so shall ye continue to strengthen one another's hand in every good work; and this shall tend to the weakening of the hands of our enemies, who seek to divide you, that they might rule over you. Many other designs doth the wicked one try, daily to break and divide, more than can now be named, or here inserted; but they are all out of the light, and if you be in it, you will see them, and that will preserve you; for it is one, and did make us one, and will keep us to be of one heart and mind to the end, if we abide in it.

3. The third good effect which Truth did work in the beginning in them who did truly receive it, was zeal and faithfulness to God, in the bearing testimony to what was manifest, though through great sufferings, in which as Friends abide in the root, they do daily increase in power, to fulfil the same testimony; for the mercy of the Lord doth engage them, and his answer of peace in the midst of their trials, doth arm and encourage them, and they do hold out to the end. And for such, the Lord hath always made a way, better than they could have made for themselves. Yet the enemy hath in this matter also been very busy, and hath prevailed with some under divers considerations or rather consultations which he hath pounded unto them. But, O Friends, be ye all watchful, and take heed lest any of the testimonies of Truth be laid waste; for that which leads to be weary of bearing witness to the Truth, and to lay it waste, the same will

lay thee waste, and bring thee into such a state, as thou wilt want the Truth to bear witness for thee ; and though it be hard for flesh and blood, (which hath no kingdom but here,) to fall into the hands of unreasonable men, yet it is a more fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And therefore let all lukewarm ones, who are neither hot nor cold be awakened, and all that have gone backwards, be warned to return to their first love ; else the Lord will come against them, and the day hastens that will divide such their portion among hypocrites, except they repent.

But to touch at some of the reasons or arguments, which he that abode not in the Truth himself, useth to draw others into this kind of treacherous backsliding.

First, He appears to some to persuade them, that their former testimony was borne more from an imitation of others, than from a work of the power of God in themselves ; and that now, they not finding the thing required of them, they may leave off their testimonies, or may do such things as they have denied formerly : this snare doth the enemy make use of in these days. But mark, who it is that he hath caught with it ; none but such who sometimes were low in their minds, and dare not grieve the Spirit of God in themselves, nor others, but for the Truth's sake, could give up all things rather than their testimony ; but in time growing careless and loose in waiting, lost that subject state, and grew high and exalted in their minds, above the cross that should have crucified the betraying wisdom ; and so having lost the true exercise of the power, and the feeling of the excellency and worth of the Truth, they knew not the requirings of the Lord ; and the earthly mind got up, that placed a greater esteem upon earthly things, than upon things that are eternal ; and so things that once thou offeredst up to God, thou takest again into thine own hand, and so robbest the Lord, and growest careful about outward things, as other Gentiles are. And to cover thy shame therein, the enemy then tempts thee to belie the power that once wrought in thy heart, and made thee afraid to act against the light, or to deny the testimony for God in

such things as was manifest, and then sayest, thou didst it by imitation ; but thou shalt know thy covering is too narrow, in the day that hasteth upon thee.

Another temptation that the enemy presenteth, is, that though thou art convinced what to do, or what thou shouldest deny, yet the trials are so hard and so many, and persecutors wax worse and worse, so that thou shalt not hold out to the end ; and where he can get entrance with this bait, he presently causeth an evil heart of unbelief and doubting to arise, which takes away even the strength which the Lord did give ; and so feebleness doth enter the mind, and a spirit of bondage leads thee to fear again. And then comes the dispute in thy heart, whether thou shalt stand with the power of God in the obedience, or whether thou shalt fall under that power that ariseth against God, and his truth and people ? And in this combat thou hast a subtle enemy, using many devices to betray thee, and a part in thyself, not yet mortified, that is ready to say, pity thyself, pity thy wife, pity thy children, and pity thy relations ; which it may be sometimes, are all as so many instruments of satan to seduce thee, and lead thee into darkness, that thou mayest not see so great necessity in thy bearing up thy testimony, nor so great a danger in the contrary as indeed there is.

Oh ! Friends, at such a time as this, where is there any help but in the Lord ? Where canst thou find a Saviour, but in that light which gives to distinguish of the several voices ? Now it is good for thee to remember, that if thou walkest after the flesh, thou must and shalt surely wither and die. In such a time flee, flee to the Lord, wait in his dread to feel thy strength but renewed at the present, and take no care for strength next month, next year, or next trial ; for God is God, and changeth not, and will be the same to thee in seven trials as in six, if thou believest and waitest on him in uprightness. And therefore fear not man, but trust in the Lord, all ye that have known and felt his power, and let not in the enemy of your souls, by the door of carnal reasoning, but keep that shut ; and rather consider, how the enemy makes

thee as a rejoicing among his own children, and strengthens that hope in them, of their overcoming all others, as well as thee; which hope is curst, and shall be confounded. And consider, that if thou lettest fall thy testimony which thou hast once borne for the Lord, thou makest the heart of the righteous sad, and makest their travail through that testimony the harder for them, by reason of thy encouraging their adversaries by the hope aforesaid. And whatever thou dost, they must go through to the end, who will inherit the crown of immortality.

And again consider, it may be that thy backsliding, or cowardly drawing away the shoulder, may prove a discouragement to others, and they may stumble in thy stumbling, and fall with thee, and never be able to rise, and so thou bringest their blood also upon thee. Oh! remember also that servant of the Lord, who could say, Psal. cxix. 157, "My persecutors are increased, but my heart doth not decline thy testimonies." That was a noble spirit becoming the soldiers of Christ; yea, though persecuted by princes, as he saith, ver. 161.

Dear Friends, let your minds be stirred up to be zealous for the Lord, in this the great day of controversy with darkness and its power. Who hath God to bear witness to his name if you fail? Among whom hath he made it known as among you? Who have given up themselves to the Lord as you have done? Well, blessed are they that keep covenant with the Lord, for they shall see his glory.

One more subtle snare of the enemy in this matter is in my heart to mention, that is this, viz. to persuade thee for once to do that which the light hath made manifest thou shouldest not, with a purpose afterwards to be more faithful. Oh! Friends, in the name and fear of the Lord, I exhort and warn you all to take heed of this, for this will prove but a false confidence, thou wilt find this kind of going out of the guidance of Truth, to be a dear outgoing to thee; for if ever thou dost return, it will be very hardly, and with bitter anguish of soul. Oh! do not tempt the Lord on this wise, lest it do prove impossible upon thy sinning willingly, to renew or restore thee again

by repentance ; thou wilt have thy pottage, but wilt lose the blessing, though thou mayest seek it with thy tears ; for while thou wentest out, behold thy way became hedged up, and the thorny nature got up in thee, and so thou art debarred and fenced out from enjoying thy former state ; sin being entered, death soon follows. Oh ! remember Samson, who when he had disclosed a token of a Nazarite, in which state he stood in covenant with God, yet thought to have shaken himself, and to have gone forth in his strength, as at other times, but was mistaken, Judg. xvi. 20, For the Lord was departed from him, though he knew it not. And so, though thou hast known the Lord's presence and power in thy vessel, yet take heed of letting in that treacherous spirit, to lead thee to unfaithfulness, and to betray the least of his trusts and testimonies committed to thee, though it be but for once ; for thereby thou wilt render thyself unworthy to be found a witness of his power another time ; for the Lord will leave that vessel, and often doth, and chooseth other vessels to manifest himself in, that will be more true and faithful.

So, dear Friends, in true and tender love I have laid these things before you, that ye might all be stirred up and provoked to love and to good works, that ye might abound in the grace committed to you, and none of you who have known the Truth, might be entangled with the wiles of your subtle enemy : and that you that have begun well, might not lose the things that you have wrought, but might persevere in well doing, till ye have finished your course in peace. And, Friends, this is the joy and delight of those that labour among you in the Lord ; and hereby is our hands strengthened, and our hearts refreshed, when we do find ye such as we desire ye should be, even steadfast in the Truth ; and then also do you find us toward you such as ye desire we should be, even a refreshing in the fellowship of life unto you, and our God comforts us together, in the mutual joy and comfort of his Holy Spirit, working in us and you.

And, Friends, I am the more drawn forth at this time to visit you with an epistle, because the Lord hath given me some sight of his great and dreadful day, and work-

ings in it, which is at hand, and greatly hastens, of which I have something to say unto you, that ye may be prepared to stand in his day, and may behold his wondrous working among his enemies, and have fellowship with his power therein, and may not be dismayed nor driven away in the tempest, which will be great.

And as concerning those succeeding times, the spirit of the Lord hath signified, that they will be times of horror and amazement to all that have, and yet do reject his counsel. For as the days of his forbearance, warning, and inviting hath been long, so shall his appearance amongst those that have withstood him, be fierce and terrible; even so terrible, as who shall abide his coming? for the Lord will work both secretly and openly, and his arm shall be manifest to his children in both.

Secretly he shall raise up a continual fretting anguish amongst his enemies, one against another; so that being vexed and tormented inwardly, they shall seek to make each other miserable, and delight therein for a little season. And then the prevailer must be prevailed over, and the digger of the pit must fall therein; and the confidence that men have had one in another shall fail, and they will beguile and betray one another, both by counsel and strength. And as they have banded themselves to break you, whom God hath gathered, so shall they band themselves one against another, to break, to spoil, and destroy one another; and through the multitude of their treacheries, all credit or belief, upon the account of their solemn engagement shall fail; so that few men shall count themselves, or what is their's, safe in the hand of his friend, who hath not chosen his safety and friendship in the pure light of the unchangeable Truth of God. And all the secret counsels of the ungodly shall be brought to nought, sometimes by the means of some of themselves, and sometimes by impossibilities lying in their way, which shall make their hearts fail of ever accomplishing what they have determined: and in this state shall men fret themselves for a season, and shall not be able to see the hand that turns against them, but shall turn to fight against one thing, and another, and a third

thing, and shall stagger, and reel in counsel and judgment, as drunken men that know not where to find the way to rest; and when they do yet stir themselves up against the holy people, and against the holy covenant of light, and them that walk in it, they shall but the more be confounded; for these shall be helped with a little help, which all the ungodly shall not hinder them of, to wit, the secret arm of the Lord, maintaining their cause, and raising up a witness in the very hearts of their adversaries to plead their innocence, Isa. 8. And this shall make them yet the more to vex themselves, and to go through hard bestead. For when they shall look upward to their religion, to their power, policy, or preferments, or friendships, or whatsoever else they had trusted in, and relied upon, they shall have cause to curse it. And when they look downwards to the effects produced by all those things; behold, then trouble, and horror, and vexation takes hold on them, and drives them to darkness; and having no help but what is earthly, and being out of the knowledge of the mighty overturning power of the Lord God Almighty, they shall despair, and wear out their days with anguish. And besides all this, the terrible hand of the Lord is, and shall be openly manifested against this ungodly generation, by bringing grievous and terrible judgments and plagues upon them, tumbling down all things in which their pride and glory stood, and overturning even the foundations of their strength; yea, the Lord will lay waste the mountain of the ungodly, and the strength of the fenced city shall fail: and when men shall say, we will take refuge in them, Nahum, iii. 12, 13, they shall become but a snare, and there shall the sword devour: and when they shall say we will go into the field, and put trust in the number and courage of our soldiers, they shall both be taken away; and this evil also will come of the Lord, and his hand will be stretched out still, and shall bring confusion, ruin upon ruin, and war upon war; and the hearts of men shall be stirred in them, and the nations shall be as waters into which a tempest, a swift whirlwind is entered; and even as waves swell up to the dissolution one of another, and

breaking one of another; so shall the swellings of people be. And because of the hardship and sorrow of those days, many shall seek and desire death rather than life.

Ah! my heart relents, and is moved within me, in the sense of these things, and much more than I can write or declare, which the Lord will do in the earth, and will also make haste to accomplish among the sons of men, that they may know and confess, that the Most High doth rule in the kingdoms of men, and pulleth down and setteth up according to his own will. And this shall men do, before seven times pass over them, and shall be content to give their glory unto him that sits in heaven.

But, oh! Friends, while all these things are working and bringing to pass, repose ye yourselves in the munition of that rock, that all these shakings shall not move; even in the knowledge and feeling of the eternal power of God, keeping you subjectly given up to his heavenly will, and feel it daily to kill and mortify that which remains in any of you, which is of this world; for the worldly part in any, is the changeable part, and that is up and down, full and empty, joyful and sorrowful, as things go well or ill in the world. For as the Truth is but one, and many are made partakers of its spirit, so the world is but one, and many are partakers of the spirit of it; and so many as do partake of it, so many will be straitened and perplexed with it; but they who are single to the Truth, waiting daily to feel the life and virtue of it in their hearts, these shall rejoice in the midst of adversity. These shall not have their hearts moved with fear, nor tossed with anguish, because of evil tidings, Psal. cxii. 7, 8. Because that which fixeth them, remains with them. These shall know their entrance with the bridegroom, and so be kept from sorrow, though his coming be with a noise. And when a midnight is come upon man's glory, yet they being ready and prepared, it will be well with them; and having a true sense of the power working in themselves, they cannot but have unity and fellowship with the works of it in the earth, and will not at all murmur against what is, nor wish nor will what is not to be; these will be at rest till

the indignation passeth over, and these having no design to carry on, and no party to promote in the earth, cannot possibly be defeated nor disappointed in their undertakings.

And when you see divisions and parties, and rendings in the bowels of nations, and rumours and tempests in the minds of people, then take heed of being moved to this party or to that party, or giving your strength to this or that, or counselling this way or that way; but stand single to the 'Truth of God, in which neither war, rent nor division is. And take heed of that part in any of you, which trusts and relies upon any sort of the men of this world, in the day of their prosperity; for the same party will bring you to suffer with them, in the time of their adversity, which will not be long after; for stability in that ground there will be none. But when they shall say, come join with us in this or that, remember you are joined to the Lord by his pure spirit, to walk with him in peace and in righteousness; and you feeling this, this gathers out of all bustlings, and noises, and parties, and tumults, and leads you to exalt the standard of Truth and righteousness, in an innocent conversation, to see who will flow unto that. And this shall be a refuge for many of the weary, tossed and afflicted ones in those days, and a shelter for many, whose day is not yet over.

So dearly beloved Friends and brethren, who have believed and known the blessed appearance of the Truth, let not your hearts be troubled at any of these things. Oh! let not the things that are at present, nor things that are yet to come, move you from steadfastness, but rather double your diligence, zeal and faithfulness to the cause of God. For they that know the work wrought in themselves, they shall rest in the day of trouble, yea, though the fig-tree fail, and the vine bring not forth, and the labour of the olive-tree ceaseth, and the fields yield no meat, and sheep be cut off from the fold, and there be no bullocks in the stall, yet then mayest thou rejoice in the Lord, and sing praises to the God of thy salvation.

Hab. 3.

And how near these days are to this poor nation, few know; and therefore the cry of the Lord is very loud unto its inhabitants, through his servants and messengers, that they would prize their time while they have it, lest they be overturned, wasted and laid desolate before they are aware, and before destruction come upon them, and there be no remedy, as it hath already done upon many.

Oh! London, London! that thou and thy rulers would have considered, and hearkened and heard, in the day of thy warnings and invitations, and not have persisted in thy rebellion, till the Lord was moved against thee, to cut off the thousands and multitudes from thy streets, and the pressing and thronging of people from thy gates, and then to destroy and ruin thy streets also, and lay desolate thy gates, when thou thoughtest to have replenished them again.

And, oh! saith my soul, that thy inhabitants would yet be warned and persuaded to repent and turn to the Lord, by putting away every one the evil that is in their hearts, against the Truth in yourselves, and against those that walk in it, before a greater desolation and destruction overtake you.

Oh! what shall I say to prevail with London, and with its inhabitants! The Lord hath called aloud, he hath roared out of Zion unto them, but many of them have not hearkened at all, nor considered at all.

Well, oh, my friends! (and thou, oh my soul!) return to your rest, dwell in the pavilion of the house of your God and my God, and shelter yourselves under the shadow of his wings, where ye shall be witnesses of his doings, and see his strange act brought to pass, and shall not be hurt therewith, nor dismayed.

Oh, my friends! in the bowels of dear and tender love have I signified these things unto you, that ye might stand armed with the whole armour of God, clothed in righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and freely given up in all things to the disposing of the Lord, who will deliver us, not by might, nor by sword, nor spear, but by his own eternal

invisible arm, will he yet save us and deliver us, and get himself a name, by preserving of us. And we shall yet live to praise him, who is worthy of glory, of honour, and renown, from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, now and for ever, amen, amen, saith my soul.

A POSTSCRIPT.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

I HAVE something further in my heart to communicate unto you, in dear and tender love, and in desire of your preservation out of the snare of your adversary: and that is, to exhort you all to dwell in the pure judgment of the Truth, which is a defence upon your glory; and let none bereave you of this, under any pretence whatsoever. But as you come to a true feeling of the life in yourselves, to which alone the certain judgment appertaineth, so let this life have freedom, and stop it not from judging all that which is at enmity with the life, and tends to the hurting of the true plant of God; for I have seen a harm hath come to many who have parted with their judgment, and so have become unarmed, and the enemy hath prevailed upon them, (under a pretended tenderness,) to permit or suffer such things as were hurtful to themselves and others; and though the Lord hath given them judgment and discerning in the matter, yet were bereaved of that gift, and so by little and little became beguiled.

Oh! dear Friends! consider these days are perilous times, and it is needful for every one to watch in that same eternal light to which you were first turned, that by its righteous judgment ye may be preserved from every thing in yourselves that appears contrary to that precious life of which you have tasted. And when you have so done, then take heed that the enemy do not do that by an instrument, which, (through your watchfulness in the light,) he could not do without. And all beware of that affected tenderness that cries out, be tender to all,

and pray for all, and mind the good in all, and love all, and judge none, but leave judgment to God, &c. I say, heed not the plausible words of that spirit, which being guilty, to save its own head from a stroke, would bereave you of your judgment which God hath given you; and is indeed truly his judgment, and is to be administered in his wisdom and power, for the cleansing and keeping clean his sanctuary: for such as have no judgment in their goings, are they that know not the true way of peace, but make them crooked paths, He that goeth in them, shall not know peace, Isa. lix. 8.

But some may say, was not Christ meek and lowly? and ought not all to be like unto him?

It is true, my Friends; but there is a difference between the seed's suffering and its reigning, and there are times for them both; and when it doth please God to permit the hour and power of darkness in the open persecution, to exalt itself against his seed and people by appear in meekness and quietness, as a sheep before the shearers. But what is this to suffering bad and perverse spirits, that appear under pretence of the Truth, and yet are out of the Truth, and enemies to its prosperity, striving to exalt and set up another thing instead of the Truth? Such as these the Lord doth not require you to use only patience and meekness towards; but if that will not reclaim them, they must know the judgment of the Truth, and you in it must stand over them; for in this case the day of the exaltation of Christ is come, and God is crowning Truth with dominion over every false spirit, and corrupt practice thereof.

And, therefore, dear Friends, eye the Lord in his goings forth, and as you feel his life in you to witness against any evil and corrupt thing or practice, use plainness, and keep sincerity, and turn not judgment backwards; for that which is unwilling to be judged, and cries out, judge none, leave all to God, &c. the same will take upon it both to judge and rule, but not in the wisdom of God. And those that cry out so much for tenderness, and against Truth's judgment, the same are in

most danger to be drawn out from the patient suffering in the spirit of Christ Jesus, when they ought to appear in the most meekness, and to appear rough and wrathful in the striving and fighting nature, and are most apt to be tempted into a spirit of revenge, as hath been seen by sad experience; for they that lose the exercise of that by which all should keep dominion over deceit, they lose that strength by which they should be enabled to suffer all things for the sake of Christ Jesus.

So, dear Friends, in that which keeps out the defiler and the betrayer, all wait upon the Lord, that you may have your armour on, and be fortified with the strength, with the might, and with the judgment of God; and keep that under in every place, which under pretence of tenderness and forbearance, would make void the testimony of Truth, or make the offence of the cross to cease in any thing wherein you have been instructed from the beginning; that the Lord may behold and see judgment established, and be pleased, Isa. lix. The Lord looked, and there was no judgment, and it displeased him; for thereby deceit got up, which with it is to be kept down.

So the Lord God of power and wisdom preserve you faithful, and fitted for every good word and work; the strong to watch over the weak in singleness, and the weak to be subject to the strong in the Lord, that so the pure plant of righteousness and Truth may grow in and among you all, to his praise that hath called you; to whom be glory and honour for ever, amen.

S. C.

A

WORD IN DUE SEASON:

OR SOME

HARVEST MEDITATIONS,

WITH A

Warning from the Lord God to all the People in England, to leave off their Wicked and Foolish Customs in their Harvest, before the Anger of the Lord be kindled against them, and there be no Remedy.

BEHOLD, the eye of the Lord has passed through the earth, and has beholden the abominations of the people and their customs, which are altogether vain, and his hand is lifted up against them, to cut them off from the earth, and wo to them that withstand him; for them will the Lord God visit in his displeasure, and rebuke in his anger: therefore be warned all ye inhabitants of the earth, and while ye have time, learn wisdom; and depart from vanity, before ye be consumed through your gainsaying.

Upon the 29th of the 4th month, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, behold, the many abominations of this people in the time of their harvest; and although my light hath shined, to have let them see them, yet they have rejected the counsel thereof; and although my faithful witness in them hath reprov'd them, yet they have not regarded it: and although I have smitten them with mildew, and with blasting, yet they have not laid it to heart, but have persisted in the foolish customs of their forefathers, and have hated to be reformed, neither have they feared me saith the Lord; but daily do they grieve my Holy Spirit with their iniquities.

Therefore once more let them be warned of the vanities and abominations of their harvest in particular, that they may return and learn to fear before me, lest I smite

their fruitful fields with barrenness, and their goodly crops with withering, and their children with cleanness of teeth in all their borders, &c. Amos iv. 6, 9, 10.

And now this is that which the Lord hath put into my heart, to warn all ye husbandmen and farmers, that in the time of harvest, when ye are taking in the fruit and the increase of your fields, and the issue of your labour, that ye mind the fear of God, that it may keep you in the remembrance of him from whence every good gift cometh, that so it may be good to you, and ye may receive it with humility and thankfulness; and none to murmur, because it is no more; and none to glory because it is so much; but all to be contented, and to mind that which lets you feel and see the blessing, that ye might be kept in the worthy walking, and know it to be multiplied unto you; and let your joy be, in that the light hath shined upon you, and let that be the joy of your harvest, Isa. ix. 3.

And remember that the portion of the poor be not gathered; but consider the Lord has regarded their need; neither be churlish nor bitter to them; but let them have their portion without diminishing, Lev. xix. 9. And when thou reapest the harvest of thy land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, [mark] neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest, it is for the poor and for the stranger. Lay this to heart, ye rich men, lest ye eat of the portion of the poor, and the hand of the Lord be turned against you, through their cry, Job, xxxiv. 18. For the Lord will maintain the right of the poor, Psal. civ. 12.

And take heed of inordinate feasting, spending the creation upon the lust, making provision for the flesh, which is contrary to the Christian's example; but let your moderation appear in this also, for the reward of the glutton shall be poverty, Prov. xxiii. 21. And mind the witness of God, that that may order and guide you into that which is convenient, and may stop the excess; that whatsoever is done, may be done to the praise and glory of God, as becometh Christians.

And let none be over covetous of drinking, neither in

the time of your labour, nor at any other time ; for that hurts the creature, and destroys the health, and hath overcome the life of many ; when they have been strengthened by the Lord to labour, then they have hurt themselves with their inordinate drinking, and so abusing the gift of God, it hath been taken from them. But let all mind God's fear, that ye may feel through that which is outward, to that which is within ; namely, the thirst of the soul, which that which is outward will not satisfy ; that so ye may be brought to wait to know that manifested within, which is drink indeed, John, vi. 55, which cleanseth from the pollutions that are in the world through lust, and satisfies the soul.

And let that abominable custom of shouting in the fields, or elsewhere be left off, which is derived from generation to generation from the heathen, and from the papists ; and while this be left, leave off calling yourselves Christians or protestants, for even this thing, namely, your crying of that which you call your largess, is a shame to the very name of Christians to be found amongst them, and renders you but foolish, ignorant people, who sport yourselves with your own breath, like the heathen who know not the Lord that gives it ; such as were the Moabites, whom the Lord's anger was kindled against, until he threatened to cut off the vintage of Moab, and their shouting should be no more heard in their vineyards, because the treaders should tread out no wine in their presses, Isa. xvi. 9, 10. And so will the Lord do by you, except ye repent and turn from the folly of your ways ; for he is not changed, neither is there respect of persons with him ; therefore let this be no more named amongst you, who call yourselves Christians.

And let your corrupt and vain harvest-songs be left off, your night-work, which lifts up the evil spirit in man, but oppresseth the just, and keepeth from the true joy, in the pure spirit, where the songs of praises are sung unto God for all his benefits with acceptance ; for in this also is there great abomination committed in the land, and the Lord's spirit hath been grieved therewith. Sometimes ye are spending your precious time, (which

should be for the resting of the creature,) in singing of filthy and abominable songs, tending to the subverting and removing of modesty and chastity from off the face of the earth; and it may be the same night, and in the same mind, will ye take some of the words of the holy scripture, it may be of David's Psalms, or some other of the psalms, and then in your wicked manner of doubling and vain repetitions, will sing them, which is far from singing to the praise and glory of God, or with grace in your hearts, but to the great abuse of the scripture, and to the dishonour of the name of the Lord; and be assured you shall not be holden guiltless, that take God's name in vain, although in the time of your harvest; but your songs shall be turned as the howling of Moab, in the day when the Lord visited him.

But all mind the light of the Lord Jesus Christ within, that ye may know it lifted up upon you, which makes glad the hearts of the righteous, yea more glad than the joy of the ungodly, when their corn and wine is increased, Psal. iv. 6, 7.

And let that wicked and abominable custom of making lords and ladies amongst you in the harvest-field, be left off for ever, which is a shame to your profession, and renders you to be like the gentiles, who had lords many amongst them, but knew not the Christian's one Lord. This ought not to be any more mentioned, but ought to be denied as a foolish and Antichristian custom, tending to nothing but to exalt the pride of man's heart, and begetting into emulation and strife; this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

And let none of you who are strong, boast and glory in your strength over him that is weaker, nor seek to hurt him by your strength; but mind the Lord your maker, and remember your ability to be of him, and not your own, and so to be used in his fear, without vain-glory.

And all you that have much of the earth in your hands, and many hired servants, see that ye stand in the power and wisdom of God, ruling over that part in them all, that would lead into rudeness and profaneness; being good examples in your places, and giving that which is

due for their encouragement, not oppressing them in work nor in wages ; but all mind the Truth of God, the equal witness between you, which secretly calls for righteousness towards all men, and equity, as ye would have from all men, that so the Lord may make your land as a fruitful field, and may multiply a blessing upon you, both within and without.

Thus have I cleared my conscience in the sight of God, and singly given testimony against these abominations which have been acted in this nation in harvest-time, in love to your souls, and in obedience to the Lord ; and whether you will hear or forbear, ye shall know that ye were warned by a friend to your souls, and a lover of the Truth, which was before the customs of the heathens were, (and therefore plead not antiquity in these things,) and one that desires this nation may walk in the light of the Lord, and be saved from the reproach of the heathen ; whose outward name is

STEPHEN CRISP.

This for the service of Truth, and for a warning to the foolishly disobedient, is again seen meet to be printed, that all may hear wisdom's counsel, repent, and amend their doings.

A

PLAIN PATHWAY OPENED

TO

THE SIMPLE-HEARTED,

For the Answering all Doubts and Objections which do arise in them against the Light and Truth in the Inward Parts; by which many are kept from Obedience, and so from Peace to their panting Souls.

BY STEPHEN CRISP.

Friends and People,

I HAVE had a deep exercise upon my spirit, concerning many who are come to feel something stirring and moving in their hearts, (that is good,) to bring them into a serious consideration of their course of life, and the inward state of their immortal souls. And when you have sometimes begun to turn your minds to this good thing that stirred in you; then have many doubts and objections arisen in you, lest you should be misled, deceived or deluded. And lest this thing that inwardly strives with you, should lead you into the erroneous way of the quakers, (as the world's teachers call it,) for they speak and write of, and bear a constant testimony to something that is in man, that calls upon him to repent and to turn to the Lord; and under this very notion, that ye have heard evil, and thought evil of that people; by the same rule you are apt to think evil of that which works in your own bosom, to lead you out of sin and iniquity; and so ye are tempted to slight it, and to get some slight name for it, to call it by, which Antichrist's ministers have many to afford you; as to call it a natural light; a common gift of the Spirit, but not a saving gift; conviction of a natural conscience; a legal work; yea, and many call it the devil's work, to disturb the soul of

its peace; and some, a diabolical light, &c. And thus when thou art brought to slight that good principle, (that strives with thee,) under some such name, thou gettest ease again for a little while, and takest liberty to act against it, and to do and say that which this principle doth in secret condemn; and then it riseth again, and breaks thy peace, and brings trouble and anguish upon thy soul. And then up comes many doubts on the one hand, and doubts on the other hand, and thy poor soul is beset and encompassed with doubts, and fears, and jealousies. Sometimes thou fearest thou withstandest the Truth to thy own destruction, and sometimes fearest again it is a delusion, and thou shalt be deceived. And besides, thou findest many learned men, and worldly wise men, that tell thee that there is nothing good in thee. And here thou art in a great strait, and labourest under many sorrowful thoughts, and many doubtful disputations arise in thy mind; the flesh now strongly warreth against that which comes to disturb it, and the Spirit strongly warreth against that which resists and rebels against it: and these two are contrary, and these contrary things are both in thee, and thou poor creature must feel the struggling of them both; and by reason of thy darkness, and doubts, and fears, thou scarce knowest, (or at least with certainty,) which is right. Now in this state and condition, how acceptable would a messenger be, one of a thousand, to show unto such a one that which might deliver his soul from going down into the pit, and save his life from the destroyer? (Job, xxxiii. 23.) And truly very many are in this straitened state in these days; for whose sakes I am drawn into a deep exercise many times, by day and by night; and my cry to God is, that his glorious power may more and more arise to open these doors that are shut and folded upon many such, and to bring forth the imprisoned spirits out of the prison-house, and out of the bondage of this spiritual Egypt, where our Lord was, and is crucified spiritually; and that he may expel the clouds of darkness, in which the fears and doubts, and questionings arise; and that he may make a clear way in all such, for his light to break forth out of

obscurity, in which the answer to those doubts and questions doth arise.

And by that same spirit that labours with you, am I moved to send this forth unto you all, as a word of exhortation and counsel, in the name and fear of the Lord God, by which as many as do rightly receive it, and make a true use and proof of it, shall find help and benefit; and shall know the mouth of the questioner stopped, and the answer of peace witnessed to their immortal souls, in the Lord's due time. And therefore consider this, that every good and perfect gift cometh from above, from the Father of Lights and Spirits, who would not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live. And therefore hath he, out of his infinite love, and tender mercies to the sons of men, prepared a way to draw nigh unto them, even while they are in their sins, which he doth not but through Jesus Christ the mediator of the new covenant, whom he hath freely given to be a light unto the dark world; and that he should enlighten every one that cometh into the world, John i. 9, of which number thou art one, whoever thou art, and art enlightened by Christ, though thou be yet darkness in thyself, as the Ephesians once were; yet the light shineth in thy darkness, or else there would not be two contrary natures and seeds found working in thee as there are; and this light wherewith thou art enlightened, is the life of Jesus, John, i. 4, which he hath given a ransom for man. And that was not natural, as some foolishly imagine; for if it were natural, it could not be a ransom for man out of sin; for the sin to be natural, and that which reproves it natural, is contrary to the apostle, who said, they two that warred in the creature were contrary; and called the one flesh, or natural; and the other spirit, or spiritual; and Christ Jesus called that which should reprove the world of sin, the spirit of Truth; and Antichrist and his ministers call it, a natural insufficient light, &c. But know this, thou that art inquiring; that that in thee which doth make manifest things to thee that are reprovable, that is the light wherewith Christ Jesus hath enlightened thee withal, as the apostle of Christ said in his

epistle to the Ephesians, chap. v. ver. 13, 14. And that principle which leads thee to do or say such things as thou art secretly reprov'd for in thine own conscience, that is the darkness, and the enemy of thy soul's peace, which, who walks in, doth not know whither he goeth; for this doth minister a peace and pleasure to thee, and a delight to thy carnal mind for a season; yet the other, to wit, the light, the reprover hath power to take away peace from thee again, and to judge thee, and to make that which was sweet to thee to become bitter; and neither the darkness, nor lust, nor vanity of thy mind, can deliver thee from this stroke.

Now, that thou mightest be resolved in such a state what to do, consider thou that hast these strugglings in thee about the light in thy conscience, whether it be true or no, or whether thou shalt own it or no, and art thinking in thyself what is best for thee to do; whether to go on stoutly against it, or to submit to it: I say consider, if thou rebel against it, thou canst never know whither it would lead thee; as it was said of old, Job, xxiv, 'They that rebel against the light, they know not the way of it; so that if thou dost take that course to rebel, that will but increase thy ignorance of the way that the light leads in, and make it more terrible to thee every time it doth appear in thee; till thou comest to that state spoken of, Job, xxiv. 17, 'That the dawning of the day, will be as the shadow of death; for the more thou rebellest against it, the more dark thou wilt daily grow, and so the less able to resolve thyself in those doubtful things that fill thy mind; but as darkness increaseth in thee, so the power of it will bind thee down as a chain, and smother every good desire in thee. And thus by rebellion against the light, do some men lose the very sense and knowledge of it, and grow past feeling, and strangers to it, though it be in them; for the custom of sin, taketh away the sense and the feeling of the burden of it. But to you I write that are not yet come to this state of hardness of heart, but are brought daily into a sense of the burden of sin; and that are ready to say, if you were but sure that were the Truth and way of God which shows you your sin,

you would follow it, and love it, and own it, but are kept off by doubts and questionings. Verily, I say unto you, before these doubts be resolved, you must try this, as to your sorrow you have tried the other, before you can be effectually informed; for arguments will not do sufficiently in this case. Therefore try and prove what this principle can do for thee, when thou obeyest it, which ye know hath power to condemn you, and break your peace when you disobey it. Why should ye always be shut up in unbelief and in doubts, and so kept from trying and proving the light, as well as ye have proved the darkness, that so ye might reap the fruit of it to salvation, as well as you have done the fruit of the other unto condemnation? Oh, dear people, consider ye cannot obey this light of Christ Jesus in your consciences, but by taking up a daily cross to your own wills, lusts and affections, for that is contrary thereunto; and that which leads to obey your lusts, leads to disobey the light; and that which leads to obey the light, that crosseth the lusts and vile affections, which are at enmity with the light, and must by it be judged and condemned. And that which leads thee to slight it, and call it by some slighty name, that is also an enemy to it, and must be judged by it; and so as the light comes to rule over those things in thee which are enemies to it, thou wilt know that it will lead thee contrary to thy corrupt nature; and as thou feelest the thing so in thyself, thou wilt come to be wiser than those teachers that have called it a natural light. For that which is natural, leadeth according to nature, but that which is spiritual, leadeth according to the spirit; which the apostle said was contrary to the flesh, and warred against it. And so that objection will, by thy obeying the light, come to be answered, far better than words and arguments could have answered it. And so likewise the sufficiency of the light thou wilt come to feel, if thou dost not oppose it, but give up to be guided by it; and wilt know that it is able to deliver thee when thou art tempted, as well as to judge thee when thou hast yielded to the tempter: for thou knowest already, that it is able to condemn thee when thou sinnest against it; but

thou canst not certainly know it sufficient to give peace, and to justify, till thou obeyest it. So then, the plain pathway to the answering thy doubts about the principle of Truth in the inward parts, is, by obeying of it, and yielding to it; for they that do evil, they grow into hatred against it, and it judges them; as they deny to obey the light, so the light denies to justify them, and so coming justly under the condemnation of it, by reason of transgression, they grow afraid of it. But, alas! this doth but prove that it is sent of God, for it doth God's work, which is righteousness. For to justify the wicked, and to condemn the righteous, both these are an abomination to the Lord. And so is it with his witness in thy own conscience, which God hath placed there to bear witness for him concerning all thy actions whether they are good or evil; and thou thyself, whoever thou art, whether high or low, rich or poor, professor or profane, shalt confess unto this, that this hath never condemned thee for that which was good, nor borne witness against thee for that thou wast not guilty of.

And, therefore, all you that have been hurried and tossed with doubts and questionings about the Truth, come hearken to the counsel of God at this time once of his without you, and answered by the measure of his good spirit within you, which hath the same voice and cry in you, for obedience to what is made manifest of God in you; obey the light, and ye shall see daily more of it, till it break forth as a morning unto you, and till it shines unto a perfect day; yea, a day of gladness and rejoicing to your poor distressed souls.

Oh! Arise, thou that sittest sorrowing, and thou that art crying out in secret, because of the bonds and fetters that are yet upon thee; arise, arise, I say in the name of the Lord God of Sion, who draws nigh to thee by his quickening spirit, and hearken to his voice, who saith to the prisoner, come forth; and to the bowed down, arise; and to the feeble ones, put on strength, and follow me, and obey me; I will confound your foes, and break the strength of your enemies, as I have done for my people,

who have forsaken all to follow me, and obey me, so will I do for you: and if ye in uprightness walk before me, and keep my covenant, as they have done, no power or strength of the enemy within or without shall be too hard for you. And when the Lord doth thus arise in your souls, and stir up his pure witness, and his arm awakens in you, and his pure light breaks forth: oh! what consolation is it to you, and how have many of you seen your vain doubtings expelled, and a clear conviction hath prevailed upon your spirits concerning the way of God? and at such a time you have begun to resolve to follow the Lord in his pure way of holiness, thus opened to you in the light, though to the loss of all; and though it be to the bearing your part of the great reproach that lies upon them that love him more than their lives. And at such a time there was felt a secret joy in a hidden ground in your souls, and the seed of the kingdom that had been long buried, began to spring up in you, in which seed your souls felt some touchings of that heavenly life and joy, which for the time exceeded all things that this world could afford. And whensoever you come to feel this refreshing dew upon your souls, then take heed and wait singly in the sense of it, keep your eye to the joy that is now set before you in Christ Jesus, the Seed; for if you let your minds wander, and your eyes gad abroad, there be objects on every hand to lead you out from your souls' beloved, and to bring you to defile your hearts, and make yourselves an unfit place of residence for him who is holy and pure, and will not dwell nor take delight in a polluted temple; but will withdraw himself as he did from Israel of old, and from their temple, when it was polluted and profaned. And besides, when your minds are taken hold of, by any of the corruptible things of this changeable world, there will presently kindle a desiring, longing, and lusting after the enjoyment of those things, though contrary to the will of God; and then next, the reasoner and consultant gets up in thee, and starts a question: may not I enjoy the Lord and this? May not I keep in the way of Truth, and yet do this or that thing which my heart de-

sireth? And though it be not perfectly according to the Truth made manifest in me, yet I will have my will, my lust, my desire satisfied but this one time, and that is not much, saith the consuler; and this is but a small matter, there be others that do greater things than this. And such like reasonings enter the mind, and this grieves and vexeth that good and righteous tender spirit that moved in thee, and brings a weight and oppression upon the pure in thee, and that withdraws itself again from thee, in which thy light did arise unto thee, and so a night comes upon thee. For where the serpent can bring any to make a question of obeying the Truth, he is as ready to frame an answer, as to beget the question. But his answer always comes with a liberty and persuasion to disobey, as it did by Eve in the beginning; and when transgression is finished, then death enters upon thee with its dark power, and manifold sorrows pierce thy poor soul; though the fruit was desirable to be eaten, yet now it is eaten, thou cannot come at life, to eat of that too, though thou desirest it; but art driven out, and kept out with a flaming sword that turns every way against thee. And here is now a ground laid for doubts and questionings of a higher nature than before, to arise in thee; for before thou doubtest of the Truth itself, whether it were the Truth, but now having tasted of it, and received a conviction of it, and yet let forth thy mind from it, after other lovers, and thy ears after the voice of the adulteress, and so caused the pure light to withdraw from thee, through thy rebellion; now thou desirest thou mightest but see again what thou hast seen, and feel again what thou hast felt, but doubtest and fearest that thou shalt never see, nor feel, nor enjoy the like again. And now thou wishest, oh, that thou hadst stood in the cross to thy own will, and that thou hadst denied thyself, that thou might not thus have lost the sight and sense of thy soul's beloved. And now thou seest by woful experience, whence doubts and fears and sorrows do arise, even thy joining with the enemy who brings forth reasons against thy obedience to the light. And therefore now hearken to that which remains in thee, though darkness and sorrow doth encompass

thee, yet there is something remains which gives thee a sense of thy state and condition, and makes thee to know thy loss and want: hear the voice of this, and it will humble thee, and bring thee into true brokenness of heart and contrition of spirit; and as thou comest to know that state, then thou hast something to offer to the Lord of his own preparing, which will be far more acceptable to him, than a multitude of words, and performances, and duties, (so called;) and as thou in the true lowliness of mind dost come before the Lord, and offerest up this offering, God will hear in heaven, and will answer the cry of the poor and needy soul that cannot be satisfied without his presence; and he will remember his mercies of old, (which never fail,) for his seed sake, which is not yet brought forth in thee. And when God doth again shine forth unto thee, and make his power known, thou must expect it to be in judgment, because of the transgression thou hast gone into, that he may consume that in thee, which led thee into the sin, from his pure law, which is light, for Zion is redeemed by judgment. And therefore take heed lest thou be offended at his appearance; take heed that thou limit not the Holy One; but if his appearance be with more sharpness and bitterness to the carnal part than before, it is but just it should be so. It is the Lord, let him do what he will; he sees more cause now than before, by how much more thou hast sinned against his goodness; but bow to his judgments, bear his indignation, (as Micah said,) because thou hast sinned against him, Mic. vii. 9. And as thou yieldest to his righteous judgment, thou wilt know the coming to the midst of them, in which the mercy is remembered and made manifest. And therefore the hasty and impatient, that fly the judgment as soon as it begins a little to appear in them, they never find the true deliverance, but get ease another way, which lasteth but for a moment: but they who come to know a thorough work wrought in their earth, and the floor thoroughly purged, they come to know the true and lasting peace to their immortal souls: and although this is not obtained by ease and liberty to the carnal mind, which must die, yet the end

crowns all that hold out to it, they are the saved ones, as Christ said, Mark, xiii. 23. And they find the returning with sheaves, as the prophet said, Psal. cxxvi. 5, 6, They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy: they went forth, (said he,) with weeping, and bearing precious seed, but they shall return with joy, and bring their sheaves: and as Christ said, they that forsake father and mother, wife and children, house or lands, yea, or their own lives for my sake, shall have an hundred-fold in this time, and in the world to come, life everlasting. Forsaking and self-denial hath always been the way to life, and to true blessedness, and is the way unto this day: and therefore all you who have wandered in your own ways, and have not yet learned to deny yourselves of what is contrary to the witness of God in yourselves, but have desires, and those strong ones too, to keep and hold that still, which the light in you doth reprove, and yet have desires of life and peace too, and so are in many doubts and straits about these things; to you all this is the counsel of the Lord, and the cry of his pure spirit, come out of the Babylonish confusion of your own thoughts, and touch not what God by his pure spirit hath called unclean, let no man presume to call clean, and to join to it, lest they be found fighting against God, and nourishing and keeping that alive, which God hath appointed to die and be detestable of the Lord, and the table of devils. Oh! feed not them, but what is for famine, let it be famished, and what is for the sword, let the two-edged sword that goeth out of the mouth of the faithful and true witness cut it down, (Rev. i. 16. and iii. 14;) and so thou mayest see the giants in the land slain before thee by one that is mighty to deliver, and to bring thee out of this Spiritual Egypt with a high hand: but this thou canst not come to witness, but by diligently following him; and if thou willingly yieldest to his gentle drawings, when thou feelest them in thy heart, thou wilt find them to be effectual and profitable to thy soul; and the more thou followest him, the

more thou wilt feel his goodness break in upon thee for thy encouragement, and the less thou wilt doubt of his love and mercy, in leading thee still further, even unto the end, and unto that rest which will satisfy thy soul.

Therefore lay aside all consultations that are against thy obedience to the gift of God in thy heart, which reproves sin in thee; and give not way to vain and needless doubts about it, but as thou findest that thou hast been condemned and judged in thy disobeying of it, now try and prove whether by taking up thy daily cross, and obeying of it in thy words and actions, and in all things, if thou dost not find the answer of sweet peace and joy; and when thou shalt find it so, then will there be no more room for doubts and questionings against thy obeying of it; but as any questions or doubts do arise in thee, or shall be cast in thy way by any without thee, thou wilt feel the answer of it in thyself to thy refreshing; and so thou wilt come to witness the effectual operation of it daily in thy soul to work thy change and translation out of thyself, into itself; and so thou wilt come not only to know the light in thee, for that one may do and perish, (for this is the condemnation, that light is come, and not loved,) but thou wilt know that thou art in the light, and walkest there with God, and in the holy fellowship, where thou feelest the Lord near thee in his light, and his reward is with him. And so coming to walk and dwell in the light, thy conversation is now in heaven, as the saints of old was, and thy unity is witnessed with the Father and the Son, as theirs was, who said, if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with him; and if any said they had fellowship, and walked in darkness, (which all sinners do, for sin is the work of it,) such, they said, were liars. And such as walk in the light, as he is in the light, such come to know the blood that cleanseth and washeth from the sin, and from all unrighteousness; and such as feel this work wrought in them, are brought into such a knowledge of the blood of Christ, that they need not doubt about it, nor have the occasion to raise a question where it is, or

what it is, or what the efficacy of it is; for having the work and witness of the blood in them, this forthwith resolves all doubts that would arise. And so likewise those that come to know the light in all things to be their guide, to lead out of darkness and sin, and imperfection, and to bring into the innocent and blameless conversation which becometh saints, and so come to know their footsteps directed before the Lord, such have done doubting and questioning about perfection; for such see that which is perfect to be come, and they, from the belief which they have of attaining it, are labouring to conform themselves unto that rule, and endeavouring after it, not as the carnal professors, (who say they labour after a conquest over their sins, with a belief they shall never attain it while they live;) but they so run, that they may attain, and have the true hope in them, which they that have, are purifying themselves, as he is pure, that is their hope, as John said, he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as God is pure, that so, even as he was in this present world, so they may be also. And so here the substance will come, and will cause the shadow to flee, and will answer all thy doubts and questions far beyond what arguments can do.

And again, the many doubts and disputations that have arisen about the resurrection, as thou comest to be faithful in the daily cross that doth slay and crucify that nature in thee, that hath resisted the Truth, and held the soul in bondage; as that comes to die, and to be buried down in the true baptism into Christ's death, thou wilt feel the pure to spring up in thee, and thou wilt be made a partaker of the new life, and of the true resurrection, which is Christ, and all that are in him, are in the resurrection, and in the life; for he said, I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and they that live to God, in the Spirit of his Son, have part in the first resurrection, which whomsoever come to witness, the second death hath no power over them, but they come to know the thing as it is in Jesus, and their doubts are all answered about that also; for he that knows a death and a

resurrection after this manner, to be dead to sin, and to be risen with Christ Jesus in the new life, even while they are in this earthly tabernacle, before it be dissolved; such will never question their appearing at the judgment seat of God after it is dissolved, but do believe it with joy and gladness, and have a fervent hope concerning the resurrection of the dead, and have their expectation unto God in that matter, that he will according to his promise, raise them up at the last day, and will give unto every seed his own body, even as pleaseth him. And the creature is not careful then about such foolish questions and doubts, as to inquire what manner of body God will give them, but leaves it to the Lord, in full faith that he will raise them up according to the Scriptures: and so here all thy doubts will flee away, and are answered with that that was before them, as it comes to rule in the creature, and death that is the root and ground of them, comes to be swallowed up in the victory of the life.

And so, as thou feelest thy part in this resurrection, all the doubts and fears of thy own condition will be answered effectually, which cannot otherwise be answered, but by that good Spirit of God that strives with thee; which, when it doth prevail with thee, and thou becomest subject to it, then it witnesseth for thee; for that there is a state in which there is a danger of falling away, thy daily experience teacheth thee to thy sorrow; and besides, Christ said, every branch in me that beareth not fruit, must be cut off; and the many examples in scripture, of them that departed from the faith, and made shipwreck of it, and turned with the dog to the vomit, and the sow to the mire, doth sufficiently prove it. And if thou dost stand, it is by faith, and thou must take heed, and so mayest thou come to the crown, and seal, and assurance, and an establishment in the kingdom, where thou shalt no more go forth, but shall have thy soul's desire answered.

And when thou comest to know this state, and to receive this white stone that hath the name within, thou wilt then be without doubt or fear, given up in the will to God, to do and to suffer all things, according to his

blessed will. And here is the true and perfect rest to thy soul, whoever thou art, that art now labouring in the iron furnace of thy own thoughts and doubts, in which the more thou givest thyself up thereto, the darker thou art, and the fuller of doubts, for they will beget and multiply one another; and the more thou reasonest against obeying God's witness in thy heart, the less able thou art to obey it, but the little strength that God gives thee, thou consultest it away, and then when thou wouldest be strong, thou becomest feeble, and when thou wouldest in some measure obey, thy own consultations stand in the way, and hinder thee; and the more thou increasest in knowledge in this state, the more thou increasest thy sorrow and condemnation; so that sometimes thou art ready to wish thou hadst never known so much of Truth; and sometimes wishest thou knewest more concerning such a point, or such a doctrine, or such a scripture, or such a mystery, and art apt to think, because thou art yet ignorant in some things relating to Truth, therefore thou art the more excusable if thou be disobedient. But alas! poor soul, consider, the way to know more, is to be obedient to a little which thou hast received; and then that mist and fog of thy own unfaithfulness will vanish away from before the eye of thy mind; for it is that which hinders good things from thee, and makes thee go daily with a burden upon thy shoulders, and a guilt upon thy conscience; and thou canst not, in any case of thy necessities, come before the Lord with an open face, but art covered still with thine own iniquities. And in this state thou knowest neither sabbath, nor new moon, nor holy-day to the Lord; but all labour, toil and travail, and wearisomeness of spirit, till many even come to wish an end of their days, and yet are in great fear that the end will be worse too. Oh! how my soul pities you whose state this is, and I have a great sympathy with your sorrows, and in bowels of tender love am I drawn forth to reach out a hand to help you, as one that hath obtained mercy to know deliverances, and to witness the way of it, and have the testimony of God in my heart, to witness for the coming of

the Saviour to the poor and needy souls, to the relieving of them, and comforting of them. And my soul's desire is, that your bonds might be broken, and your souls might escape : but this I say in the name of the Lord to you all, there is no way for your deliverance, but your giving up in single obedience to that faithful and true witness of God which stirs and moves in thee against thy sins : and therefore wait thou to feel thy mind and will subjected thereunto, that thou mayest feel thyself to be one of those willing people in this the day of God's power ; and cease from thy reasonings against thy obeying the Truth, and from saying thou canst not, thou wantest power ; and when God gives thee grace, then thou wilt obey ; for these sayings are in vain ; for though it is true none can obey the Lord but by his grace and power given unto them, yet he hath made his grace, even that which bringeth salvation, to appear unto all men, as in Titus, ii. 11, and it hath appeared unto thee, and in thee to whom I write, and is a reprover in thee, and thou must turn to that that smites thee, and then thou turnest to the grace of God ; for it is his grace that strives with thee, to lead thee out of the evil that it reproves in thee, and so out of the world that lies in the evil, up to God from whence the grace cometh : for whosoever doth give up to the drawings of the good Spirit of God that moves in them, and in obedience thereto do deny themselves of their own wills, and lusts, and evil desires, and pleasures, such want not power, but feel Him near them that works the willingness first, and then the deed according to his pleasure, and so the glory comes alone to be his. And then thou knowest the mystery of the cross, and how it is the power of God, which all that reject the cross, complain for want of. And so, so long as thou livest in the cross, thou livest in the power, and thy obeying is easy, and all things are possible to thee through it ; and as long as thou art daily dying to that which is corruptible, thou feelest the more life and joy and pleasure in that which is everlasting, and thy desires grow more and more fervent, after a full and perfect enjoyment of it, in the pure unity of spirit. And those desires growing strong in

thee, it grows a lighter thing to thee to part with that which hinders, though it be thy bosom sins, thy Delilahs and darlings, yet all must go, for the love thou hast to Truth. And such only as have this love, and continue in it, are counted worthy to be heirs of the kingdom of God; for so long as any thing be hugged and loved beside the Lord, if the Lord should manifest his love to thee, thou wouldest play the harlot, and abuse his mercies, and cleave to thy old lovers, as Israel of old did, that was after the flesh. And therefore think it not strange, to be brought through manifold trials, that thereby thou mayest be purged and prepared as a bride, for the true husband Christ Jesus; for there are many that desire acquaintance with him, but are not fitted for him; they must be washed first, and trimmed first, and must put off the vile raiment first, and must come to know the white linen put on; and while this work is doing, what need of patience and quietness of spirit is there? what need of subjection to the workings of that Holy Spirit in all things, that thou mayest not be setting limits and bounds to that which must bound and limit thee in all things; nor say in thine heart, if my trials were but so, or my exercises so or so, I could then bear them; but rather submit in all things willingly to do and suffer, and to be tried and exercised, even as it please the Lord to order, or suffer thee to be tried; and in all his dealings say with the good man, it is the Lord, let him do what he will with thee. And whosoever gives up thus to him, though he slay them, yet shall they live; though he wound them, yet he will heal them again: therefore learn patience and stillness of mind, for by taking thought, thou canst add nothing in this work. Remember Israel of old, who were commanded to stand still to see the salvation of God in their greatest straits, and they were a figure unto thee: and now in the light read thy figure, and wait for the substance, the true seed, that it may bring forth peace and rest to thy immortal soul, and may set up righteousness in thy earth; which is that, I travel after, on the behalf of all distressed and afflicted souls every where, to whom I am a friend and well wisher,

as one knowing their trials, straits, doubts and besettings; and also through the rich love of God in Christ Jesus, do witness the delivering, answering, and satisfying life made manifest and revealed in its own eternal light, which lighteth every man. And in true desire that you may all know the same, and in discharge of my duty towards God and my generation, have I sent forth this word of counsel and exhortation, and do remain in my rest with the Lord, being thus far clear of the blood of all men, whether they hear or forbear. And though in bonds for the gospel's sake, yet the Lord's free man, waiting in patience and full assurance for Zion's full redemption.

Known by the name,
STEPHEN CRISP.

Ipswich's County Goal, this 3d Month. 1668.

A
BACKSLIDER REPROVED,

AND HIS
FOLLY MADE MANIFEST,

AND
**HIS CONFUSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS
DISCOVERED.**

In a short Reply to a Book lately published by Robert Cobbet, called
A Word to the Upright; who being turned from the Light, now
makes it his work to War against it, and them that walk in it: but
his Weapons are broken, and in his own Snare is he taken.

Written for the Truth's Sake, by a Servant thereof, known by the
Name of
STEPHEN CRISP.

Prov. x. 18. *He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander,
is a fool.*

Vers. 21. *The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for want of wisdom.*

Chap. xii. 2. *A good man obtaineth favour with the Lord, but a man of wicked
devices will he condemn.*

Unto which is added, A brief Answer to a Pamphlet, stiled, A brief Discovery
of the Labourers in Mystery Babylon.

IT is not a new nor strange thing, to see the old ene-
my of the light, viz. the prince of darkness, to be dili-
gent in raising up as high mountains and towers as he
can, to keep it from shining; and as he can bring forth
no evil to man of himself, without some instrument into
which he gets an entrance; therefore he is diligent in
persuading and tempting from the light, even those that

have seen the appearance of it, and not become so subject to it as they should have been, whose foolish hearts he darkens, and fills their minds with vain imaginations ; and then are they choice instruments for his purpose, as bearing something more of his image, (who himself abode not in the Truth,) than others. And such as these he always spurred on in a blind zeal against the light, as that which was most destructive to his and their works of darkness. And among this sort of instruments, here is one Robert Cobbet, hath presented himself as an enemy to the doctrine of the light, though he is indeed but as one of the meanest and most shattered of that camp, and hath attained to but a small measure of that subtilty which this father and prince of darkness doth use to furnish his children with that are capable to receive it. But however, what he hath, or thinketh he hath, he hath ventured to present to public view ; though indeed it is as a rod for his own chastisement. And I heartily wish there be so much sense left in him, that he may feel the smart of it, and may amend and leave off his folly and blind zeal, and submit to that which comprehends him, his spirit, and works. For I knew a time when he could not have believed that he should have been led to such a depth of confusion, in opposing the light, as now he is, though he was never faithful to it as he ought, but sought in his fallen corruptible wisdom to have comprehended it ; but I desire he may yet see a death upon that which hath unto this day, kept his soul in death and darkness. And in order thereunto, and for the Truth's sake, I have written these few lines, briefly to show him and others his confusions, contradictions and absurdities ; or at least a few of those many which he hath uttered, and printed in his book, called *A Word to the Upright, &c.* And therefore, reader, take notice, that after his book called *God's Truth* attested, was made public, and something was written in answer thereto, showing him how he contradicted himself and the scriptures too ; in a seeming reply thereto, he published this, called *A Word to the Upright*, which, he saith, is to establish them in these erring days, and to keep the young sprouts of the nation from

corruption in opinion ; which, whether R. C. hath written a piece that is likely to prove an establishing of the upright from error, or to prevent the young sprouts from corruption in principle or opinion, will more appear anon to the considerate reader, when he hath rightly weighed the consequences of letting in all his doctrines for Truth, whether it will not render them more like to distracted men, than principal Christians.

At my first sight of this book, it arose in my heart to write something in answer to it, and to take off the reproach which he hath endeavoured to cast upon the blessed Truth and way of God, which he hath turned his back upon ; but when I came to make a diligent search into the matter, I found much of that labour spared, the most part of his doctrines being answered and confuted by himself, in the same book, so that it might have been called, Robert Cobbet, answering and confuting Robert Cobbet, as will appear in this ensuing rehearsal of his doctrines and principles.

And therefore now let the upright, to whom he writes, consider what he propounds to them as an establishment against the errors of these erring days.

And first as to the light in the conscience, he saith, page 22, In that the light is a sparkling glimpse in the soul, it doth convince the soul of what is done amiss, which being discerned by the soul, serves for a director of the soul to Christ Jesus, where only lies its help. And in his 10th page saith, that the soul hath knowledge from this light to eschew evil, and do good ; in the doing of either of which, stands his wo or peace. And in his 22d page saith, that this spirit or light in man, is the candle of the Lord that searcheth the innermost parts of the belly. And in his 4th page saith, did not this light in thy conscience condemn thee of all that ever thou didst before the day of God brake forth ? And in his 3d page saith, that the end of Christ's coming was to beget unto communion with the Father and himself, by giving them his life, which is man's light, which, (my brethren,) being our salvation, we have it by him who is our Saviour Jesus Christ. And in his 11th page saith, the light serves to

condemn for unbelief, and to justify the creature in his obedience of faith, &c.

So by this time we see what a large testimony R. C. hath borne to the light in the conscience, and to its original; to wit, the Life of Jesus, and to its power, efficacy, and influence; and also to the effects that follow both the obedient and disobedient; as wo and peace, condemnation and justification, and how it is the soul's director unto Christ, and that by which the soul obtains the knowledge of what is good, and communion, &c.

Now will or can any, that doth take in and receive this doctrine from R. C. doubt or question his being a friend to the light, and to the quakers too, seeing he hath so strongly asserted their principle, with so many illustrations? Well, suppose that now thou dost believe R. C. in these things, and be settled in thy mind that he hath written the Truth, and so come to find a need of loving and obeying this light in thy conscience; which he further affirms in the 21st page thus; The Word that was God, by which all things was made; in him was life, and that life was the light of men, and he it is that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. I say, if thou dost come to be settled thus in these erring days, (as he calls them,) and dost come to have an esteem of the light according as R. C. hath written; my counsel is unto thee, that if R. C. or any else, shall deny this doctrine again, and write or speak against it, that thou believe them not, but keep single to this Truth and thou shalt find the good effects of it, beyond what he hath or can declare; yet thus far R. C. hath against his will witnessed to the Truth. Now mark what follows as to this doctrine, that R. C. may sufficiently appear to confute himself: he saith in the 22d page, the light in the conscience cannot lead the followers of its dictates further than its own centre, which is the centre of nature, and its power felt, but the power of the centre of nature; and that man's internal light hath no more power to give salvation, than the soul hath to save itself, as in the same page; and that the sinking down into it for a manifestation of the salvation that came by grace in Christ, is a

doctrine that turns away the creature from Christ the Redeemer to a property of nature, wherein can be no saving health, as in page 10. And again, in the same page he saith, the light in the conscience being a property in man, as man is a creature, its office in the soul is not appointed to give salvation. And in the 21st page he saith, Christ the word that maketh all things, is not the light; and although he be goodness itself, and sends forth his love, (to wit,) his life, which shed in the heart, is a light which he calls his spirit, which light is not Christ, though of his nature. And in the 5th page saith, that the spirit of man is of the principle of light, and is a spark of that nature, which having lost its life by the transgression of the man to God, is dead, &c.

Now by this time where is the settlement for the young sprouts of the nation? Who must, (if they will believe R. C.) believe that the light in the conscience is to lead to Christ, and yet can lead no further than the centre of nature; and that it is salvation and hath power to minister wo and peace, to justify or condemn; and now must believe it can do neither, it being but a property of nature, and dead to God: and must believe that the light of men, is the life and Christ; and now must believe that though this light is his life, and is his spirit, and of his nature, yet it is not he. Oh, horrible blindness and sottishness! Is this the way to settle people, for such double-minded and double-tongued hypocrites to take in hand to doctrienate them thus backward and forward, to believe and deny the same thing, and all in one hour's time?

But one thing more I have to note, which R. C. goes about to settle us in, in these erring times, about what we should and ought to believe of Christ, what he is that is the Saviour, in which mark; first, he affirms in the 3d page, that Christ is everlasting as he is the word. And in the 16th page saith, the seed is Christ, to whom the covenant was made by God, as written, my covenant shall be with thee, and with thy seed, and he is Lord and Saviour. And in 17th page he quotes the saying of Christ, they have believed that I came down from thee.

So here thou mayest see who R. C. acknowledgeth to be the Saviour, even the Seed of Promise, with which God's covenant stands for ever, which Seed came down from God, &c. So this is good sound doctrine according to scripture; but that thou mayest be unsettled again from this, R. C. saith again in the 18th page, that the Saviour is in nature and creaturality like him; and that the Seed that broke the serpent's head is not something that this R. C. is not, as he is nature and creature, but is the offspring of Adam, consisting as he doth: and saith in his 12th page, The body was Christ: and in his 6th page, Behold I show you a mystery, you men in the clouds, Christ being the product of the Holy Ghost to a coagulated substance from the properties of man in Mary. And in the 18th page saith, Being out of doubt that the soul of Christ was of and from the properties of nature and creature, made by generation of the properties of Mary, is that seed God promised to break the serpent's head. And in the 19th page, Is it not the body of Christ by which we are reconciled unto God? Yes verily.

So now let all people see if this man be like to settle any, and to keep the young sprouts from being deceived, who is thus confused himself; one while telling it is the Seed that is the Saviour, and the everlasting Word of God, and he which came down from God, &c. and then presently saying it is a thing produced, a thing formed of the properties of man, a body that reconciles, a coagulated substance, a thing in nature like himself, consisting as he doth both in kind and substance; and much such-like, as may be seen more at large in his book.

Well, if R. C. had known Christ Jesus, and the power of his death and resurrection, he had not written so confusedly; for then he had known the virtue of the Seed, and the service of body and soul too, and had known the offering to be made by the Eternal Spirit, and then he would not have said that it was the body only that reconciled, or that the body only was Christ, seeing that the body without the spirit is dead, and that could not give life; but the Son of God that took the body, hath life in himself, and can give life to them that believe,

and was, and is, and is to come; and he is in the faithful, and they are in him and in his body, bone of it, and flesh of it; and the life which they live is by faith in him, and not by talking of him. But these things R. C. is a stranger to, and so imagines about him, and intrudes into things which he hath not seen, and is vainly puffed up in a fleshy mind, and fleshy knowledge which is for judgment; for this jumble and confusion is the only way to bring into atheism indeed, if there were no better asserters of the doctrine of Christianity than he is. But let all sober people wait to feel a measure of that life and fulness that dwelt in that body of Jesus, for which it was prepared, that so they may by the power of that Life be settled in the knowledge of the Saviour Jesus, and may daily wait for his appearance to save; for he ever liveth and is ever needed, and none are safe but under the government of his Spirit. Now as to what substance he was of, R. C. saith in his 6th page, His substance was from the properties of man in Mary; but in the same page, he saith again, That the body of our Lord was of an heavenly substance. And in his other book saith, He is the Son from the substance of the Father, and was, he saith, of the nature of heaven. So then the properties of man in Mary were heavenly substance, of the nature of heaven, or else R. C. is here unsettled and in error and darkness himself; nay that which is more, R. C. himself must be of this heavenly substance, this nature of heaven; for he saith, Christ consisteth as he doth. But lest ye should believe what he saith about the heavenly nature, he saith, His soul was made by generation of the properties of Mary. R. C. wilt thou not blush at these things when thou reviewest them?

And then for the form of this substance, he saith, page 8th, That while he there stood, differed nothing from the form of a servant: but in the 6th page he saith, that as he was thus circumscribed, and thus consisted of soul, body and spirit, he was that form of God.

How now R. C.? What! is the form of a servant, and the form of God all one? And is the form of God a

circumscribed form? Hast not thou learned this of Lodowick Muggleton, that false witness and notorious blasphemer? (that saith God is but the bigness and compass of a man,) whose steps thou art treading, and whose end will be thy end, except thou repent.

And then again concerning the blood that saves and does away sin; hear what R. C. in his 11th page saith, My brethren, you are bought with a price, not of blood of bulls, and goats, nor heifers of a year old, but by the blood of God. But in his 13th page he is of another opinion, and saith quite contrary; these are his words, viz. Which blood being the blood of his humanity, as he was creature, was that which did with God expiate for sin. So now which of these two doctrines shall we believe, that we are saved by the blood of God, or the blood of the humanity? Or shall we suppose them to be both one, and so God to be human, and so the doctrines indifferent?

R. C. will do well to clear up these things, or own his condemnation upon his folly and presumption; for it is unlike he should ever be reconciled to the people of God, who is so at odds in himself in this manner. Alas, Robert! dost thou not yet see whither thou art gone, by going from the light, and now staggers and reels, and dost not know whither thou goest? Oh! that a day may be yet found for thee and thine, and that thou mayest come to bow down to that, which thou now kickest and spurnest against.

And in page 21, thou sayest, if the light in the conscience be Christ, then so many men as are in the world, so many Christs. Why so, Robert? Hast not thou thyself answered this, in confessing that one Christ hath with his life served to lighten every man that cometh into the world? And what need is there then for every man to have a distinct Christ, seeing he is the Christ of God, thou sayest, that enlightens them all? And thou sayest in this same page, that Christ, as he is the word and maker of all things, is not the light in the conscience; but in the next line or two, thou sayest, but the word that was God, &c. in him was life, and the life is the light of men,

and he lightens every man. How dost thou mean by this? dost thou not mean that he lightens them in their consciences? or where else?

And as to the soul of man, thou sayst in thy 4th page, that it is a spark of God's eternal nature; coagulated into a spiritual substance for a centre of his insensitive life; and as thus compacted, is a creature of an eternal being, of an own self-subsisting consistency.

Answer. R. C. hath here described a creature that subsists of itself contrary to the scripture, that saith all things are upheld by the word. And besides this eternal creature, as he calls it, this spark of God's eternal nature, this coagulated substance, (he saith,) was to be a centre for God's insensitive life. What Robert! had it not a centre before? But if this coagulated substance subsists of itself, then not by the life that centres in it. And if the soul be a spark of God's nature, how comes it to be created? and if it be his nature, how comes it to be corrupted in the life-time as thou sayest it is? and how can a spark of God's eternal nature, let into itself the poison of the serpent and so die? where is its own self-subsistency now? is this thy explaining the matter? or, where is its being a centre for that insensitive life of God? And further in thy 5th page thou sayest, this spark, this coagulated substance, this own self-subsistency dieth; and in another place speakest of its perishing; and yet talkest of an eternal creature. But R. C. what life of time is that which corrupts the soul? and how came it to have its abode in an infectious life of time, seeing it is an eternal creature as thou sayest? but what man's soul, or the soul of Jesus either is, thou knowest not; for if thou hadst, thou wouldest not have thus befooled thyself to say, man's soul was a spark of God's eternal nature, and yet say the soul of Christ was but of the properties of nature made by generation; nor yet have affirmed that to be the seed of promise which came by generation of and from the properties of Mary. Is not that the seed of promise mentioned in Isa. ix. 6, who is called the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace? And what! is Mary the mother of God? This

will please the papists well. And is this the way to settle Christians, and preserve the young sprouts of the nation from corruption? And where is thy scripture to prove that Jesus the Saviour was created, as in thy 6th page thou sayest? But oh! this darkness and confusion, that thou mayest see it, and be ashamed of it.

Again, Robert Cobbet, in his 26th page, saith in plain words, that Christ and his spirit are not one. And his argument is, that Christ said, I go away, but I will send you a comforter. Which argument is sufficient to prove, that Christ, the Messiah and Saviour, is one with the Spirit of Truth, and not distinct. If one should ask R. C. how many were mentioned in that text, where he saith, he that dwelleth with you, shall be in you; would he answer that there was more than one; if not, then here is no more, (to wit,) Christ and his spirit, which eternally are one.

But that he may sufficiently manifest his folly, he tells us in the same 26th page, that the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, are all one, both in respect of consent in their testimonies, and also in respect of their eternity of being; so which of these shall we believe? that Christ and his spirit are one or that they are not one? R. C. will do well to tell the people which he will stand by.

And for R. Cobbet's pleading or hoping, that the powers will keep up a charity to us, upon the account that thousands of us do, (he hopes,) believe his narrative of God; and his desire altering the matter for a corporal form, into a nature for production of creatures, speaking forth the model by his word, &c. page 26. Truly we need not R. C. to set forth an account of our faith and belief in these things, neither can we own it or him; for if we should, we should soon be brought under the judgment both of God and man. And for his pleading, that in the soundest bodies, there sometimes breaketh forth a boil: truly if he aims at us by this body, (as I think he doth,) we do confess, that so far as ever he was of us, so far he is that boil which we confess is now broken forth. But they that know him in particular, know how little he was of us, and how little while he

professed himself to be of us; so his breaking out, and running like a boil or sore, the corrupt matter that was in him, is no great disparagement to the body; for the body is sounder without him than with him; and whilst he was amongst us, he was often breaking out with his whimsies and imaginations, so that he became nauseous unto us, but not in so gross a manner as now.

And for R. C. saying, that some of us knew that he counted our language but a cant language; we know that from the first of his coming among us, he was far enough from our language or life either. But it is no great matter for him to call our language a cant, who replies to our works thus, viz. when we said, the Lord is one, and the name is one; he answers, Friends, do not caper, as in his 2d page. And he saith in his 31st page, that he is no Quaker; of which, all that ever saw or heard any thing of the Quakers' books or doctrines, will bear him witness; for never did Quaker appear in such a heap of confusion as R. C. hath done; and yet that malicious saying of his in this 31st page, that to be a Quaker is to deny his Lord and Master, God will judge him for; if by Lord and Master he means the Lord Jesus Christ, as I think he doth. But he that really and truly is *his* Lord, viz. the prince of the air that rules in the hearts of such disobedient children and apostates as he is; he, I confess, he must deny more than ever yet he hath done, before he can become a Quaker, or have unity with them, who are scornfully so called.

But why doth R. C. in his 30th page, come with a kiss, Judas-like, and say, brethren, I will ask you a question, &c. when as the matter he intends there to insinuate to his reader, is, that we deny that Christ that was born of the virgin Mary, to be Christ. Is not this on purpose to betray us and beguile his reader? and that with a lie? for we never yet denied him that was born of the virgin Mary, and suffered under Pontius Pilate, to be the Lord and Saviour. But indeed we never did believe him to be produced by coagulation, as R. C. doth; nor by generation of and from the properties of man in Mary: for then some might have declared his generation,

which the scripture saith, who can do? And besides, we believe him to be the eternal Son of God. But if R. Cobbet's doctrine be true, then he was not before Mary: but his ignorance of Christ, is sufficiently manifested to all that have an eye opened.

And as to his saying, that the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2, 3, that the sufferings of Christ is the power of God, and gospel by which we are saved: that is false and a belicing the apostle and scripture too; for all that read the text may see, that the apostle speaks of his sufferings but as one part of many of that gospel which he had preached; but it was the resurrection of Christ he most of all pointed at, as the principal thing they must come to feel the power of; as in verse 12.

Many more of R. Cobbet's absurdities and contradictions I might note down, as also those noted in the answer to his first book, which yet remain unanswered, nor so much as an attempt made thereof; he, (it may be,) despairs of ever reconciling them in the sight of rational men. But these at present may satisfy the ingenuous reader, what spirit it is in Robert Cobbet, that hath taken in hand to settle people in these erring days, and to preserve the young sprouts of the nation from corruption. And so let Robert Cobbet mind, (if he writes again,) to keep more within the bounds of moderation, and not to let his envy against the light, so captivate his reason, as to bereave him of the use of it, as it hath done; for truly is that scripture fulfilled in him, He that walketh in darkness, stumbleth, and knoweth not whither he goeth.

Concerning the Light that lighteth every one that cometh into the World, what it is, and what it is not, as Robert Cobbet saith.

PAGE 1. Which doctrine of the light in the conscience, had it been kept in its office, as a school-master, to bring unto Christ, had been a doctrine of good morality.

PAGE 22. Be not deceived, the light in the conscience cannot lead the followers of its dictates further than its own centre, which is the centre of nature, and its power felt, but the power of the centre of nature.

PAGE 3. I deny not, but the end of the coming of the Lord into the world, was to beget his children into fellowship, by communion with his father and himself, by giving to them his life, which is man's light, which, (my brethren,) being our salvation, &c.

PAGE 10. But a light of reason man hath, as man is a rational creature, from which his light hath knowledge of good and bad; as also knowledge from his light to eschew evil, and to do good; in the doing either of which stands his wo or peace.

PAGE 22. But in that the light is a sparkling glimpse in the soul, doth convince the soul of what is done amiss, which discerned by the soul, serves for a director of the soul to Christ, where only lies its help; which spirit or light in man is the candle of the Lord, which searcheth the innermost parts of the belly, and comes down with every man by generation from Adam.

PAGE 11. The light serves but to condemn for unbelief, or to justify the creature in his obedience of faith.

PAGE 21. But the word which was God, by which all things were made, in him was life, and that life was the light of men, and he it is that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

PAGE 4. Did not this Light in thy conscience condemn thee of all that ever thou didst, before the day of God break forth?

PAGE 22. So hence I conclude, that the spirit of man being his internal Light, hath no more power to give salvation to the soul, than the soul hath to save itself.

PAGE 10. Therefore the Light in man, being but the Light of man, as man is a rational creature, sinking into it for the manifestation of the salvation that comes from grace, by covenant from God, by Jesus Christ, is a doctrine that turns away the creature from Christ the Redeemer, to a property of nature, wherein can be no saving health.

PAGE 10. The Light in the conscience being a property in man, as man is a creature; its office in the soul is not appointed to give salvation.

PAGE 21. Christ, as he is the Word and Maker of all things, is not the Light in the conscience.

PAGE 21. The Word being goodness itself, sends forth his love, (to wit,) his life, which shed in the heart, is to it a light, and this he calls his spirit, which light is not Christ, though of his nature.

PAGE 5. The spirit of man being of the principle of light, is a creatural spirit from the principle of Light, as a spark of that nature, which having lost its life, by the transgression of the man, to God is dead.

PAGE 11. If the light in the conscience be Christ, then may Christ be darkness.

Concerning Christ, his Body, Soul, and Blood, and what he is, and is not, as R. C. saith.

PAGE 3. He is the everlasting word, but as he was the man Christ, he was in time.

PAGE 6. Which body of our Lord being of a heavenly substance, as it was circumscribed, was the body of his personality that he gave for an offering, for the ransom of the world; which body being of the nature of heaven. Thus have I given you an account of Jesus, his body, soul, and spirit; who as he thus consisted, was that form of God, and express image of his Father's substance.

PAGE 7. We have proved before the personality of Christ, and that he was the express image of God in his person.

PAGE 16. The seed is Christ, to whom the covenant was made by God, as written, My covenant shall be with thee, and with thy seed, &c. He is Lord and Saviour.

PAGE 17. They have believed that I came down from thee.

PAGE 19. This Christ being born of Mary, proceeded from David and Abraham, according to the line of the covenant, Christ coming from Mary, and God forming himself in and with that body Christ; for its saviour to man, was the power to Christ, by which Christ brought forth man's salvation; but could he, or did he, without the body of Christ reconcile?

PAGE 5. And the soul of Christ, that was of and from the soul-like properties of man's nature, as Christ consists personally from his mother Mary.

PAGE 6. Behold, I show you a mystery, ye men in the clouds; Christ being the product of the Holy Ghost, to a coagulated substance from the property of man in Mary.

PAGE 8. Who while there stood, differed nothing from the form of a servant.

PAGE 12. Which body was Christ.

PAGE 17. He came of Abraham's lineage, of the loins of Mary, begotten by the Holy Ghost of his mother Mary, for the Saviour.

PAGE 18. That the seed which is the Saviour, is Christ in person; for if he had not been creature of soul and spirit as I am, as I am nature, it had not availed me; but the seed that broke the serpent's head, is not some strange thing that I am not, as I am creature, but of kind and substance as I am, he being made so from the nature of Mary, by which she became creature, as the offspring of Adam, of soul and spirit consisting as do I.

PAGE 18. Being out of doubt that the soul of Christ was of and from the properties of nature and creature, made by generation of the properties of Mary, is that seed that God promised to send to break the serpent's head.

PAGE 11. My brethren, you are bought with a price, not of blood of bulls, and goats, nor heifers of a year old, but by the blood of God.

PAGE 19. Is it not the body of Christ by which we are reconciled unto God? yes verily.

PAGE 18. Which blood being the blood of his humanity, as he was creature, was that that did with God expiate for sin.

A

LETTER FROM GERMANY TO FRIENDS,

EXHORTING THEM

TO DILIGENCE IN MEETINGS.

ALL Friends every where, who have tasted of the goodness of God, keep in the savour thereof, and let not your minds be stolen away from that which is living, for that which is living cometh from above, and makes you lively, but that which is corruptible, cometh from the earth, and brings death with it over your souls; and therefore watch in diligence to retain the savour of the life of Truth, that you may live, from a sense that Christ liveth in you, who is the seed, the truth, the noble plant, and grows, and bringeth forth fruit in you.

And all Friends, every where, who thus keep and retain the savour of life in them, they will come to feel daily quickenings thereby, and will have power over the nature that is dead in Adam to all good works, and especially to waiting upon God with a steadfast and stayed mind. Nothing so hard as this to that old and corrupt nature which is soon weary. This is that nature which cannot watch with Christ one hour; but let his trials and sufferings be never so great, this leads from watching to sleeping, this hath no fellowship with the

seed of God in its sufferings, and shall have none in its dominion. And where this drowsy nature stands uncrucified, it keeps you in the weakness, out of the power, and this brings out of the savour and feeling of the goodness of God, and so makes meetings unprofitable; and as it comes through custom to be allowed and subjected to, it leads into hypocrisy, that is to say, into a professing to wait upon God, and a presenting the body in the meeting, and then letting the heart, (which God requires,) depart from him, even into the ease and liberty of the flesh, in which the apostle said, they that lived could not please God.

Therefore, dear Friends, in the name of God I exhort you, consider what you do when you assemble together; and let it be in the name of Jesus, that is, in his power, not in the weakness, nor in the flesh, like a fleshly meeting, but in his name and power make war with the flesh, and with the drowsy spirit that lodgeth there, and in the faith overcome it, and be not overcome by it, for that is bondage: and hold your meetings in the spirit, where every one is made alive, and flourish, and grow in life and in dominion, and shine forth to the glory of God, and to the comforting and refreshing one of another.

For now as any one suffereth himself to be overtaken with sleep in a meeting, he loseth the sense of the power of God, he becomes a grief to the diligent, and an evil example to the negligent, and brings himself under the judgment of God's power in his own conscience, which when he awaketh, riseth up against him; and also he is under the judgment of the power in the whole meeting, which, when he comes to a true sense of, will be no light thing. And further, if any that are unbelieving come in among you, and see such things among you, that make a profession of an inward power, and an inward quickening spirit, and a worship that is inward in the Spirit and Truth, herein causeth such the name of God to be dishonoured, the way of Truth to be holden in little esteem, by such who know it not in themselves, and a stumbling block is hereby laid in their way, to hinder them from any further seeking after the truth. Oh, Friends! consi-

der these things, and be all diligent in this matter, and let not that earthly part have liberty, but let it be kept in the cross till it dies, or else it will keep and hold you dead and insensible of God or one another. And this is that which hath hindered the growth of many, namely, their carelessness in coming to meetings, and their slothfulness when they are there. Therefore for the time to come, let every one that bears the profession of Truth, be diligent in the work of God, and be good examples to each other; and observe your time and hour of coming to meeting; and set not one hour, and then come at another; and neglect not your middle week meetings, by reason of your outward occasions, for that will not bring a blessing upon your affairs, but let all things give way to the service of God, and then all things shall work together for good unto you, and there shall be no lack of any thing that is good for you.

So, dear Friends, in the true love of God, have I written this unto you, as it lay upon me from the Lord, as a word of exhortation, to stir up the pure mind in you all; and the God of power and strength, give you of his might, and of his power to help you in all your necessities, and in all your combats, and strengthen your faith, in which, and by which the victory is obtained, which is the desire of my soul for you all, who am your friend in the fellowship of the gospel.

STEPHEN CRISP.

A
WORD OF CONSOLATION,

AND A
SOUND OF GLAD TIDINGS

TO ALL
THE MOURNERS IN GERMANY,
AND THE PARTS ADJACENT.

WITH A

Tender Visitation and Salutation of Love to all that wait for Redemption and Freedom from the burden of Sin; with an Exhortation to love the appearance of the Day of Deliverance which is now dawning upon them.

From one that seeks nothing more than the spreading of the Everlasting Gospel, that the Meek and Poor may be comforted thereby; known by the Name of
STEPHEN CRISP.

ALL ye who hunger and thirst for the fulfilling of the promises of God made unto his holy and beloved Seed, in the latter days to be raised, and in the latter age to rule: and all you that are come to a sense of the great oppressions of the just, both in particular and in the general, and feel pure groanings within yourselves, to see deliverance brought forth unto your souls immortal from under the bondage; unto you is this salutation of my tender and dear love flowing forth, by the operation of the Eternal Spirit, by which God worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.

Dear hearts, I am sensible how that pure Spirit of the living God is searching out the habitations of them that sit in solitary places, sighing; for the delight of the

everlasting gospel which we have read, must be preached again in the latter days; which gospel is Christ the power of God, that opens the prison doors, and brings forth the prisoner out of the prison: but Christ Jesus doth visit them in prison also; so that it is one thing to feel your spirits visited with living breathings after perfect freedom, and the glorious liberty of the children of God. (This you may have and feel in you, and yet be in prison.) And then it is a further work to know the desire answered, and to know the freedom obtained; and this none come to witness, but those who come to a love and sincere waiting upon the God of power, for an opening in the things that are truly spiritual; which the carnal man, with his carnal counsel and book-learned wisdom cannot understand. And therefore now in the aboundings of the love of God in my heart towards you all in the parts of Germany, and in the provinces, dominions, and richstadts nigh adjacent, am I drawn forth to visit you with these few things, that you may be prepared to meet the Lord in the day which is dawning upon you; that you might not be as the foolish virgins, contented with a lamp, and sleeping whilst ye should get oil. And therefore this I say unto you all in the name of the Lord God of heaven and earth, that a day, a glorious day is breaking forth, and shall break forth upon your nations and countries, even a glory that shall stain the glory of all professors that are out of the holy life of the Son of God, a day of gloominess and darkness shall this day be unto all who are established upon their own mountains; but a morning of gladness, with a refreshing dew unto all that long for a habitation in the mountain of the Lord, which is rising over all the mountains; yea, this day shall discover the mountains on which every sort of men have fed, and the kind and sort that have trusted therein. Esau the profane man hath had his mountain, and that a den of dragons: Ishmael the mocker had his mountain, he mocked at the seed, and is cast into the desert, with her that bore him: Cain hath a city, who slew the just, but was filled with fear, and his plagues more than he could bear. In these cities and mountains

where the plague enters, the dragons lodge, the wild beast seeks his prey; and where the wicked builds a wall for his defence, in those have nations trusted. But the thundering power of the Lord is arisen, to lay waste these mountains, to raze these cities, and destroy all wild beasts of the forest, and to bring anguish and desolation upon all murderers about religion, upon all the mockers, upon all the idolaters, upon all the oppressors of the pure seed. And in this day shall anguish take hold of many professors of Christianity, whose religion hath stood in names of things, and words of godliness; but at the appearance of the substance, they shall fret themselves, and resolve if they can but kill the heir, they shall have the inheritance; but if they should let the heir live, they should be cast out. Now will the wisdom, and strength, and arm of flesh, with its power and policy, seek by all means to stop the spreading of this glorious day, lest their high religion which is accompanied with sin, the work of darkness, should be discovered.

Howbeit, this I say unto you who sigh and mourn because of the abomination and spiritual oppression which you feel, I say, fear not, the day of the Lord shall break forth, and nothing shall be able to stop it, but he that shall come, will come, and none shall let him. And the heavenly manifestation of the life of Jesus Christ, which is the light of men, shall fill the earth, and a Goshen shall be found for the true Israel, in the time of Egypt's plagues. Therefore rejoice you, and be glad, and let your heads be lifted up, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh.

But now, dearly beloved, I have something to say unto you more particularly, concerning the way of the breaking forth of this glorious day, lest any of you that wait and hope for it, should be mistaken, and should be offended at his coming in one appearance, whom ye may look for in another, as the Jews of old were: and therefore in the fear of the Lord consider these following things.

1. Consider what it is that must be destroyed in this day of the Lord that cometh to visit your nations; it is the works of the devil, who is the author of sin, and his work is not destroyed, so long as sin remains. Now the

prophet said, the day of the Lord shall burn as an oven, and the wicked should be as stubble. So that if the appearance of God in this your day be in judgment, and burning, and consuming even those things that have been delightful, yet take heed you are not offended thereat; but that, (in you,) all that is for the sword, let the two-edged sword that goeth forth out of his mouth, (that hath the brightness of the morning star,) cut it down. And what God hath appointed to be famished, take you heed of feeding it, lest you strike against God, and it happen to you, as once it did to one to whom God said, because thou hast saved one alive, that I had appointed to die, thy life shall go for his life. Now God hath appointed the death of every sin and lust that liveth in your souls, and hath appointed his Son Christ Jesus to be the killer and destroyer thereof. And he cometh to the earthly part, not with peace, but with a sword; and when ye feel it cutting off your pleasures, your delights, your worldly friendships and fellowships, yea, your hope and confidence, which stood on a sinful ground, or a ground where sin also stood, you must not be offended thereat, but wait in humility to feel that you are the slain of the Lord, which the prophet said should be many, in his great and notable day: and fear not, for he that kills you to what is old, shall raise you up in the new life of righteousness that never waxeth old.

2. Consider what it is that must be set up in this day of the Lord that is visiting the nations; it is righteousness and truth which hath long fallen in the streets, and equity could not enter; but God hath determined to exalt righteousness even in the earth, that it may run down as a stream in abundance, bearing all before it that is contrary to it. And the way of exalting it, the blind world cannot see, and so fights against it: but they whose eye is open to mark his footsteps, shall see it is by the shining forth of its own glory: for as it ariseth in the particular, to rule the whole man in the fear and pure wisdom of God, that man ceaseth to act of himself, or speak of himself, and is brought to wait upon the good spirit of God, to know what to do and say, as the hand-maid upon the

hand of her mistress; and such the pure spirit keeps in a pure conversation without sin, for no man by the spirit of God is led into sin. And if any come to live in this pure sinless conversation, this differs from the sinful world, and so shines over the world, and brings a night upon their glory: for this shining and beauty of holiness is answered by the measure of the grace of God in all consciences, where it shines; and so many come to be gathered to the brightness of the arising of this righteousness, and become subject to the love of it. And so shall the borders of its garment be daily enlarged, and the borders of the possession of the wicked one shall be daily lessened, and the seed of God shall possess the gates of his enemies, according to his promise of old made by his holy prophets.

And now Friends in the third place, consider the place where this alteration is to be wrought, where the kingdom of the man of sin is to be destroyed, and where the kingdom of Christ is to be set up: it is within you that this great change is to be wrought, and a great power must be felt to work it; for in this case, in vain is the help of man, without the power of God. Therefore that which leads to the knowledge of the power, you must come to love and to obey, which is the light of Jesus Christ in your consciences, wherewith Christ Jesus, the free gift of the Father, hath enlightened every one that cometh into the world; which light doth discover to the soul, when the dark power doth begin to stir and operate, to lead into evil. And those that love the light better than their lusts, they come to take up the cross to the lust whatsoever it be; and standing faithful in the cross and denial of themselves, they come to witness what the apostle said, the cross of Christ is the power of God through faith unto salvation. And then when this cross is thus taken up and self thus denied; then that soul is not without the power of God, which is the ground of their faith: and the more they are herein subjected, the more power they have, and the more doth their faith increase, and being obedient to the light of Jesus, the faithful and true witness of God, they feel peace, and

encouragement, and a loving hope doth sustain such as cast an anchor, till God makes a perfect work on their hearts. And here will arise the great difference between your hope, and the hope of the hypocritical world; they hope to be set free from the condemnation due upon sin, but you will hope and wait to be set free from sin itself, which is the cause of condemnation, and to be redeemed out of evil, into the life of innocency, that was before sin was.

And, dear Friends, you that have attained already to this hope, hold fast your confidence, waver not, but hope and wait to the end; though the seas roar, and the waves make a noise, yet let this hope be your anchor, for it is sure. And seeing this great work is to be wrought within, and you are to be made witnesses of it to the sons of men, oh let your eye be kept diligently to the power, that ye may be true witnesses of his glory, who is your soul's beloved. Oh, keep the eye of your minds, (which the God of this world hath blinded, and which now the God of heaven hath opened, and is opening,) always within, that ye may see the appearance of every evil, and every good in you; and be able to put a difference, and may learn wisdom of God to choose the good, and eschew the evil; that thereby you may know that vessel cleansed and purged, in which this great work is to be wrought: for ye know whilst the vessel is filled with wrath, envy, or with unrighteousness of any kind, such are not yet fit for the glory of God to shine forth in. And when that is removed out by judgment; and Zion is set free from oppression, then the creature returns to God a pure vessel in the righteousness that was before the fall. And so a man or woman may come to Adam's state he was in before he fell, which was without sin. And against such the judgment of God doth not go forth, but they have peace with God, and fellowship in that which is pure, before sin and transgression was. And they that come to this state, may be tempted again as was Eve, and if they watch not, may be entangled again; but if such be faithful to the power that redeemed them from the sin, and in the power resist the temptation, then do

such receive the seal of eternal life in Christ Jesus, who never fell, though he was tempted, and so come to an establishment in him that never changeth.

And, therefore, dear Friends and people, you upon whom the glorious day of our God has dawned, and have the day-star arisen in your hearts, which gives you a hope this day is at hand; or you that have but a sense of that sure word of prophesy in you, which you are to take heed unto, till the day-star arise, I say unto you all, in all your states and conditions, it is faithfulness to what you know, that God requires of you: and it is those among you that are willing and obedient, that shall reap the desires of their souls: for he that is faithful in a little, shall be ruler over much. And therefore Friends, put not the day of the Lord afar off, when God hath brought it nigh, for on such it will come as a thief; but all that wait for it in sincerity of mind, shall see his salvation and be glad; for the hills shall flee at his appearance, the mountains shall be removed and laid waste, that which hath been as the world's element, shall melt away with fervent heat, and their heavens pass as a scroll; but the poor, the mourners, and the oppressed in soul, shall rejoice and sing because of their deliverance. And my Friends, think it not hard, that ye meet with many sore trials, and deep afflictions, for bearing witness to the light of the glorious day of God; for all your cruel sufferings, your cruel mockings, and your heavy and grievous reproaches, shall tend to the furtherance of the gospel; for thereby are the hearts of many open, to inquire concerning you: and as they come to look towards you by way of inquiry, then let them see nothing of you but meekness, love to enemies, patience, and an assured hope. And this will win many to the love of your life, and will daunt your foes, and in time make them hopeless of extinguishing your light again; for after this manner have we in England been exercised from the beginning. Nevertheless the gospel doth abundantly flourish, and the light and splendour of it break forth; and many are daily converted to the faith, and made partakers of the heavenly grace of God, and joy of his salvation with us: and

we have great encouragement, both by the feeling life and power, and presence of God with us, and in us daily, and also by the fruit of our labours, which we see daily coming up to our joy. And this I say, that you also who have believed, may be encouraged, that this day of the Lord, and dispensation of the light of his Son Jesus Christ arisen and manifested in and among the people called Quakers, shall never be extinguished or brought to an end, but shall spread through your and all countries; and blessed are they that can receive it. This I have received from the Lord, therefore be strong in his might, and quit yourselves like men; be faithful to the death, and Christ shall give you a crown of life. My heart is full and abounds with love to you all, and to the whole regions round about you, to whom I send this as the salutation of my love and tender greeting, in the feeling of the mercies of God that are breaking forth unto you that mourn and are afflicted, and wait for redemption.

And now my prayer to God is, that this my love may have acceptance among you, and that you all may consider how clean you must be made, before you can be vessels in the house. So I do remain in the covenant of God, in the communion of saints, and in the earnest expectation of the redemption of Zion's oppressed seed, for the sake whereof I do labour and suffer both in body and spirit, and will yet willingly labour, until my course be finished.

I am a lover of all men's souls,
Known among men by the name,
STEPHEN CRISP.

AN
EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP,
TO
FRIENDS IN COLCHESTER.

DEARLY beloved friends, brethren and sisters, who are come to know and feel the life and virtue of God refreshing your souls, which you once longed after, and sought with heavy hearts, and knew not where to find it; but now have tasted of the heavenly manna, and are comforted. My dear Friends, who can express the greatness of the mercies of our God in this particular? but in a sense and feeling of my fellowship with you, and you with me herein, am I at this time drawn forth to salute you, in love unfeigned; as being present with you in your drawings nigh unto your God and my God, your strength and my strength: and Friends, though you know these things, yet it is in my heart to put you in mind how that your standing is not by knowledge, but by your faith in the Son of God; and whosoever is born of him, believes him through death, and finds him faithful for ever, and so by faith and obedience, comes to the joyful resurrection and inheritance in light; and the Son of God is made manifest, that you having seen his appearance, may be made like him; and that power that can do it, is the same that raised up, and brought again our Lord Jesus from the dead; and therefore dear hearts, you who have believed in the light, be diligent to feel the power to which all things are possible, that so the blessed work begun in you, may be perfected, to the praise of God, and your comfort and establishment; this is it that hath gone before you in all your sore combats and conflicts, and you were never weak, while you eyed the power of God, and marked which way it led you; for it always gave you power to accomplish your testimony, though with your lives in your hands. And Friends, this

glorious blessed power is the same to day as yesterday, and will always be the same to you ; if you abide in it, you will feel no weakness ; that will be among your enemies ; and among you, God will ordain strength, courage and nobility ; and ye will appear worthy of your name, to wit, the people and children of God. He hath none to stand up for him in the earth, but they that trust in his power ; they that trust in their own, their strength is as tow before the fire. Ye are his little heritage in the sight of the heathen ; if ye appear valiant, many will believe, and the name you profess shall be honourable, and you with it : and therefore, Friends, seeing how great goodness is bestowed upon you, and how greatly your souls' desires are answered, in that ye are brought from the barren mountains to the pastures of life, and remembering how you have been kept from being again scattered by the violence or subtleties of the enemies of Truth, and of your souls ; and feeling to this day and hour, the continuation of that blessed power with you, warming, comforting and refreshing your souls ; oh be encouraged to follow the Lord with your whole heart, though to the loss of all that can be lost ; and heed not the darkness of this world, nor its times and seasons of ebbing and flowing, or appearing more or less ; but mind the power of God, and observe diligently the times and seasons in which you are called to bear a testimony for your God, and to show forth the faith you have in him, and the love you have to him, that the world may see you constrained, though they cannot see that which constraineth you. Dearly beloved, my heart is enlarged towards you, beyond what words can declare ; and as you feel the love and goodness of God springing up in your hearts, then feel ye and read my love, which is in the same root by which I am, and have been supported in all my travails and sufferings for the seed's sake ; and my joy doth daily increase, because I see daily the captivity of Zion to return. So rejoice you with me, be glad in the Lord, and meet diligently together in his power, to praise and magnify him for his goodness, as in times past, when ye met together to be made partakers of it, and to be ac-

quainted with it, that so unthankfulness may be found in none of you ; but ye all may be clearly and singly given up to do and suffer his will, that hath chosen you to be a people to himself: and lay by and cast aside all earthly mindedness, and all fleshly consultations ; for that will but darken you and veil your understandings, and bring in doubtfulness and weakness ; but mind the power over all, which was before all, and must remain when all that is contrary to it is hushed and gone ; and in this, I say again, is your strength and my strength, and the strength of the whole heritage of our Father. And therefore the supplication of my soul to the God and Father of my life, is, that you may be kept and preserved single to the power of God, minding always its leading and guidance, which will at last lead every one that believes and obeys into perfect rest. So dearly beloved in the Lord, fare ye well, be faithful, be of good courage.

Your friend and brother in the Truth,

S. C.

AN

ANSWER OF STEPHEN CRISP,

TO

THOMAS LODDINGTON.

FRIEND, thrice I have received, though until now I had not opportunity, or convenient time to signify the receipt of it to thee, nor to reply any thing thereunto; but now I shall as briefly, as well I may, give thee to know my sense and judgment of what thou hast written, and turn back what of it is thy own into thy own bosom. And as to what thou writest of my exaltedness, or high-mindedness, &c. in this particular, I shall not say much, because God knoweth that work of humiliation which himself is the author of, in which he hath made me willing to be a servant unto all men in his love, and it is he that justifies me, and who art thou that condemnest me? Shall thy judgment stand? Nay surely, it will be thy own, and out of thy mouth shalt thou be judged with that measure which thou hast meted out to me; for thou sayest, that my judging thee whom I, (as thou sayest,) know not, savours of the accuser of the brethren's spirit; then surely thou, that hast run so high in judgment against one whom thou as little knowest, and less hast manifested the savour of that accusing spirit, to purpose; but though, let me tell thee, I do know thee, and can very well trace thy path in which thou walkest, and see the place of thy standing; and I do not deny but that the grace of God hath shined or appeared in thee in times past, which might raise up some fear of God in thy heart, and might in measure wash thee from the gross pollutions of the world. But how much thou hast licked up that which once thou hadst vomited, and how often thou art tumbling in that from which thou wast once, as it were washed, God and his witness in thy own conscience

knoweth, to which testimony thou must stand in the day of his judgment.

And as to thy letter in general, it is but as a heap of rambling words, run out together without asserting any thing of what I have either said or writ to thee, except in that I said thy carnal reason must be famished; and that is true enough, and thou wilt find it so; for the things of God were never appointed as food for it, as saith the apostle, *The world by wisdom knows not God, and the carnal mind is enmity to God, and discerns not the things of God, neither can, for they are spiritually discerned; and dust is the serpent's meat, and he must creep on his belly, read that; he goeth not uprightly, mark.*

And yet, I never said faith was a thing separate from reason, that is but thy own false suggestion; for we do desire that all that have received of the like precious faith with us, may be ready to give a reason thereof to him that asks it, as I shall be ready to do to thee or any man when asked thereof; in the mean time, this is my testimony, that as man stands in the fall, simply considered, as a vassal and servant of the wicked one; in that state, his reason, will, and understanding, are all corrupted, and his affections are vile, and he an enemy to God and Christ; and in that state, as so, cannot see nor understand the way of salvation, nor the true reason of it, nor perceive how it is according to the nature of God, but with that reason, judgment, and will, will strike at the appearance of the true way of salvation, as the wise of this world ever did; and as thou according to the hardness of thy heart art still doing; but the light hath always broken forth another way, than their reason hath taught them to expect, and so they were left in darkness, still groping for the way, and changing and turning this way and that way, while others entered into the kingdom, and they were shut out, which is very near to be thy portion; wherefore, Friend, we say, that before the way of the Lord can be acceptable to a man, that is, before a man can receive that measure of faith which God hath offered unto all men, in that he hath raised up Jesus

from the dead, he must know that of God in him, to enlighten, or clear his understanding, and to rectify his reason, and reduce it from the gross darkness in which he hath been ready to call evil good, and good evil; and yet used his reason, as it was, to maintain this his opinion; and as this enlightening principle of God is known to work in him, and he giving up his will and judgment unto the manifestation of the light, then his reason comes to be rectified or reduced to its original principle of pure equity, in which he seeth that his reasonable sacrifice and service to God, is to give up all that he hath to the Lord, and thereupon he comes to wait for the gift of his spirit, to order him and his affairs, that now he may live to God, and not to himself any longer; and when he comes to feel the gift of God's holy spirit working upon his spirit, then thereby he hath a right understanding of his duty, and believes that to be the will of God; and so believing, this belief or faith working in him by love, he becomes obedient, and this kind of faith though it be separate from the corrupt reason of the world that lies in wickedness, yet it is not separate from the reason of an enlightened understanding, which through faith doth receive a perfect evidence of things which are not seen, and the substance of things that are hoped for; and this kind of faith which is the substance, thou art a stranger to, who art yet in the changeable shadows and imaginary worship, which men of corrupt minds have invented, and such backsliding hypocrites as thou can conform unto; but hadst thou had a true living faith mixed with thy former zeal and religion, it would have made thee more single-hearted and less self-interested, and more constant and steadfast in thy principles now; but this day is come to manifest such a faithless generation, whose preaching, praying, and worshipping, was for honour and advantage, and hath suffered that which you so much preached and prayed against, to come upon you, to make manifest how long your faith would hold you, when the sword was taken from you; and how far your zeal would lead you, when you had not an arm of flesh to lean upon; and now it is made manifest, and we see you, and we can trust neither you nor your church-faith any more.

And whereas thou hast fallaciously insinuated in thy paper, that I had denied the ascension of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the general judgment; these I turn back again as lies upon thy own head: some of which are also wilful, because I testified so far as I was required unto these things; especially unto that about the resurrection: to which I said, I did believe, that all both good and evil, must have or know a day of resurrection; but if thou wilt be such a fool, as not to be satisfied with a scripture-like confession, but will be still pressing to know with what body the dead shall rise? Then I say concerning thy carnal imagination of a body; thou sowest not that which shall be now, what body shall be, shall be as pleaseth God, and none knoweth what that is, but he who knows the seeds that must receive their own bodies from God: go learn what that means. And as to a general judgment, I did express my mind, that God had appointed a day in which he would judge the world, by the man Christ Jesus; whom he hath made the judge, both of the quick and dead, and warned thee to take heed, that in that day thou mightest have a name and place among the righteous: and now do again exhort thee to believe the least appearance of his light that now is, as well as is to come; for it is by the light that the works of darkness shall be judged in that day, and so are they now, and this judgment of the light the righteous love, but the wicked and the rebellious come not to it, but reject it.

And whereas thou sayest it is the mark of heresy to gainsay the essay or standard of the world, scripture and right-reason, what is all that rambling stuff to me about Turk and Pope, &c. I have neither denied any scripture, or sound argument produced naturally from scripture: but I did not yet say that the scripture was the standard of the world, for the scripture saith, the world is upholden by the Word of God, and that was in the beginning, and was God, and all things was made by it, as well as upholden by it. But I think thou wilt not say all things were made by the scripture, (for itself is also a thing which is made,) nor by right-reason neither, except thou be of the ranter's principle, that there is no

God but reason, which indeed thou savours too much of in thy discourse. Well, if the world hath no other standard but scripture, then where it hath no scripture it hath no standard, and so consequently cannot err; or else their error cannot be manifest. Is this good doctrine thinkest thou, oh, thou blind hypocrite? Hast thou not here done thy worst or greatest endeavour to shuffle out the knowledge or remembrance of that ensign and standard of the world, which I say was prophesied of, which God would set up unto the nations? Or was that scripture or reason, which God would give for an ensign and standard to the nations, to which they must be gathered, and by whom they must be tried; for he saith of him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles; and the same He that was the ensign and standard, should be God's salvation unto the ends of the earth. And what, Thomas, dost thou think scripture and reason are God's salvation to the ends of the earth? If thou dost, I tell thee thou art deceived, and art expecting life, where it is not to be had, as thy fathers the old pharisees were, who were willing enough to have eternal life, but would not come to him who was the light of the world for it, but run to the scripture to seek it, which could not give it, and perished in their hypocrisy, as thou wilt do without speedy repentance, and turning unto him who is the light, who is able to search thy heart, and judge thy thoughts, and show thee what thou hast done in thy life-time, which thou must confess is the faithful and true witness; and then is not this the Christ, whose name is called the Word of God, by whom God upholds all things, and tries all things, and manifests all the secrets of men's hearts? Yea, and this is he thou must bow unto, and confess unto; and well will it be for thee, if it be while there is a place and time found for mercy, which my soul desires thou mayest find, if it may stand with the will of God. But this I know, that before ever thou comest to know an entrance into that kingdom thou talkest of, that which is head in thee must be broken, and that which keeps house in thee must tremble, and that which now seems good and beautiful, must be spoiled; for this is my testimony to thee in the word and spi-

rit of God, that God will stain thy glory, and make thy shame and nakedness to appear in the sight of many, if not of all men that know thee. And in as much as thou hast stretched forth thy hand against the eternal Truth of God, the Lord will stretch forth his hand against thee, and will not draw it back till he hath humbled thee, or utterly confounded thee; and then thou shalt know it is hard to kick against that which pricks thee.

So though I have been somewhat large, it is love to the Truth and to thy soul, which hath constrained me, and my service unto God I know is acceptable; and I could desire it might be so to thee also; but, however, whether thou wilt hear or forbear, I am clear of thy blood, and my conscience I have cleared in giving testimony to the Truth, which is dearer to me than my all in this world: blessed be the God of my life, who hath made it so, to him be the glory ascribed for ever and ever. And, Thomas, although, (as thou saidst,) my mind has been as a cage of many unclean birds in days past, which I do confess to his glory, who hath appeared to cleanse the unclean, and purge and sanctify a sanctuary or tabernacle for himself to dwell in, and walk in according to his promise; I say, this being wrought in me, and for me, through the effectual working of his power, who hath separated me as a vessel to bear his name; I now dare not let the testimony of his holy power be trodden under foot of the unclean beasts of the forest, who would obscure it as in days past, that so night and darkness might continue still, and they might still prey upon the simple, and not be seen. Nay, I had rather that this body were trodden under foot, and I as a man ever to be despised by all, as I have been by thee; than that this precious testimony should in any measure fail: for I know the God of heaven hath decreed to set it over all your heads, both priests and people, episcopal or presbyterian, &c. And he is able to do it, and to him I leave thee, who must judge both thee and me, who knows I have nought in my heart towards thee, but love to thy poor immortal soul, and remain thy friend,

S. C.

AN

EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP,

TO

FRIENDS,

DEAR plants and babes of an immortal generation, who are sprung from him who is before Abraham was, and partakes of the strength of his word, by which all things were made; that in the power of that ability and might, ye be made able to reign over all things that are made, and might not be subject unto any thing, which itself is subject; unto change, alteration or end. Oh ye sons of strength, consider unto what you are born, that the nobility of your generation may be manifest in the valour of your minds, that the noble acts of the ancients may arise in you, and the wisdom of the elders may appear, who were mighty through God, in confounding his enemies wisdom, and in the word of his patience, overcame their strength, and through faith in the covenant, put to flight the aliens, and through the strength of his power, ran through the troops of the uncircumcised: in their day they were faithful in suffering, and God, even their God, was faithful to give them dominion.

Now brethren, and dearly beloved in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to the end that all may be kept in him that hath the promise and blessing of the Father, feel the word that did beget the first breathing to Godward, for that was not worldly, but before it was, in the beginning; neither doth the world satisfy what the word hath begotten: and whosoever receives satisfaction in the things of this world, are not the noble seed of inheritance, unto which appertaineth the kingdom, which is not of the world. Again, my beloved, that which is begotten by the word, partakes of his nature, which is meek and lowly: and this seed and birth grows not but in meek-

ness, neither seeketh to exalt itself, but humbleth itself to serve for his friends, and suffer for his enemies. And therefore whosoever willeth to exalt himself over friends or enemies, the same is degenerate from the root of the life that is in the word, and must return to the word in meekness, and wait to know the lowliness thereof ingrafted in his soul, lest the heights do separate him from the love of God, that is in the lowly seed. So let none of the olive-plants leave their fatness, nor the fig-trees leave their fruitfulness, in the places where God hath set you, to seek a dominion to yourselves; for this is your glory and your crown, to be what you are in the word, which abides for ever; and let none put trust under the shadow of a bramble, which will be most subject to reign; neither delight yourselves in his fruit, for the end will be bitterness. But oh, thou tender seed, and beloved of thy mother, (which hast been brought forth with bitter pangs, ever since her return from the wilderness,) behold, thy king is the Lord of Hosts, the Mighty One of the ancients, and the Counsellor of the holy priests and prophets of old, is the oracle of thy wisdom and understanding. Therefore let thy eye be always to him, and let the steps of thy feet daily be directed unto his holy place; let thy ears be open to his words, and thy heart shall be taught in wisdom; let the increase of his power be thy strength, so shalt thou never be confounded. O ye sons of the morning, and daughters of the brightness of his arising, who live not but as he reigns, and die not while he lives in you; oh how my heart is filled with his love and breathings of his life to you-ward; wherewith shall I express, and how shall I signify unto you, the strength of that love, which he hath by his divine power raised up in me toward you; oh, I am straitened, in that words are too strait and narrow, to utter the joy that my spirit hath amongst you night and day, when I behold your order, your feeding, and your clothing, yea, and your armour, which is light. Who is like unto thee, O thou beloved Jacob, and Israel, God's chosen, terrible as an army with banners, strong as a fenced city, whose dwelling is the

munition of rocks : the archers have shot against thee, but their bows were broken ; the mighty men, the princes, the captains, and the nobles have risen up against thee, and they have fallen by the edge of the sword, even the word, which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lamb, thy light, oh Zion. The wise men have added their wisdom, and the strong man hath added his strength, the scribe and the learned have brought forth their devices, but God, even thy God, in the midst of thee hath done wonderfully.

And now brethren, herein am I enlarged, knowing you can read the lines of my dear and entire love, beyond what I can write, because the finger of God hath been felt to write me in your hearts ; an epistle, not read, but in the light, where the name is recorded, which is one. And this is the salutation of my very life unto every one of you that knows me in that one ; that ye live in purity and peace ; then shall love abound amongst you, and my joy shall be full concerning you. Dear babes, and everlastingly beloved children, whom I feel near me, (though far off outwardly,) with the arm of sensible love I embrace you, and with the undefiled lips of innocency I salute you, and in the arm of his strength that hath loved you, I leave you, yea, and lie down with you, I having no other strength than that which is your strength, nor food, nor riches, nor wisdom, nor glory, but what are yours also, being anointed with the same oil of gladness, and joined together in that body which is, and shall forever be glorified at the right hand of the eternal Majesty, whose is the kingdom, and the glory, and the worship for ever. And this further brethren, is in my heart to signify unto you, that your joy may be full, that since my coming southward, I have seen the prosperity of Truth, and the people that God hath made willing, in this the day of his power, are many : glory be to the Lord God of Zion, who turneth her captivity, and restoreth again her inhabitants from far ; and Truth hath a good savour in these parts ; and Friends keep fresh and living, and many in a readiness to go out in the Lamb's warfare, to overcome violence with patience, and the

force of the enemy with faith, and to wait for their saving through suffering, and feel the rock that upholds, and the anchor that stays their souls, which hath never failed us, nor ever will, but will last until adversity cease, and tribulation come to an end, and sorrow be no more ; yea, until the kingdom of our Lord be over all the kingdoms of the earth, and his name over every name, in which is your strength, and the strength of your dear friend and brother, in the kingdom, life and patience of the Lamb and holy seed.

STEPHEN CRISP.

Let copies of this be carefully written and sent forth among Friends in the East and North Ridings of Yorkshire, to be read in the sensible feeling life of the holy and beloved seed of blessing, when Friends in it, are met together.

JOHN FURLY'S TRANSLATIONS
OF
TWO OF STEPHEN CRISP'S EPISTLES,
IN
DUTCH,
TO
FRIENDS AT AMSTERDAM.

Amsterdam, the 28th of the 4th Month, 1667.

DEAR FRIENDS,

FOR this end hath the Lord God of heaven and earth made known his everlasting Truth to you, that you should walk therein, in singleness and uprightness of heart, and not to live any longer to yourselves, nor to this world, but to the Lord that hath called you. Therefore dear Friends, wait with all diligence upon the Lord, in the light of his Son Jesus Christ, with which every one is enlightened, but in you, through the gospel is made manifest, by which you are called out of the world, to seek and wait for an inheritance and kingdom that fadeth not away. And as your minds in this light of Jesus are stayed, you will feel the heavenly power of God, which will give you a discerning of that which is of the world in you, and also of those that yet are in the world: and as you are obedient and subject to this power, you cannot join with the world, nor with their worships nor manners; but such live in that clean and unspotted life that shall judge the world. Also you that have believed in the name of the Lord, wait to feel the working of the power of it in yourselves, and to be baptised into his death, that being dead to the world and the flesh, you may live to God in the spirit, and your minds may be

set upon things that are above; for the world and all things therein must pass away as a scroll, but the word of God, by which you have been convinced, is everlasting, and by its power shall all things be subdued, and the throne of wickedness brought under, and righteousness shall be established in the earth; and all that come to know this effected in themselves, shall see this day and be glad. Therefore, Friends, be not discouraged at the clouds and darkness that yet remain over the nations; but keep the faith, and walk in the law of God, so shall light be in your dwellings, and your borders shall be enlarged, for the darkness of this world shall never extinguish that light, that is broken forth in this day, in which you have believed. Therefore, my dear Friends, to whom my soul is at this time enlarged, in the love of God beyond words; be strong in the Lord, and walk before him in a single and upright mind, for that is well-pleasing to the Lord, and keep all things under your feet, that would dishonour the holy name of God. Let your conversation in the sight of men be inoffensive, answering the witness of God in the consciences of all men, that the mouth of gainsayers may be stopped, and may be made to acknowledge to the power, truth and righteousness that is found in and among you.

So God Almighty keep and preserve you by his almighty power, to whose fatherly care and protection I leave you, dear hearts, to be preserved by him out of all the snares of the enemy of your souls, which will daily be discovered by the light to all such as diligently wait in it.

In the fellowship of which pure everlasting light of Christ Jesus, I am your friend, and a lover of your souls, and a servant of the everlasting gospel of God,

S. C.

Friends, keep your meetings in the name of the Lord with diligence, and let this be read among you in your assemblies.

FRIENDS,

Our fellowship stands in the gospel of peace, which is the power of God which is everlasting, and which is not of this world; if you keep low in this power of God which is not of this world, then have you fellowship, and the gospel of peace is felt, and the things of this world cannot break your fellowship, but you will mount over the world, and over that which would disquiet and disturb you in yourselves: so will the power bring you to rest, and to the true sabbath, and to the true joy, and to the true dominion of life: and you shall know an entrance to be administered into the kingdom of God, over the devil, and his power, and the least among you shall rule over him; but neither the least nor the greatest to rule over one another, but the power of life over you all; this is the requirings of God: and where all that is contrary to this power, is brought under, there is peace, rest and stillness enjoyed to the soul. Therefore my dearly beloved Friends, feel after the power that preserves your fellowship, and let the law of God go over the fallen reason, in which the world can see you: but in the seed you are hid, and your life is hid, and your glory is hid, and kept from spots, and your crown is sure in immortality. Therefore, dear hearts, love the power, and depend upon it, that you may feel perfect deliverance by it, from all that which will bring weights and burdens; and so walk in the power and dominion of Truth in the life of righteousness over the prince of this world, the serpent and his earthly wisdom which you are to know an end of; and when you come to know an end to that, you come to receive the wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable and without end; through which you will be led to a right spirit, and to walk in the path of the just, which is holiness; which brings us to see God.

The Almighty God keep and preserve you all to the end, Amen.

S. C.

London, 6th of the 12th Month, 1667.

Let this be read in your assemblies, when you are met in the name and fear of the Lord.

AN
EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP
TO FRIENDS,

AGAINST

Such as cry out against the Form of Godliness, as against Meeting
at Set Times, on First Days, &c.

OH, MY DEAR FRIENDS,

MY soul with love unfeigned salutes you, even in that very love which the Father hath bestowed on me, of which love and goodness he hath also made you sharers and partakers through Jesus Christ our light and counsellor, whose paths have become paths of peace, and his right hand has been a support and refuge unto you, in the days of your weakness and infancy; so that when the enemy within, or enemies without, sought to destroy your hope which you had in God, lo, you felt his power near to sustain you: so you became valiant for the name of your God, and his eternal love that sprung up in your hearts, constrained you to suffer much, rather than his name should in the least suffer: and by the operation of his power, ye became so united and joined together, that your hearts stood open one for another; and if any thing happened through weakness and childishness, ye could feel in that day how God for Christ's sake had forgiven you, and could in the same forgive one another: and this was that, dear children, that gave you an understanding, and a discerning of the false power, and airy spirit, in how great a glory soever it appeared: as you dwelt in that blessed power which kept you low and broken in yourselves, ye could see both yourselves and others. And in those days were the hearts of the righteous made glad among you, and ye were enriched with heavenly benefits, and your assemblies were a delight

unto you, because therein your souls were satisfied with the appearance of his likeness. And, oh, my Friends, that this glory might ever rest upon you, and that you might say, the government and the peace of our Lord Jesus is still increasing amongst us, and that as the Lord hath called and chosen you, to be his witnesses of his arising, you might none of you fall short of this testimony; to wit, to know him raised up in you all, who bruiseth down satan the scatterer and defiler, and destroys his whole work, though never so crafty. Oh, that seed which never fell, which cannot be beguiled; oh, wait to feel it in yourselves, for this is meek and lowly, long-suffering, and full of patience: this is that which puts to silence the birth of the flesh, yea, though it would plead to advance the spirit; for wisdom is justified of her own children. Oh, my Friends, my heart is full towards you of the love of my Father, yet am I pained and in heaviness concerning you, lest that old enemy of Israel's peace, should beguile any of you and lead you from the simplicity of the gospel, to follow seducing spirits. And, therefore, my dearly beloved in the Lord Jesus, I charge you all to wait in that same eternal light of Jesus, which at the beginning was a sure guide unto you, and led you into the form of sound and uncondemnable speech, and into an inoffensive life towards all people, and made you watch how to ease the burdens of the oppressed, and so through believing ye were preserved. Therefore by doubting, let not any be shaken nor removed, though the enemy in these days hath prepared the seeds, men of doubts and questionings, as well as ye have known them that have sown the word of faith and soundness, yet know them asunder, whenever they appear; for the ministers of righteousness have from the beginning sown but one manner of doctrine, and in that you have received us, and we have sought to establish you, both in the power and form of Truth: now, whosoever strikes at either, is a seducer, and if any lets in his doctrine, it will cause divisions among you; and when you are divided, then the carnality will arise, to feed and maintain the division; and so your love to God will wax colder,

and iniquity will unavoidably abound, which separates from God, and scatters from the true church, and brings the soul into desolation: and that which draws forth the mind about days, and places, and outward things, leads into animosities and heats; whereupon false fire comes sometimes to be offered up. Oh, my Friends, my heart is broken in remembrance of you, and what the Lord hath done for you, and how he made you a dread to the heathen, while ye retained the love and simplicity that ye learned in Christ. Oh! how meek, how tender, how subject were your souls unto the Truth, and one to another in it? Oh! let it neither be lost nor forgotten, but fulfil my joy in the Lord on your behalf, and with one consent judge out that which is wicked and abominable, and let none spare that which appertaineth to the uncircumcised: but let it be done in fear and trembling, that the fleshly part in all may feel the stroke. But, dear lambs, let your concord never be broken, nor your agreement, (in things appertaining unto godliness,) any ways be removed from you; for if it be, then is your beauty marred, and your crown defaced: but meet together on the First days, and on other days, as formerly you have been led, and the former blessing and presence of God will be felt among you; which some not feeling, have gone into questionings and reasonings, to their own harm. Dear Friends, the Lord knows the integrity of my soul, and true love to you; and that for his glorious Truth's sake, and for your sakes I write these things to you. Oh, receive my advice; hearken and hear, and let all self-willedness be borne down by the meek Lamb's power, for it is that which gives life, and restores, and heals and makes up breaches. Therefore make haste to an hearty atonement in the seed Christ, the head of every true and living member, and let none have cause to glory in your flesh, or in your weakness, but make glad your hearts who seeks no glory, but the glory of God: his witness is in your hearts, bearing us record that we have laboured among you, to bring you into the unity of the faith, and into the knowledge and practice of such things as tend to your edifying. Therefore lend not your ears, (I

beseech you,) unto that, in any, or in yourselves, that would, (under pretence of formality in times or places,) draw you aside, from the good and blessed testimony of assembling yourselves together to wait upon your God. And what there is in any of you that would not condescend unto each other as brethren, is not of the nature of the true birth, but must by it be subdued: and as that ariseth and prevails in and among you, so will you again feel the Lord ministering to his own in you, and your eyes will be open to see the wiles of our subtle adversary more clearly; who though he may appear masked, with a show of more holiness, with a promise of a further glory, higher dispensations, new discoveries, yea, and with a pretence of leading out of formality into the power, and many such like baits and snares; yet my dearly beloved, beware of such pretences, for he comes but to bring you into a disesteem of what you have received, and to draw forth the expectation after something else; that so you might be robbed and spoiled of your portion: and then when you come to a want in yourselves, having lost the former, and missing the latter, you will be tempted to end in the earth; and the latter end of such is worst of all.

So, my dear Friends, in the largeness of my love, have I written this large epistle to you, in which if you receive my advice to your benefit, I have my end. And though heaviness hath been upon me, yet my rejoicing in you will return unto me again, and my spirit shall praise the Lord with yours. The Lord God of power preserve you, and keep you steadfast to the end, in the doctrine of his Son, and in the obedience of his Truth, unto the fulfilling of your testimony, and to the obtaining the crown immortal, which never fades away; in the earnest of which, and in the blessed fellowship of his power, in which my soul desires you may be kept, I bid you farewell; who am your friend and companion in the Truth, and acquainted with the burdens of them that cause trouble, whom God will repay.

STEPHEN CRISP.

AN

ALARM

SOUNDED IN

THE BORDERS OF SPIRITUAL EGYPT,

WHICH

Shall be heard in Babylon, and astonish the Inhabitants of the De-
filed and Polluted Habitations of the Earth.

AND

The Power of the Prince of Darkness called into Question, and he
himself examined by the Truth, how he came to Reign over Man-
kind, and how long his Time shall be, till he come to be cast out
of his Dominion, and the Creatures be delivered from under his
Tyranny, to serve God in Spirit and in Truth, as Christ the Prince
of Peace has ordered them.

Also the Number of him whom the World has wondered after, found
out and demonstrated to be near at an end; and withal, that it is
no ways unlawful nor in vain, both to hope and expect the utter
Desolation and Destruction of Sin in this Life, and the setting up
of perfect Righteousness in the Souls of Men, where Sin has too
long Reigned.

Written in a Testimony to the Truth, and against the false Position
of the Devil and his Servants, by a Servant of God,
STEPHEN CRISP.

Mat. xv. 12, 13, 14. *Then came his Disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou
that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this Saying,—But he said, Let
them alone, they be blind Leaders of the Blind, &c.*
1 John, iii. 8. *He that commits Sin is of the Devil, &c.*

TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader,

THIS small treatise does not appear with the approbation of the learned doctors of this our age; neither do I believe it will be received in the academies, or universities, or among the rabbies, whether they be Papists or Protestants; and considering the subject, it is not like that it should get such patrons. And therefore, must I singly recommend it to the witness of God, in thy own conscience, whoever thou art; by which witness thou knowest, that as long as the devil reigns in thee, it is not as it ought to be: and if thou be at all desirous that it should or might be as it ought, it will be no ways offensive unto thee to hear of the overthrow of him, that has brought out of order; and withal, of the appearance of him, who is the Restorer of Israel, and the right Heir of the Gentiles.

And this one thing I do desire of thee, of what profession, religion, or judgment thou mayest be, to wit, That thou layest by thy own interest in the controversy, (for a little time,) and read without prejudice or partiality, and be not offended, that another is not of thy judgment; but consider, that thou in thy own particular, art in one and the same transgression, in the matter aforesaid; seeing the greatest part of mankind is not of thy judgment; and they have as much power to judge thee, that thou art wrong, as thou hast to judge me that I am wrong. Therefore read in coolness, and consider what thou readest, as knowing that it is God that must give an understanding. And whereas the subject or matter of the treatise does comprehend much, and many things are but hinted at, therefore look up to the Lord, who can enlarge thy understanding in it, as it pleaseth him.

And as concerning the priests, who are so busy to make complaints against sectarians, heretics, and heretical books, desiring the magistrates they would abuse their power, to defend them and their doctrine by perse-

cation; they would do better to employ their time in the answering of these positions. And whereas they are called spiritual, let them fight with spiritual weapons, (if they have them,) and bring forth something in defence of their old master, and his kingdom and power, now in a time of need, when it is near come to an end.

And whereas the words government, dominion, reign and kingdom, are often used, by which some of perverse minds may conclude, that I intend thereby the overthrow, or changing, or subverting of outward government; to prevent such a momus, I do declare in the sight of God, and before all men, that I have no such thought or intention; perfectly declaring my judgment, viz. that a Christian ought to live peaceably and quietly under all sorts of governments, which the Lord permits to be, or is pleased to set up. And I do believe, that the ruling or government of an emperor, king, prince or state in itself, is not repugnant to, but consistent with the government of Christ, whose kingdom is spiritual, and the more he reigns in the hearts of people, the easier will it be for the rulers of this world to fulfil their office; and if the devil were wholly dethroned, yet notwithstanding, they might still rule, decreeing justice, according to the words of him, who said, By me kings reign and princes decree justice; by me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth, Prov. viii. 15, 16. And then they would be under him, who is their King and Lord; and the people would live a pleasant, godly and peaceable life, under their respective kings and lords.

And seeing these things are promised, and that he is faithful that hath promised them, why should we not then hope for, and expect the fulfilling thereof? And so, courteous reader, having given thee this short caution and instruction, I leave thee to read the following discourse, and remain a friend to thee and all men.

S. C.

AN

A L A R M

SOUNDED IN

THE BORDERS OF SPIRITUAL EGYPT, &c.

MANY are the devices of satan, and great is the subtlety which he furnisheth his children and servants withal, by which he seeks to uphold his kingdom, pleading now a right to that which he got by subtlety; and has taught his whole family, that it is impossible for any to be freed from under his service, even as if all men that are created of God, were created to the service of the devil; and although he can make no man, yet that he is able, after they are made, to keep them in his service; yea, although their maker does call for them to serve him: and so by this supposed necessity, (which is a doctrine well-pleasing to the flesh,) he keeps nations, kindreds, tongues and people, in bondage to his will: and not only so, but he has so bewitched and besotted his whole synagogue, and every sort in it, that they cannot endure to hear that they should be made free; and all that come to declare liberty to these captives, and an opening of the door of this prison-house, (the darkness,) unto those that are shut up within it, they cry out against such, away with them from the earth, let them be crucified, stoned, hanged, burned, imprisoned and banished, or at least, derided, and mocked at, and all manner of evil be spoken of them: and what have they done? They have preached against sin, that it must come to an end, and have preached that that which is perfect, is to be found in this life, by which men might come to the acceptable year of the Lord, unto whom there is nothing acceptable which is imperfect.

Certainly, there is no manner of slaves so well contented with their bondage, as the devil's are; and therefore it is worth the considering, what right he has to

reign over mankind, and what work it is, he gives his servants to do, that is so well-pleasing unto them, that they cannot endure to hear of being set at liberty, as long as they have a day to live. As for my part, I have considered what right the devil can claim to the government which he has among the children of men, reigning over kings and princes, priests and people, from one sect to another, setting them all to work in blind zeal one against another; yet all agreeing in this one question, (to wit,) is there any man or woman upon the earth, that is free from under the reign of the devil, that he can live without sin? or is it possible for any to be so? The general answer is, no; we are all, and must all be his servants, all the days of our lives. But some might say, seeing you are all fellow servants, and that both you and your work do belong to one master; why then are you disagreeing with one another about the work? But oh! my soul longeth that some might be awakened, once to consider and to bethink themselves, how they came to this state and condition, and by what right and authority their master keeps them in this bondage, and whether it is not both lawful and possible to come from under it?

And in the first place it is to be considered, that this spirit, which is called the devil and satan, had no dominion over man in the beginning; for God gave man power over all beasts, fishes, fowls, and over every creeping thing, that he should rule over them; and in that time the devil, that old creeping serpent, was kept under, and could not speak nor command as with authority; and he being but a subject himself, he sought to have dominion; having lost the glory of the everlasting kingdom; and so he came to the woman, who was made, and brought forth in a time of sleep, and persuaded her, (mark, not commanded,) and his persuasion was, that she should break the command of God, under pretence that she should be profited thereby. So here was but a sneaking, underly spirit, coming to the woman in a deceitful, feigned manner, with a lie in his mouth, to see if he could deceive her, and lead her to be disobedient to her God and Maker. Who could then have thought, that this spirit

that was subject to all sorts of misery, should have reigned and ruled over so many millions of thousands of men both high and low, young and old? Well, the woman hearkened to a lie, and broke the command of God, and went to try whether this serpent had found out a way to make her better or not; and not only so, but went to the man, and gave him also, and he did eat. Mark, this devil, the old serpent, he did not go to the man, that was a work too high for him; but there comes his companion, (who was given of God,) who was of his flesh and bones, to tempt him; he did not hearken to the devil, but to his deceived wife, and he did eat, and their eyes were opened, and they were ashamed, and hid themselves. Here were the two first subjects which the devil had in his kingdom, he having before this time no dominion among the creatures which God had made.

Now it is to be observed, that there are but four ways to come into dominion, to wit, by descent, by election, by conquest, and by treason.

Now which of these it is, by which the devil got his entrance, is easy to be concluded; all that are wise will say, that it was by treason and falsehood, and that man thereby came to be deprived of that dominion and rule which he had before, and his boldness was taken from him, and he was ashamed. So now see for whom you are pleading, all you that are so zealously pleading for the devil's kingdom, (viz.) for an old traitor, that came into his government by a lie, and spoiled our predecessors of their dominion, glory and power at once by sin, for which you are now pleading. Oh! blush and be ashamed every one of you, and let your mouths be stopped for ever.

But now, seeing that it fell out so, what was the determination of the Lord in this matter? Hearken to his sentence; and to the serpent he said, because thou hast done so, thou shalt creep upon thy belly, and art cursed above all cattle; and above all the beasts of the field. See, he must creep upon his belly, and not stand upon his tip-toes, lifting up his head above the nations; he must eat dust, and the other beasts must eat the grass of

the field; but he, dust all the days of his life, and not the fat of the land, and to have the tenth part of the fruits of the earth bestowed on his meanest servants, having also the other nine parts of it bestowed and ordered to his will; and so shall it be with thee as long as thou livest; that is not to say, that he shall live for ever, and to have dust to eat, and a belly to creep upon: but at last God has determined that his head should be bruised, there is his end. Oh! all ye pleaders for sin, behold your prince, and hear his sentence, and be ashamed, and stop your mouths for ever.

And now, when he had gotten a little dominion, let us examine a little, how this traitor used his rule in the beginning. His first lesson was, to teach his new subjects to hide themselves from the presence of God: that which before was their chiefest joy and crown, was now their greatest fear and dread; and so they run under the trees, hiding themselves, as their posterity now do at this day; but the Lord found them out, and spoke to them, and caused them to hear that dreadful sentence; and not only so, but drove them out from where life was to be found, into the earth, where there was nothing to be gotten without pain and labour. And whereas they were before in dominion, and had nothing to do, but to dress the garden in which the life was, they must now till the ground, which brought forth unto them briars and thorns; and in that state man's misery was great, and his sorrow unspeakable, and his darkness not to be expressed; and he had lost his discerning of things that differ; and having an expectation of a Seed which should destroy the serpent, and bruise his head, he was apt to think that birth to be that seed, (as his children in the fall do at this day:) so that when Cain was born, his mother said, she had gotten a man from the Lord; but poor woman, she knew not the seed, and how that that seed which is born of the flesh is a persecutor, and that the enmity is great in the first birth; and so that although he grew up to be an offerer, yet he did not grow up in dominion over the serpent, nor over the quality of the destroyer in himself; and that sort of offering was more

acceptable to the devil than to God. And now mark, that man was a sinner, and yet religious, his sin and religion were consistent, and could have place together at one and the same time in one man, as it is now with the professors of this age; who say, they are sinners, and that their best works are polluted and defiled with sin, and that they must remain so whilst they live; and yet they will seek acceptance with God in these polluted offerings, notwithstanding they do profess him to be pure to whom they offer. Thus was this first sacrificer blind and darkened, and so are many thousands after him, and the dominion of the devil was over him.

First, Deceiving him, by leading him to expect an acceptance, because he offered, though with an evil heart.

Secondly, To lead him into the evil which had kept him from acceptance.

Thirdly, By making him so wroth and angry, (because he was not accepted,) against his brother that did well, and was partaker of the one sure faith of the elect seed of God: and the serpent having thus darkened his mind, then he durst come before him with a lie, (though he was a man, of whom Eve thought, that she had gotten him from the Lord,) persuading him, that if faithful Abel was out of the way, that then it would be better with him; so he hearkened to the counsel of this evil spirit, and shed innocent blood about religion. Here persecution got its entrance into the world, by one that was an offerer, and an evil doer together; a fit instrument for such a work. But behold, what became of this man? The blood which he had shed, and the earth which had drank it up, cried for vengeance against this bloody offerer, and he feared exceedingly, and said, He could not bear his punishment; and said, Every one that finds me, will slay me; and to prevent that, he went and built a city in the land of Nod; here was the beginning of fortifications, which was to defend the transgressor; for the righteous have a tower, namely, the name of God, and there they are safe, without such gates or walls.

Now let every one consider how little right this spirit

had in all these things; but he entered by a lie, and reigned by a lie, and darkness and deceit was his defence for his government; and how little reason there is to plead for such a spirit, let the wise in heart judge.

It would go beyond my present aim and purpose, to trace this spirit, who is called the devil and satan, the dragon, and old serpent, through all ages, since the beginning, to see with how little truth, right or equity, he came to reign among men. The understanding reader of the scriptures of Truth can see it clear enough; and it is a great wonder, (and one of the greatest,) that is in that part of the world called Christendom, that there are so many men, (being men of knowledge in other matters, and such as set up the scriptures, so much as they seem to do, calling it the word of God, the rule of Christians, the light of the world, the guide of life, &c.) That they should go with such a book in their hands, pleading for the devil's kingdom, and for a necessity that it must continue as long as there is a man upon earth: whereas the scripture in substance is nothing else but as a declaration against him and his government, and sheweth how he ought to be forsaken, opposed, resisted, and cast out; and withal, how that primitive, pure and holy, and righteous law of that Spirit, which is called God, and is holy, pure, and blessed for ever, how that ought to be embraced, received and exalted in the whole creation. I say, this is a very great wonder, of which, and of the consequences thereof, the Christians so called, have cause to be ashamed; yea, are a reproach to the whole world; and it is high time that some do arise for God; and the call is gone forth, Who is on the Lord's side? *Exod. xxxii. 26.* The devil has an innumerable host to plead for sin, some with arguments, and some with cruel weapons; but who is on the Lord's side that can say, The Lord reigns in righteousness, and in truth he judges the earth? Oh! all ye carnal professors of God and Christ in words, but in works deny him, and say, that sin must stand, and remain as long as you live. Be it known unto you, in the name of the God of heaven, that where sin remains, there the devil is prince and ruler.

And if that must remain as long as you live, the devil desires it no longer; for he that will be his servant in this life, must be his companion in the world to come. But hear ye the word of the Lord, oh great host, and mighty army of the devil, beast, serpent, and the old deceiver, who plead, that his government shall stand, as long as there is a man to live upon the earth. The controversy of the Lord God Almighty is proclaimed, and begun against you all, and your prince; yea, the arm of the everlasting God is stretched out against you, and henceforth ye shall not be prosperous; but the dominion of your prince shall be lessened, and both his and your power shall be weakened, and your weapons, both of deceit and cruelty shall be broken, and come to nought. The inheritance of the wicked shall be laid waste, and the design which hath been carried on so long, shall be frustrated; deceit and falsehood shall fall before the Truth, and darkness shall flee before the Light; and your fortified city shall fail you, and the land of Nod will not be a hiding place for you: for the arm of the mighty God of Jacob shall scatter you as a reproach, and make you ashamed of your work and of your prince.

Now, to touch a little at your arguments, which the servants of this spirit make use of, for to hold up his kingdom, of which they say, it is impossible that it should be brought down; even as if God had given up all mankind, (which is the best of his creation,) unto the devil; and that he should keep none of them for himself to serve him, till they have fulfilled the devil's work to the full, and can serve him no longer: certainly the heathens, Moors, and Indians, have a better doctrine than these in the ground: though darkness is over their understandings, as concerning God and heaven, and such things, yet many of them do not judge that there is such a necessity to do evil, as long as they live; but abstain from that which they know to be evil, and they that do so, are esteemed to have their pleasure and delight in the Elysian fields, after they are dead. Lucillius said, Know ye not what grievous punishments and torments the wicked and evil men are to suffer after this life; or in

what great happiness the good men shall live? The heathen Epicharmus said, If thou art godly in thy mind, thou shalt, (being dead,) not suffer evil: and many such sayings are among them. But these fallen Christians, who plead a necessity to serve this spirit, whom they call the devil, whose place they will confess is in hell, and in the everlasting fire; yet they notwithstanding, without doing good, expect to enjoy their Elysium, to wit, a heaven where God and the holy angels dwell for ever.

Now let us examine a little what reason there is for this great mistake.

First, they say, that sin is rooted and planted in the nature of man; yea, so that a man must cease to be a man, before he can come to cease from being a sinner.

Answ. That man in his natural state is so united with sin, as that he thereby is separated from God, I do not deny; and also that there is a natural inclination in man to commit sin, is also true; to wit, as long as they remain in their natural state and condition. And if these champions for the devil's kingdom, had blotted out, (out of that which they call their rule,) all those precious sayings, that make mention of a state of grace, of being under grace, of being changed or translated, of being redeemed and made free, of being washed, cleansed, and sanctified perfectly in soul, body and spirit; and many more such places; then they had had a plea for their prince. But seeing there is such a large testimony of the mercy and goodness of God, and of his power and all-sufficiency to redeem and save: therefore it is worthy to be pleaded before we allow the devil such an unlimited power in and among you, yea, over all the sons and daughters of men. And therefore, as concerning the first part of this objection, to wit, that sin is rooted in the nature of man, how came it to be rooted there? whose work was it to make it so? was it the work of God? or hath he ordered it, that it should be so? if so, why is any man or woman punished or condemned for its being so, seeing it could not be otherwise? But none else but such as are wholly blind from a true sense of God, will dare to say so: for

then the manifold calling of sinners unto repentance, to wash them, to cleanse them, to put away the evil from them, to cease to do evil, &c. must all be against his will and ordering, and so consequently but a mockery; but God forbid that any man should say or think so. Well, if it was not by the ordering or appointment of God, but that God has made man righteous in his nature, will and affections; yea, in the image of God he created him; then it must needs be another that has wrought this great work, to plant sin in his nature; and when it is examined, it will appear that it is the work of a cursed outcast, an unclean, lying, treacherous spirit, who was rejected of God, and had no place in the whole creation, but by framing a lie, he brought a poor woman from her integrity and obedience; and so from that, came a great alteration to be in her, and a ground or foundation was laid for the devil to build upon; and from that time he has always had a rule in the hearts of the children of disobedience: but now that this rule and government should not only be universal, but also irresistible and unalterable; yea, though God Almighty stretch forth his power, to redeem any out of this kingdom, to bring them into the kingdom of his dear Son; yet they say, it is impossible for him, till he dies. It is as much as to say, if God will have any man to serve him perfectly, he must first kill him, and then he shall have him to his service in another world: oh horrible ignorance of the power of God, and of the end for which Christ came into the world! namely, to destroy the devil and his works. Now, when his work is destroyed, which has a tendency to corrupt man's nature, then the nature of men and women come to be again holy, clean and pure, and man comes to be restored to his first image, and the glory of the first body is again known, of which all the bond-slaves of the devil are ignorant; and this power to restore the nature of man again is the Lord's alone: it was the devil that corrupted it, and it is God that sanctifies it again, and delivers it by the spirit of judgment and of burning, which the hypocrites cannot bear.

Now, the manner how the nature of man came to be

corrupted, you have heard, that it was by man's joining with that spirit that was fallen and cast out from God, and had only a power in the darkness, and could not reign over any thing, but over that which he could draw from the glory of God into the darkness: and God who dwells in the light, being moved with infinite compassion, sent his eternal Son, that was with him before the world, that he should be made partaker of the same nature in which man was created, that by the virtue of the eternal power, he might restore him unto God, and might minister unto the spirits of all such, to whom this darkness and corrupted state, was a prison-house. And this Jesus received not the nature of angels, that was not his work, but he received the seed of Abraham, which was in captivity, that he might redeem it from captivity through death, suffering under the weight of that which oppressed the creature, and caused it to groan after redemption: so that although it could not deliver itself, yet it might come to be delivered through faith in him, who is mighty to save. And this Jesus, which was of the seed of Abraham after the flesh, purifieth the nature of all those that join with him; for the work of the devil, is to bring in corruption, and the work of Christ is to destroy it, and instead thereof, to bring in everlasting righteousness. Now, where sin is remaining in the nature, there the covenant with hell and death is not broken, neither are such in covenant with God, but are yet under the power of the prince of the air, whatever they may profess. And the death of Christ is yet of no value unto them, because they are yet in their sin and corrupted nature, unchanged, untranslated: so that those that hold this plea for the devil, that because he once got a place in the nature of man, and has corrupted it, that therefore sin must remain, so long as the life or nature remains; such are strangers to the work of God, and to his power, by which he worketh, and also to Christ Jesus, through whom he works: and they have more faith in the power of the devil, than in the power of Christ, believing that the devil is more able to keep the creature, and to hold fast that, which by deceit and treachery he has gotten in it; than God, (who

made the creature good in his nature,) is able to restore it to his first purity, that the creature might come to serve him in righteousness and holiness. And such as so believe, are no true Christians, nor true believers; but are standing in the corrupt nature, that has unity with the devil, and pleads his cause, who is willing that his corrupt birth should live in man, as long as he lives in the world; for he knows, that so long no acceptable sacrifice can be offered up to God; for you cannot bring forth a clean sacrifice, out of an unclean vessel; and as long as nature is defiled, the works will be unclean that are wrought in that nature.

Secondly, The second pleading is, that never any man was freed from sin, ever since sin first entered into the world; and that therefore it is presumption to expect such a thing in this life.

Ans. If this position were true, that there was never any man freed from sin, yet it would be presumption to say, that God should not be able to do that which he never did; and it is also presumption to conclude, that never any man was freed: but if this position be false, then not only the consequence is false, to wit, that none can be freed, but also the argument itself is proved to be a lie, and so is swept away, and a door is opened unto all, that have more love to righteousness than to sin, both to hope and to expect, that the same work should again be wrought in and for them, without presumption. Now, that all men are sinners by nature, is evident; and that some were changed out of that natural state, is as evident; so that the question is only, whether those that are translated out of that sinful nature, remain sinful, yea or nay? Which if it be so, what advantage have they beyond others, if they after they are translated, must remain unfreed? But I answer with the words of the apostle, 1 Pet. iv. 1. He that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin. And here he spoke of such that were yet in the body, but had suffered with, and were made partakers of the sufferings and death of Christ, by a dying to sin; through which every one must pass, before they can come to the resurrection that is in Christ, by

which, (said Peter,) they obtained the answer of a good conscience in the sight of God, which he calls the baptism that saves. Now some having been partakers of that death, baptism, and resurrection of Christ, by which they came to cease from sin, and to have an answer of a good conscience, without offence both to God and man, (which none that sin can have,) then may some lawfully expect to come to the enjoyment of the same state of freedom and clearness, as well now as formerly without presumption.

Secondly, I answer with the words of the apostle John, 1 John, iii. 9, He that is born of God sinneth not, because his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, for he is born of God. Now, whereas there have been some that were born of God, and have been his children, and they that were so, had overcome the wicked one, so that he could not touch them, but they had kept their garments white and unspotted, and that some have been freed from the law of sin and death, and that some have walked unblameable and without spot, and had put off the old man with his deeds, and had known the new birth, and could by the Holy Spirit call God Father, which things are all manifest in the scriptures of Truth, which none can deny, but those that will deny the scripture. Why then should any man question, that the same works of redemption, should not now again be brought to pass? And therefore it is lawful to expect it without presumption. This argument being confuted by the experience of the saints.

Thirdly, The faith of God's elect is but one in all ages; and that faith has purified the hearts of many in former ages, and has taught them to walk with God. As for instance, Enoch walked with God several hundreds of years, Gen. v. 21, and it would be a horrible thing to say, that he walked with God, when he walked in sin; as if God walked in a sinful way; for the prophet said, the bloody man, nor the worker of iniquity, dwells nor walks not with the Lord. But Enoch dwelled and walked with the Lord, and did not iniquity; for if he had, he should not have obtained a testimony, that he pleased the Lord; for sinners and evil doers do not please him.

By faith Noah walked with God, and was a preacher of righteousness in the old world; 2 Pet. ii. 5. Also Lot in Sodom; which they could not have been, if they had been sinners, except they had been such preachers as the preachers at this day; but they were owned of God, though they were mocked of men; and it is said of them, that they did inherit the righteousness which they preached. And of Lot it is said, that his soul as well as his doctrine was righteous. And by the same faith, Job was kept in the fear of God in the land of Uzz; Job, i. 22, for that taught him to eschew evil, by which he obtained a testimony of God, that he was perfect and upright, which no sinner is; and if he had not been free from sin, it would have been false to say of him, that he eschewed the evil, and was perfect; and though his trials were many, yet he sinned not with his lips, neither did he charge God foolishly. And in the end of all his trials, God cleared him of having sinned, witnessing that he had found him faithful, and received a sacrifice from his hand, for those zealous professors that had charged him with sin, whom God had cleared. And the same faith caused Abraham and Sarah to be partakers of the promise: and Abraham was a friend of God, of which Christ said, that none could be, but by fulfilling his will; and those that do so are no sinners. And by this faith, Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, Heb. xi. 25. So, mark, he left sin and the pleasures, and then he must be without sin, by which he obtained a testimony that he was a servant of God, which sinners are not. By faith, David's heart was made after the mind of God, and that is not sinful, but free from it, for in him is no darkness at all. By the same faith the prophets were chosen vessels of God, and were upheld in their testimony for God, till they came to obtain that testimony, that they were the men and servants of God, which they could not have been, and withal servants unto sin. And the scripture beareth record of Zachariah and Elizabeth his wife, Luke, i. 2, that they were both righteous before God, not by an imagined righteousness, but in regard to their conversation,

walking in all the commands and statutes of the Lord unblamable : but if they had been under the power of sin, and not freed from it, they had been neither unblamable nor righteous ; but must at least have transgressed some of the commands of the Lord, or else they could not be sinners. Also Nathaniel, in whom there was no guile, John, i. 48, which could not have been, if he had been under the power of sin. And much more might I write upon this subject, to show, how that many by this one faith in all ages, have been delivered from sin, and become the children and servants of God ; and therefore, those that are partakers of this faith in this age, may hope and expect, that the same work may be wrought in them ; and this is no presumption. And if these sin-pleaders should say, that there is none partaker of this faith now at this day, and therefore cannot be made free from sin, they will exclude themselves, which they will hardly do, because they would fain have a name of being believers, though they deny the works of the true faith in themselves.

Further, let us consider what these strong pleaders for sin have to fortify themselves withal ; they say, they have the scripture to plead withal for sin, which certainly was never the intention of the Holy Spirit, by which it was given forth. But, (say they,) it is written in 1 Kings, viii. 46, For there is no man that sinneth not.

Ans. This is very true, neither do I plead, that any man is free from sin all the days of his life, (except Christ,) but have confessed they are all sinners by nature, until they be changed ; and besides, there it is but spoken of a people that were under the law, of which the apostle says, that it made nothing perfect ; but, said he, the bringing in of a better hope did : but the law did not purify the comers thereunto, according to the conscience ; but when the offerers had offered there remained an evidence of sin in the conscience ; but what is that to the Christians, who are come to know a better hope, and the blood that purifieth the conscience ? For that same apostle that said, the law made no man perfect, (under which law Solomon was, as also that people con-

cerning whom it was said, there is none that lives and sinneth not,) notwithstanding the same apostle said, that it was the bringing in of a better hope that did it. And what, are these fighters for sin, and sin-pleaders become so zealous, that they will rather deny the better hope, than to cease from sin? If not, then there is a possibility to be made perfect by the blood of Christ, which the blood of bulls and goats could not do.

Another objection is brought forth, that is, that the apostle Paul said, that sin lived in him, and that the good that he would do, he did not; and the evil that he would not do, that he did.

Ans. That Paul knew the passing through such a state, is without question, and is not denied; but this does not prove at all that he never knew a better state; or that he never came to perfection, for in that place he makes mention of three states. First, how it was with him, when he lived without the law of God in his liberty to fight against the Truth, and he thought he might do many things against the name of Jesus. Secondly, he declares of his conviction, and how it was with him then, when he knew he should not do any more against the Truth; and yet, not being wholly changed, he did things which he knew he ought not, by reason of sin living and dwelling in him; and that state he did not call happy or blessed, (as these blind professors do at this day, that take up a rest in this state, and say, they can never be redeemed out of it,) for he, speaking of such a condition, cries out for deliverance, calling it a miserable condition; which plainly sheweth, that his eye was upon a further and better state, unto which he also beareth witness; saying, he was made free by the law of the spirit of life, from the law of sin and of death, in which time he was yet in the body.

Now what reason have these pleaders for sin to believe that Paul was in all these three states at once? And if not, why not in the last? seeing the other two are but foregoing states, leading to the third; especially considering the many other testimonies which he gives of his being perfect, and of those that by his ministry were brought

to perfection, saying, concerning himself, Timothy and Sylvanus, we can do nothing against the Truth. And in another place he testifies, that he has fought a good fight, kept the faith, and finished his course. Now, if it was finished, then there was no more to run; and if the fight was fought, then the enemies were no more alive, as they were, when sin lived and dwelt in him. Again, he says in another place, we preach wisdom among them that are perfect; that is, after the explication and sense of these sin-pleaders, we preach wisdom among none, except among those that are already departed out of this world, and gone to heaven. And again, as many of you as are perfect be so minded; that is to say, after their explication, let none be thus minded, before they be dead. Again at last, dear brethren be perfect, and of one mind, &c. But this, they say, cannot be in this life. And again he says to the Hebrews, you are come to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to God the Righteous Judge of all, &c. But where were these Hebrews? were they yet alive, or were they dead? if dead, how came his epistle to meet them? But a wilful blindness is come over many of these servants and ministers of darkness, and they have rebellious hearts against the light, that discovers their sin, and would lead them out of it.

But because they have more love to sin than to the light; therefore they seek to cover themselves so much: but the day is come that has discovered them, and their deceitful coverings will not longer cover them.

Another pleading is of that which is spoken by the apostle 1 John, i. 8. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.

Out of which words, every miserable and pitiful soldier of this great prince of darkness, thinks he may arm himself sufficiently to fight against that which would deliver them, and make them free; but if this scripture were seen and read with that spirit by which, and in which, it was written; then it would appear, that this John was not such a great friend to sin and the devil, (who is a father of lies,) as they would have him to be; for in the same chapter he had showed before, into what

state they must come, before they can come to have fellowship with God, viz. to walk in the light, as Christ was in the light; and those that said they had fellowship with God and Christ, (as the priests and professors do at this day,) and did not come to attain unto that state, to walk in the light, but instead thereof, walked in darkness; such, said he, were liars, and did not the Truth.

Now he said, his fellowship was with the Father, and with the Son; which could not be, if he had walked in darkness, or was a sinner, or that he had not walked in the light, as Christ was in the light, for then he would have made himself a liar, if he had been a sinner, when he said, that he had fellowship with God and Christ.

And therefore it ought to be well observed, that John speaks there of a sort of men, that were not yet brought to confess their sins; and if such came to that conceit and pride, as to say they had no sins to confess, and so exalted themselves above the witness of God that reproved them, then such deceived themselves. But if these that are so sinful, come to own that which brings them to a confession of their sins, then God is faithful to forgive such their sins, and to cleanse them from all iniquity. Now, when this is done, to wit, when the creature has confessed his sin, and God has forgiven it, and cleansed him, what must then that man say? must he then say, that he has his sin still, when he has it not? must he say, that he is filthy and defiled, when he is cleansed from all that? This would be a lie; and if he should be cleansed from all sin he must certainly be cleansed from lies; and if it was his duty to confess the work of the devil, when it was standing in him, which were his sins, may not he now being cleansed, confess God's work that has cleansed him, he being cleansed by him freely? Must he therefore be cried out for a deceiver and heretic? Who is so blind that cannot see, that it is as serviceable, as needful, and as lawful for a man that has known the power of God to cleanse him, to confess that, and to bear a testimony to that work, as it is needful and lawful, when the devil's work is manifested in him, to confess that, and to bear a testimony against that.

Yet saith John to those that were thus washed, If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar. It is as much as if he would say, That even those that are saved, must confess to the power of God, by which they have been judged for sin; and not to exalt themselves above it, as if they had never sinned, seeing that the witness of God testifieth in all, that they have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. So that now the understanding reader may see, that John hath not written here of an impossibility of being delivered from sin, but absolutely the contrary; namely, that those that cannot say that they are without sin, may come, by confessing their sins, to be cleansed and made free from it; yea, from all that which is unrighteous. Yet some will say, that the apostle in that place useth the word *we*, as if he included himself; as if he would say at that time, If I should say, that I had no sin, &c.

Answer. This is no proof at all, because the contrary is proved before, to wit, that he had fellowship with God and Christ; which no man could have, that walked not in the light, as he is in the light; and such may as well, by the same manner of speaking, prove James to be a curser, when he said, With the tongue we bless God, and with it we curse men that are made after the image of God. And many more such instances might be brought forth of the lamentations and complaints of the prophets, concerning the house of Israel, which is translated so, in that manner of speaking; which does not prove at all, that the prophets were guilty of such sin and rebellion, of which they complained, Neh. ix. 37, &c. But how zealous are these pleaders for sin, to find out words which they think do serve for the upholding of the kingdom of their master, when there is not one word that properly belongs, or was written to their purpose, except that part of it which the devil and his servants, their predecessors, have spoken or written, and that indeed may serve them? as I once heard a priest, that was exhorting the people to employ their time and ability to gather knowledge, confirming his exhortation with the

scripture, viz. Gen. v. You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

And another, a Menist preacher in North Holland, whilst he was warning the people to take heed of being deceived, he exhorted them to imitate the deaf adders, Psalm lviii. 4. And so to stop their ears against the voice of the charmers, that charm never so wisely. So the one hath his proof from the adders, and the other from the devil. Such scripture places as these, I do confess, that these pleaders for sin may find to strengthen their arguments; but that which was written by the motion of the holy spirit of God, is a perfect testimony against them all; against their work, and against their prince.

So having answered their chief objections, which they draw out of the scripture; by which they endeavour to prove, That none can be free from sin in this life, contrary to Rom. vi. 22. I make haste to the third great argument of these captives, which they lay down against their own freedom.

Thirdly, That is, that it is the will of God, to let some sins remain in the best of his people, to keep them humble thereby.

Answer. If it be the will of God, that his best servants should sin, then his will is done when they sin. And what reason have any men to be humbled and cast down, because they have done the will of God? but rather to rejoice and be glad that the will of God is done, and that their will is conformable to the will of God, that the will of both can be done together. This is a very easy way to the joy of the Lord, if this brings to that sentence, Well done good and faithful servant, &c. But wo unto those that are given up to believe this lie.

Again, let the understanding reader, (I mean those that are weary with their sins, and are willing to be freed,) consider, (for as concerning the other, they are my opposers,) how can God properly be called Almighty? And how can the work of the conversion of souls properly be called his, if he is necessitated to borrow some-

thing from the devil to keep his children humble withal? Certainly we must conclude, that if God had a better way to do it, that he would do it in the best, and not in the worst way, viz. by sin; which is so very contrary to his nature.

But let these sin-pleaders suppose, that if God should stretch forth his power so far in man, that it should destroy all the works of the devil, and cast out sin; and cause his soul to take as great delight and joy in well-doing, as ever it had in sin; and should plant humility as naturally in the soul, as the devil has planted pride in it: now the question is, whether this power that works this change, be not as able to keep the creature in this condition, as to bring him to it, without any help of the devil, or his work? But they will say, To suppose a thing that is impossible, is either against reason or presumption.

I answer, all things are possible with God, except to lie; and as concerning this, it is not only possible, but the contrary is impossible, because God hath so often promised it, to make a perfect work, and to finish his work in all them that trust in him. And for this end is Christ Jesus come, that he might destroy the devil and his works. And in the parable he saith, When he comes that is stronger, he shall bind the strong man, and spoil that is stronger, and cast him out. This seems as if Christ who is the stronger, had no need of the devil, or his goods either, to keep his people humble thereby: but the apostle said, That they were kept by the faith, through the power of God unto salvation. Except you will say, as the priests in Scotland say, Cursed is he that says, Faith is without sin; and let all the people say, amen. Then the words of the apostle must be read thus; You are kept by a faith, which is mixed with sin, in the power of God unto salvation. But if you will have it so, speak it out, as they have done: but seeing you profess, that faith is the gift of God, we may well say, it is able to cleanse the heart, and to give victory over the world, and also over the devil and sin, and then there is no need

of sin to keep us humble. For if humility was a fruit of sin, it would not be so acceptable to God as it is; for the prophet says, He giveth his grace to the humble, and dwelleth with such as are of a contrite and broken heart.

Again, if a few sins, yea, though they be but a remnant, can keep men humble, then a great deal of sin must needs make a man more humble: so then let us plentifully sin, that we may plentifully be humble. But God forbid, that such doctrine or such teachers should go unreprieved; for they have exalted the work of the devil beyond the work of God. And it is because such teachers have been countenanced that the people have been led into so much blindness, ignorance, and hardness of heart, and that people have wholly lost the hope and expectation of a day of deliverance, and have taken up a rest in a sinful and slavish state.

And now, if any come to preach the gospel, which brings deliverance and freedom to the soul, their souls being in a rest already, (though a false polluted rest,) such are looked upon as disturbers of their rest, and breakers of their peace, and such like; even as it was with the prophet Micah, when he cried out, (Mic. ii. 10.) Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted; it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction.

But blessed be the Lord God of heaven and earth forever, for he hath brought forth his day of salvation, which many have longed after, and are longing, and are in travail that they might come to know it, to whom a sinful state is no resting-place, but is unto them as a strange land, in which they cannot sing the songs of Sion, but still have Jerusalem in their remembrance, which is free-born from above, longing after the day of gathering, that the Lamb, (and not the changeable priests and teachers,) may be their light and leader. Unto such I say and testify in the name of the Lord God of heaven, Lift up your heads, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh, and deliverance shall come out of Sion, the city of our solemnity, Isa. xxxiii. 20. And a mighty voice

shall be sounded forth from the holy mountain, from the Lord of hosts, and those that hear it shall live, and the dead bones in the valleys shall be enlivened, and the joy of that day shall be greater than the joy of the harvest.

Now how, and in what manner these things will be brought to pass, is a great dispute among many, that are yet seeking in the carnal wisdom to conceive and comprehend spiritual things, and so they come to be scattered and divided in their imaginations: and therefore, in the mean time, those that are become willing to sit down in quietness, in the light of Christ Jesus, that sheweth every running-out of the mind, they come to feel the pure fear of God to be planted in their hearts; so that they dare not think their own thoughts, nor speak their own words. And here is the beginning of the true wisdom, by which wisdom it is given unto them, to understand those things which they could not find out in all the time of their travail and pains in the fallen wisdom.

And whilst they were hearkening after the different voices of men, they never could have a certainty; but now hearing him by whom God speaketh, who is manifest within them, whom their ears are inclined unto within; they come to know certainly that which they know, through the testimony of the Holy Spirit, who alone is able to reveal unto those that fear him, the mysteries of God's kingdom; and he shuts them up from the wise and prudent of this world.

And, therefore, you that desire to have an understanding of these things, come down from your high-built towers of knowledge and comprehension, and sit down in that pure light, that brings a death upon the earthly wisdom, and become as fools, that you may be wise; and that wisdom that is so received, shall lead to know the number of the beast, which the whole world, with all their academical wisdom, and all the sects, with their inventions, are strangers unto at this day, and are carrying about with them his name, and the number of it, or his mark, by which they are accepted among men, and yet do not know what it is; but when they come to be wise enough to know it, and honest enough to forsake it,

then they will see, that the friendship of this world comes to be broken, and the enmity to work against the Holy Seed; and the seed comes to arise and bruise the head of the enmity, and to nail it fast to a cross till it die, and then comes freedom, then there is war no more, then there is peace on earth, and nothing but good-will towards all men, yea, to enemies. Then anguish and sorrow flee away, and the perfect love of God casts out fear, and there is death no more; but that which is overcome by immortality. Blessed and happy are all they that come to know that state, and blessed are they that believe and wait to enjoy it; and blessed is that hope which leads thereunto.

Now, as concerning the chief matter of this treatise, to wit, concerning the reign of the devil among men, there is yet one thing worthy to be considered, of which there is made mention in the scriptures of Truth, in which it appears, that in the beginning and setting up of the reign of Christ, the everlasting gospel was preached, and that many thousands had believed and obeyed it, so that they came to be witnesses of the kingdom of Christ; and that the devil was cast out, dethroned, and put under their feet; and some were made priests and kings to God. I say, after all these things aforesaid, there came an apostacy from the faith, by which all these things afore-mentioned were brought forth; and of that apostacy Paul prophesied to the Thessalonians: and John by the Spirit saw, how that the devil should get a great dominion over men, by many changeable means and ways executing his power, as a dragon; then as a strange beast with seven heads, and ten horns; at another time, as a little beast with two horns; then with an image; and then with a whore, &c. And that the Almighty God has set and appointed a time, a certain time, to this dreadful, dark, changeable government, and gave John to know, that it should last and continue but one thousand two hundred and threescore days or years. And this is a set time, and hath its beginning, and its ending; but the kingdom of Christ, and also his priesthood, are both after the power of an endless life.

Now, seeing that this last power which the devil has gotten, is but to continue his appointed time, why should any be his friend so far, as to say, that it must continue always, and that it must never come to an end; and that people no way can get freedom from under his tyrannical power? Certainly these men that plead so strongly for his continual reign and power, have more reason and understanding than they use. As for instance, suppose that one had hired a house or farm of another for several years, and the years being come to an end, that man to whom that house or farm belongeth, has a desire to live in it himself; and the in-dweller not being willing, and they both should come to one of these sin-pleaders, to hear his judgment and determination, I believe they would soon say to the in-dweller, thou must depart, the other is the landlord, and thou hast had thy full time, and he now desiring to have his house, he must have it; and especially if the in-dweller was come into the house as a thief in a dark night, and had kept it by violence, and had brought no profit to the landlord at all. And this is properly the cause between God and this prince of darkness, for he has possessed the inheritance of God, and ruled over it, not to the advantage of the Lord, but to his disadvantage and dishonour; and yet these men will not do so much right to God as they will do to their neighbour; but on the contrary, they say, that this usurper or thief, that has stolen away the hearts of men from their Creator, must set there as long as there is a man upon the earth, and not any man redeemed. Oh! blush for shame, ye hypocrites, can you make a difference between good and evil among men, and will you not judge for God? Come, take your books into your hands, and read the number of the years, it is called 1260 days; reckon after the reckoning of the ancients, 30 days to a month, and see whether that does not make out 42 months; and see whether 42 months does not make a time, times, and half a time; and see what things are ordered to be in those different times; and see whether you can find out the beginning of those times that so you may find the end of them: for all those that had their confi-

dence in the number of the year 1666, are now confounded, ashamed, and their hope is frustrated. And now it is high time to wait upon the Lord, to get an understanding and knowledge which makes not ashamed.

Now, the first thing to be considered, to the opening of this thing is that the first appearance of this man-child, that was born in heaven by a woman, that was clothed with the sun, and had her feet upon the moon, and was crowned with the stars: the first, I say, that appeared against this child, was a great red dragon: mark, this was no substitute under the devil, but was the devil himself; though he appeared in heaven, as you may see Rev. xii. 13, and he it is that has given power to all those that have persecuted this woman, or her seed; but as long as he was in heaven, he was no perfect persecutor; there he had no power, but only to be an accuser of the brethren, and therein he busied himself night and day. But by this it is evident, that there was a power over him, to which he accused them, and so long they could not sing; but when he was cast out with his angels, then they sung, now is salvation come, and power, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren that accused them day and night before our God, is cast down, &c.

But then wo unto them that dwell on earth, where the devil got his power, that is, in the earthly ground; there he rules with great wrath, anger and fury, and indignation, persecuting the woman, and the least appearance of her seed; and because he cannot do harm enough of himself, he goes and makes him a substitute, to wit, a beast with seven heads, and ten horns. Mark, just the number of his own heads and horns, only he came out of the pit, and this out of the sea or waters, of which waters you may read in Rev. xv. 17, that they are peoples, tongues, languages, and nations; and out of them came this strange beast, which the devil counted worthy to have his perfect power, because he knew that he would do his work for him to purpose; and he received his power for the space of forty-two months; and his first work was to persecute the saints. Secondly, to set up

the worship of the devil. Thirdly, to bring the dread of this seven-headed beast over the whole earth. Fourthly, to blaspheme the name of God and his tabernacle, and them that dwell therein. And fifthly, to make people believe, that there is no overcoming of his power. And these works are spread, and carried on by three unclean spirits, which came forth out of the mouth of the dragon, beast, and false prophet, over all kindreds, nations, tongues, and people, and there were none able to resist them, except those whose names were written in the book of the life of the Lamb. And as concerning them, because they would not receive the mark of the beast in their forehead, or right hand, they must be banished, and must not have liberty to buy or sell; and those that would worship nothing but a living substance, and not an image, though it was alive, those must be killed; and when that sort were all killed and banished, and the whole world being brought, sometimes to worship the dragon, sometimes to worship the beast that had as many heads and horns as the dragon himself; and then to worship a little beast with two horns, that came out of the earth; and then to worship the image of the old seven-headed beast: when, I say, that all things upon the whole earth were thus disposed, then was it as the devil would have it; for now had every one subjected himself unto his power, and received that name or mark, or the number of the substitute, and admired his great power; and set him up as the chief among men, whom none could overcome, except some few, that had the word of God itself, (for the other had the scripture,) and durst seal their testimony against the dragon and false prophet with their blood; and because these were but a few, and were soon killed, they being dead, there was a joyful and merry world; the devil was well pleased, and they did send their gifts to one another abundantly; and those that had been most busy, and serviceable to kill the witnesses, (that dared to speak of another kingdom or dominion, besides that of the dragon and beast,) they had the greatest gifts. And in those days there was no prophesying, but in sackcloth, and that did not continue long neither,

but the prophets were killed, and being dead, their dead bodies were kept above the earth, and were more esteemed than their living testimony, for that plagued all the worshippers of the beast.

So in such a time have the nations been so long, that they are so used to the power and reign of the devil, that they plead for it, as if he had an undoubted right thereto. And, if the devil might speak himself, he would not desire of the world to rule any longer than the world alloweth him; and they have forgot that it is but to continue forty-two months, whilst the man-child was caught up unto God, and whilst his mother was in the wilderness; and also, that it was to be expected that both should appear again in their appointed time.

But whilst it was thus with the world, viz. that the true church was not to be found upon earth, but was fled away, as upon eagles' wings; and that he that ought to rule over all, was caught up into heaven; and that the devil was in his place, the old serpent ruling and giving his power to whom he pleased, to a great beast, or little beast, or to a whore, or to any thing like him. And whilst great and small, high and low, bond and free, did wonder at his power, and were ready to worship any one that had his power; let those whose eyes are open, but consider in what a lamentable state the miserable world then was, and whether that abomination that made the world desolate of God and all good order, was not then set up in the holy place, where it ought not. And was the world without a religion, or without a profession of God and Christ in those days? No: they bore a profession of Christ that is unchangeable, in all their changeable ways; and this was a time of gladness to many. And they had many sorts of religions, and when they came to be weary with one, the devil furnished them with another. And when they had been exercised a long time in the aforesaid worships of the dragon, the seven-headed beast, the little beast, and of the living image, then there came forth yet a deeper mystery of iniquity than before, the mother of all these abominations; she showed herself, not as a despised whore, but as a queen decked with

scarlet, purple and precious stones ; and that very beast, which none could overcome, but the whole world had wondered after it, he himself must be under her command, and must carry her up and down upon the waters, which are peoples, lands, tongues, and languages. And this whore has another design upon the poor blind world, (mark,) she comes with a preparation to make all drunk, that they might not make use of their senses, to bethink themselves where they were ; and that they might not have any suspicion against any thing, she furnishes herself with a golden cup, which there was none that had any thing against it, but every one could well receive it ; and this was but to deceive them, for any potsherd of the dunghill had been good enough, (yea, a hog's trough had been too good,) to drink that out of which she had to give them. But she must give her drink to kings and princes, and nobles, and captains, and merchants, and to all sorts of men ; so she proffered them her cup, and they have all drank : but what have they drank ? her whoredoms, fornications, and all abominations of the earth. How much ? Till they were drunk. What did they then ? They committed fornication with her ; they were drunk of abominations, and the whore was drunk with the blood of the saints and witnesses of Jesus : and yet the name of Jesus was still professed upon earth ; that was not persecuted ; but those were persecuted, that witnessed Jesus himself that takes away sin ; such were persecuted ; for she being the mother of whores, and having nothing to proffer to her customers but abominations, she could not endure to hear, that sin which is an abomination to the Lord, should be taken away, and that men should live without sin, and be perfect ; for if so, then she must be childless, and as a widow, and must lose her high place on the top of the beast, and then they would not be so drunk of her cup, and that would not tend to her advantage ; therefore, if any came to be witnesses of Jesus himself, she drank the blood of such ; but if they would be content to drink her cup, and so would please themselves with good and precious words, and in the mean time

drink in her abominations, then they might live and flourish as long as she flourished.

But alas! what do you think, that read with understanding, was the state of the world in those days? Was it not high time that plagues, indignation, and vengeance should be poured out upon this bloody whore, and upon the seat of the beast upon which she did ride, and upon the whole earth, which had committed fornication with her? Is it not high time that the carpenters should come, Zach. i. 20, to cut off these horns? For at that time the power of darkness was spread over all, and the will of the devil was done, and his one thousand two hundred and sixty years, were prosperous to his kingdom, and he did what he pleased. And if any spoke against him, and against his kingdom, he would have them killed, and then his whore would drink the blood of such; and there was none left, neither great nor small, neither bond nor free, high or low, neither young nor old, but they had submitted themselves all of them, and said, who is like him? none are able to overcome him; it is impossible to be made free from under his power; he must reign as long as we live; it is possible for us, (cry they,) to overcome princes, kingdoms, and armies; and therefore we go out and fight valiantly, and many times we get victory, and become conquerors; but to overcome sin, which the devil has set up in us, that is impossible, and therefore it is in vain to trouble ourselves about it, and we will not do any thing concerning it, seeing we have drank in a faith, that it is impossible to perform or accomplish it.

And thus has the whole world been bewitched, in the time when the devil reigned. And will he and his servants make us believe, that it must continue so always? Though never any other time was given him, but such as was limited; and in the end of that time we understand there is a great alteration to come to pass; to wit, that the church, the true woman, must come out of the wilderness again; the man-child must come down again, and appear upon earth, and rule the nations with a rod

of iron, and the whore must be judged; that sorrow, death and famine must come upon her in one day; and that ten kings should agree together, to burn her flesh with fire; and that the smoke of her torments should ascend to heaven; and then the dragon, the beast, and false prophet, that had still preached peace, though it was so, as abovesaid, they must all be taken, whilst they are yet alive in this work and in their power, and be cast into the lake of the wrath of God, which burneth for ever; and these princes, and captains, and merchants, and inhabitants of the earth, must howl and lament because of this great alteration.

And therefore seeing that such a time is lawfully to be expected, in which the devil, the old serpent, may be thrust out of his dominion; and that then the time of joy and rejoicing will be for the upright, it is worth the spending of our labour and time, to find out that time, that so it may not come over us, and we see it not, nor know it, and so let it pass by, as the Jews did, doting and waiting for it, as a thing which is yet to come, as they do at this day; when almost two thousand years are past, since the thing has come to pass.

Now, you know the Jews had a prophet, who told them the time when the Messiah should come, aforehand, to wit, Daniel, as you may see, Dan. ix. 24, &c. where he told them, that it was seventy weeks that were determined upon the people, and upon the city, and that the Holy One should be anointed. Now, this was not such a great mystery to them; they knew it was common to reckon a day for a year among the prophets; so that that time was but four hundred fourscore and ten years that the vision should be sealed, and the daily sacrifice taken away, the city be made desolate, and the anointing of the Holy One, and the Messiah be slain for the sins of the people. And since the time that the command was gone forth to build Jerusalem again, in which time the seventy weeks had their beginning, it is above two thousand years ago; the city is since builded again, and also made again desolate, and the daily sacrifice taken away, and the prince of the people that then

came, viz. Titus Vespasian the Roman, has destroyed the sanctuary, and the destruction of it, was with an overflowing to the end of the war; and yet all these things cannot convince them, nor make them believe that the Messiah is come, or that it was he whom their forefathers have killed as a blasphemer.

Now, that we, after such clear prophecies of the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, and dethroning of the devil, sin and Antichrist, should not come to be surprised with the same blindness and hardness of heart; let us have a strict observation of the times, that we may not fight against the appearance of Truth, and put it far away from us, and say, the days are not come yet, in which the pouring out of the Spirit can be witnessed; and that the knowledge of God must cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; and that the gospel must be preached again unto those that dwell upon the earth, and that the Lamb and his saints must have the victory over the dragon and his angels. For, such as put the day so far from them, are in one and the same error with the Jews, and do not understand the times better than they do; and so are persecuting the true appearance of that which they seem to expect, and to pray for, (as the Jews did,) because it does not appear in their way to answer their carnal expectations, that despise the day of small things: but from such are the mysteries of the kingdom shut up, and are revealed unto those that fear the Lord.

Now to understand these things, let every one come to read the prophecies in a measure of that spirit, by which they were given forth, and that same opens the prophecies, and without it every one understands only according to his own fancy or private judgment. The apostle said, there should come an apostacy from the faith; that is, from the true Christian faith. Now, when was that? And who are they that are thus apostatized, or fallen away? Ask the pope, and the whole Roman Catholic church, and they will tell you, that the prophecy points at Martin Luther, Zuinglius, Œcolampadius, Calvinus, Menno Simonis, and other heretics, that have rent many nations from the true apostolic faith, and

the ancient Christian church, the infallible foundation and pillar of Truth, &c.

Ask the bishops of England, and the presbyters in Scotland, the pſarherren or pastors in Denmark or Sweden, and predicants in the Low Countries, and they will tell you, that this prophecy signifieth the general apostacy from the apostolic faith and order in the church of Christ, to the pope and popish exercises, and institutions over all Christendom. Again, ask them, who among themselves continue as yet in the true apostolical faith and religion? Then the Lutheran pastors will say, we do; and therefore cry they join with us. No, say the bishops in England, we will prove that the apostolical church had bishops, and that the apostle said, he that desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work; and therefore we are they that are the true church, according to the first institution. Then say the presbyterians and Dutch predicants, the bishops in the primitive churches were not such as you are, but such as we are, whose care was over the flock, and did teach and rule in ecclesiastical matters, but not in councils and parliaments, as you do; therefore you are fallen, from the primitive state. And now, at last, what says Truth of these, and all others who deny that faith which purifies the heart, and can cleanse the conscience from sin, and can give victory over the world? This was the faith which Paul preached, that was nigh in the heart; and therefore all those that say, that the heart of a true believer cannot be made clean, nor that he can come to live without sin, nor to have a purified conscience; and all those that deny the word of faith in the heart, and Christ to be the rule, and set up another rule, and another faith, and another foundation for it, than the apostle set up; all such are fallen from the faith, and are not apostolic, but Antichristian: and when the man of sin comes to be revealed, they will come to be revealed with him, and fall with him, and with Babylon the mother of them all; great will be their fall in that day.

There is yet another prophecy of Christ, when he said, When you see the abomination of desolation stand-

ing in the holy place, where it ought not, then let not him that is in Judea flee unto the mountain ; nor he that is in the field, go back to fetch his clothes ; nor he that is on the house-top, come down to take any thing out of his house, &c. Mat. xxiv. 15. And said he further, ver. 23, 24, Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe him not, &c. signifying plainly, that when the abomination of desolation should be set up, that the people would notwithstanding not want divers sorts of teachers of the name of Christ. What were they made desolate of, by the setting up of this abomination, seeing they were not desolate of a profession of Christ in divers manners ? They were desolate of the power and presence of God in all their holy places, (as they called them,) where this abomination was set up ; even as Christ said to the Jews, when they had made the house of prayer to be a den of thieves ; then said he, Your house is left unto you desolate. Mark, it was not then desolate of people, of congregations, of religions and worship ; but it was desolate of the presence of God ; for that was not to be found there. So that abomination which makes people desolate of the power of God, by which they should have power over their sin and lusts, and which makes the ministers and teachers desolate of the spirit of God, by which they should have been led to preach the gospel ; this abomination has been set up a long time, and made the people and nations as a wilderness ; and this has been since that time, that the Christian religion has been carried on and maintained by the traditions of men. Then came the poison to be poured out into the church, and thereby it is come to be so swelled and big, that it can comprehend in it the tyrannical and persecuting princes, proud and rebellious bishops, wicked men-slayers and murderers, unclean, wanton and drunken people ; they have all room enough in it : and since that time it is counted heresy, that any should make a profession of being purified and cleansed ; and from that time it may be reckoned, that the abomination of desolation has been set up. And, therefore, let us consider how long it is yet to stand, before the devil comes to be cast

out, and the temple of God be cleansed, and the filth of abomination be burned up, that the God of heaven may again delight in his sanctuary, and that the earth may not for ever be empty of his presence, but that he may be found of those that seek him, and be heard of them that are mourning after him.

Now John saith, that this time of desolation was to continue a time, times, and half a time, that is, three years and a half, or three times twelve months and six months, that is, forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days; which times are agreeing together in one, and do perfectly fulfil the time of the restoration of the church, and of the coming down of the righteous Judge, whose right it is to rule over men; for to him are the Gentiles given for an inheritance, and the ends of the earth for a possession. And that time doth also perfectly fulfil the time of the power of the beast; for these times do all agree together, and as they had their beginning about one and the same time, they must also have their end shortly after one another, because they are like one another.

Now to find out the end of those times, the beginning must be first known; now the daily sacrifice was taken away long before the abomination, that made the earth desolate, was set up; but from that time that both should be fulfilled, said the angel to Daniel, there should be one thousand two hundred and ninety days, that is thirty more than John writes of. Now the abomination of desolation was not set up in the time of Christ; for, said he, when you shall see it set up, &c. speaking as of a thing that was not yet come to pass; and the apostle said, There shall come an apostacy from the faith; that shows, that it was not yet come, neither did it come till several hundreds of years after; for the true Christians suffered many cruel and grievous deaths for the Christian faith; so that they did not fall away, but endured to the end, and were saved, and so long the earth was not desolate. But when that faith was lost, which did support in sufferings, and that the Christian religion, (which was the holy place,) came to be corrupted by

pride, covetousness, persecution and worldly pleasures, ease, and the delights and honours of this world ; then the abomination was set up, that made the earth desolate. And reckon from that time, one thousand two hundred and sixty years, and add to it these thirty years, of which the angel spoke to Daniel, Dan. xii. 11, and see whether we be not about the forty-five years, of which there is made mention in the twelfth verse, where the angel having spoken of the one thousand two hundred and ninety years, adds, Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days : signifying plainly, that there must be a time of patience, and waiting for the blessed restoration, which was promised ; and that that time of waiting should continue from the one thousand two hundred and ninety, till one thousand three hundred and thirty five, which are forty-five days or years ; and then they are blessed that come thereunto. So he that hath wisdom, let him reckon : but this reckoning is not comprehended in arithmetic, or the art of reckoning ; neither can it be conceived by the wisdom of this world : but such as have the wisdom which cometh from God, they shall understand ; and it is to such I write ; for I have learned to cover the pearls before the swine, and to withhold the children's bread from the dogs.

And by what is here said, it sufficiently appears ; first, that this intruder or usurper, called the devil, satan, dragon, or Antichrist, has no right to rule and to reign over mankind, all the days of their life. Secondly, that his kingdom is a limited kingdom, and was not to continue for ever. Thirdly, that the limits of it have been revealed to several of the servants of God. Fourthly, that the appointed time of his governments is nigh come to an end. Fifthly, that there is a blessed day and time to be expected after the end of his reign. And sixthly, that none can come to enjoy that blessed time and blessedness, nor sing the song of joy and deliverance, but those that patiently wait upon the Lord in the days of tribulation ; and have that hope to see the salvation which cometh out of Sion.

And therefore for conclusion, I shall say this, that all those that feel themselves in bondage under this prince of darkness, in what manner soever it be, and are not willing to remain so always ; believe but in him that showeth you your bondage, and wait in his pure light in your own consciences, which discovers darkness and the prince of it ; and then you will feel a hope to spring up in you, that you may be delivered, as I myself have felt : 1 John, iii. 3. And this hope will lead to a daily washing and purifying, and to a daily crucifying and mortifying of the earthly members. And as this hope comes to work in thee, it will bring thee to an experience of being delivered in some particular things, and that will strengthen thy hope of being delivered from more ; and so, at last a faith will arise in thee, perfectly and thoroughly to be made free from sin. And when thou art made partaker of this faith, then the greatest and strongest bond of the devil is broken ; for, through the unbelief of it, he keeps his kingdom in man and woman. And when this evil root of unbelief is taken away, then his kingdom comes soon to an end, and the government of Truth comes to be set up in thee ; and so there comes a change to be wrought in thee, both inwardly and outwardly ; and so comes his kingdom, who is the intruder or usurper, to be lessened, first in thyself, and then thou comest to see that change in another ; and so it goeth forward, from one to ten, and from ten to a thousand, and so forth, more and more, until the inheritance of the wicked comes to be wholly laid waste, till truth and righteousness, and the reign and government of Christ Jesus our Lord comes to be set up in the earth, which my soul longs and travails for ; and so, I know it is with many more, for whose sake this is written ; and as a testimony against that proud and presumptuous generation of hypocrites, of what sort or name, or in what nation or kingdom soever they may be, who not only have subjected themselves unto this prince of darkness, and unto the power of him who is called the devil and satan, but also pretend, that all mankind must do so, and continue so all their days, and that there is no remedy nor help against it ; and so deny the power

of God, and lead the people to trust in a lie. But the day of the power of God is come, and the refuge of lies is swept away; and the deliverance and victory of the Lamb is known unto many; to whom, and to the everlasting God, by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the redeemed, be sung everlasting praises, thanksgiving, renown, honour and glory, and dominion for ever.

POSTSCRIPT.

THERE comes something further up in my heart concerning this matter, which I think good to communicate unto you.

There are hardly any ignorant, how commonly it is said, That we cannot live without sin: and that we cannot be made free from it, as long as we live in this world; even, as if our sin and our life were so knit together, that they cannot be separated from one another; but that they must end together, and not the one before the other. Now all those that believe there is a God, they also believe that he is the Fountain of Life, and gives life unto all that live: and all that believe that there is a devil, they also believe, that he is the author and original of sin; as Christ said, When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own; for he is a liar, and a father of lies, John, viii. 44, and so he is of all other wickedness. Now he gives life to no man, for that comes of God; and he having made them live, then comes the devil, and betrays them into sin. And now are men and women become such fools, that they seek to bind together inseparably that which is of God, with that which is of the devil; and that is great foolishness; for what fellowship has Christ with Belial, or light with darkness? So also the life of men, (simply considered in itself,) has no fellowship with sin; for they come forth of two different originals; and he, who is the original of life, is stronger than he, who is the original of sin: and though he has

brought in sin, and has corrupted nature, (which first was pure,) by sin; and men in that corrupt nature, do abuse their life, which they have from God, to his dishonour, and to their own perdition; yet that life is not so joined unto sin, that they are inseparable. For, though it be true, that men cannot sin, if they live not; yet it is not true to say, That if men sin not, then they cannot live; for the life that some lived, they lived by the faith of the Son of God, Gal. ii. 20, and that is in dominion over sin, and over the devil, the author of it.

There is another common position, that we must live in sin, so long as we do carry about with us this body of sin and death; meaning this substantial and corporal body; alleging the words of Paul, Rom. vii. 24.

Now this is also a blind and foolish position, as if the fault of all sins which they commit, were in the body, or the members of it; whereas, on the contrary, the body, (simply in itself,) is not guilty of that which through the body is done, it being altogether passive, having no will in the members; but they are as instruments, that are ordered or disposed of according to the laws of God, or of the devil; the one or the other being set up to rule in the will and mind of the creature; and the members have no power to do, or leave undone, any thing, but as they receive it by the will or understanding.

Also, there is no member of the body, but is made to serve the Lord, and is also made fit for it; and they are as ready and willing to do, and to fulfil the will of God, as to fulfil the will of the devil; yea, and they are more properly in their right place and service, and have more joy and freedom in it, than in the service of the devil; for the service of the devil is but bondage, to which the creature is led captive by a lie, as is aforesaid; and those that call the corporal bodies, the bodies of sin and death, they please the devil well enough; for he well knows, that as long as they so believe, his birth and seed will remain in them without hinderance, when the eyes of men are led out to suspect their own bodies, as being the cause of all sin and evil which they commit; which bodies are more fit to serve God; but are capable to be giv-

en up by the will and affection, to serve either God or the devil; as is manifest by the words of Paul, Rom. vi. 19, As ye have yielded yourselves servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. Now here every one may see, that the same members, that before were given up to serve unrighteousness, must now be given up to serve righteousness. [Mark,] they had them still, they did not say, we would we were delivered from these members and bodies, (that were used to commit sin,) that so we might come to be made free; but the apostle said plainly, that they were free from sin, and were become servants unto righteousness, and that therefore they should give up their members to the service of him that had made them free, as formerly they used to do to him that had brought them into bondage. And these people that so complain against their own bodies, calling them the old man, the body of sin and death, and of corruption; how will they understand the apostle, where he says, mortify your members which are upon the earth? What, will they mortify their hands and feet, and pull out their eyes, and cut out their tongues? I suppose not. But how will they fulfil the words of the apostle, except they find out another body of sin, and the members of it, which ought to be crucified with the daily cross? But the apostle hath named the members of that body, which must be mortified, Col. iii. 5, to wit, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry, ver. 8, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth, and lying one to another, &c. these are the members that make up that body which is called the body of the sins of the flesh, Colos. ii. 11, and this is a sort of flesh which God has not made; for that which he hath made, that is good, and it is for himself and not for sin, 1 Cor. vi. 13. And though the devil hath his seat in the heart, commanding the members of the body to do his will, yet the same members could serve to do the will of God, if the devil were cast out, and truth and righteousness were set up in the heart; and then these

sin-pleaders would come to see, that the fault was not in their bodies, but in their corrupt hearts, and that there is another body to be put off, before they can come to do the will of God, and not the corporal body, which God has created to serve him.

And besides that, these people show themselves to have but little love to God; that all his kindness and manifold mercies cannot draw them to serve him; but on the contrary, they will serve his greatest enemy, as long as they have members to serve him withal, using those members which God has given them, against him and his ordering; and if he will not permit it so to be, he must take away those members again; even as if there was no other remedy to put an end to sin; that is as much as to say, if the Lord will not have them to swear, to lie, or to speak evil, he must make them dumb; and if he will not have them to do bad works, he must make them lame; and if he will take away their life from them, then they will leave off sinning, but not sooner: yea, they cannot endure to hear of putting off sin sooner; that, (say they,) is the grand error of the Quakers, to speak of ceasing to sin, before we cease to live.

Oh! where is the sense of the love of God, that this people should feel in their hearts shed abroad to God, to constrain them unto obedience? Alas! they are strangers thereunto, and the covenant with hell and death is so strong, and the unbelief is so rooted in them, that they think this covenant cannot be broken. But blessed be the Lord, that faith is now manifested, that giveth victory, and breaketh this covenant.

Another great plea, which these sin-pleaders bring, is this: if people can come to perfection in this life, then they have no need of Christ to be their Saviour; as if the salvation by Christ, and a perfect and pure life were inconsistent with one another. Ye fools and blind, know ye not that all good and perfect gifts come from the Lord, and that none can come to perfection, but by his gift? And if God be the giver, is it not then by grace? Where are works then? But these pleaders for sin, are as great strangers to the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, as

they are to perfection, otherwise they would see their ignorance. When Christ said to his disciples, Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect; that is as much as to say, (according to explanation of these people,) there is your command, when that is done, you have no need of me. And the apostle spoke wisdom among them that are perfect, but not such wisdom, (or rather foolishness,) as this, to persuade them, that they had no need of Christ to be their Saviour, because they were come to perfection; but, on the contrary, he said, that he could do all things, (then he could be perfect,) but not as of himself, but through Christ that enabled him; and those that come to a perfect state, they know that their salvation is not of their works, how good and pure soever they may be, but merely by grace through Jesus Christ, and that in respect of these three following observations.

1. First, That it was the appearance of Christ Jesus, who is the power of God, that has brought them off from their sin and imperfection; and that they have not left them off of themselves, but do own, that it is the grace of God, as the apostle did, Tit. ii. 11, 12, For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. So here you may see, that it is the appearance of the grace of God that leads to perfection; and this perfection is not yet a perfect salvation; for those that have it, may fall from it again, and so not be saved; but those that endure to the end shall be saved.

2. But Secondly, It is Christ who is the preserver and keeper unto the end, those that trust in him; and the apostles testify, that those that were delivered from the corruption of this world, must know him to be their keeper, that had gathered them out of the world; and therefore said Jude in his epistle, ver. 24, Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, &c. And Peter testifieth, 1 Peter, i. 5, You are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready

to be revealed in the last time. And Paul testifieth, that the keeping is by Jesus Christ, Phil. iv. 7. So here you may see, that the bringing to the state of perfection, and the keeping from falling from it again, is both the work of Christ; and yet, this is not a perfect salvation; for this does not put away the former sins.

3. But Thirdly, Whoever comes to perfect salvation, he comes to know Christ to be an offering for sin, and to obtain reconciliation with God, and forgiveness of his former sins: for all the holy conversation and perfection of life, can be counted no more but his duty; and therefore he cannot obtain remission of one of his former sins: but those that confess their sins, and forsake them, such come to forgiveness by Jesus Christ, and come to know his blood cleansing them from all their former sins; and so they come to perfect salvation by grace, not by works, but by faith, that works in the love of God unto obedience; without which, faith is but dead, and makes no man saved, but those that have this true faith and hope in them, They purify themselves, as he is pure, 1 John, iii. 3. And he that has not this hope, does not purify himself, neither does he believe that he can do it; and by this we know the true believers from the false; and by this sinners are made manifest, that cannot stand in the congregation of the righteous, Psal. i. 5.

So now let all the pleaders for sin, stop their mouths for ever, and let the devil stand for himself, and plead his own cause; and henceforth do not despise and revile the innocent, (that are travailing and striving after perfection, with a faith to obtain it,) that they think to be saved by their own works; for we hope for no other salvation, but that which is in and by Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God, who is the first-born of every creature, that brings many sons and daughters unto glory, but not by leaving them in their sins; but his name is Jesus, and he saves people from their sins.

S. C.

TO THE
MAGISTRATES OF GRONINGEN,

IN THE
UNITED PROVINCES.

YE rulers and burghermasters of Groningen, I have a message unto you in the name of the God of heaven and earth, on the behalf of his truth and people; and therefore hearken to my words, and consider them, for in love to your souls, and to your city and country, do I write unto you: and therefore be it known unto you, you cannot fight against God and prosper; the powers that are, (said the apostle,) are of God. I am a friend to magistracy and government, and do know that it is an ordinance of God; but that magistrate beareth the sword in vain, that doth become a terror to them that do well, or that endeavour so to do. And therefore, Friends, turn not your sword against the innocent, for their conscience sake towards God, for that is not your place; but to protect all that fear God, and to encourage such as depart from the evil of their ways. And whereas the Lord is pleased in this your day, to visit a small remnant in your city, with the knowledge of his everlasting Truth, and to lead them to take up the cross, and deny themselves, and to leave the customs and ways of this evil world, and to wait upon God in the despised way of the Quakers, so called; what harm is this unto you? What evil have they done since, or what evil have that people done to any prince or government since they were a people? What is this great cry and noise made against us for? Is it not as in days past, if any man depart from iniquity, he makes himself a prey; and he that reproveth sin in the gate, for him they lay a snare. Why are the workers of iniquity so moved? Ought you not to inquire of our accusers when they come to you, what evil we have done against God, or the wholesome laws

and liberty of the land, before you lay your hands upon us? Oh, take heed of your priests, who fear nothing more than the breaking out of the light, which as it ariseth, will give men to see their evil works, and the foundation upon which they stand. Oh, let not them deceive you, by stirring you up to persecution, as they have deceived many princes and governors in other lands, who now begin to see them, and to cease from the work to which they have instigated them; and most governors and rulers where we live, have a sense of our innocency. And now your day of trial is come, and I cannot but in love warn you not to run this course of persecution, for if you do, you will bring vexation upon yourselves inwardly and outwardly, and the judgments of God upon you and your city, out of which your priests will not be able to deliver you. And besides, mark, this work of the Lord shall go on and prosper, and as many as are found faithful to the light of Christ Jesus in their consciences, shall feel the daily encouragements of the everlasting power of God, which is enough to bear them up, under all that the power of persecution, (which never was of God,) can do against them; and the divine love of God, through the faith of Christ, will flow in upon them, which will make them not to love their lives to the death, for their testimony's sake: and their innocent sufferings will reach to that of God in the consciences of others, and they shall come to believe in that which supports us, and so come to be made partakers of that same life of righteousness which judgeth the world; which the spirit of this world hath always sought to slay in all its appearances. And further, the more you cause this people to suffer, the more shall we be drawn in the love and power of God, to visit them and your city for their sakes; for we dare do no other, being commanded so of Christ, who is the head of our church: and if any, the least member of him be in prison, in hunger or want, and we visit them not, he takes it as if he had been so, and we had neglected visiting him. And this hazard we dare not run, for all the frowns and threats of men; for we know none, (but Christ Jesus,) shall ever receive

power to say, Go ye cursed, &c. And it is not sufferings and tribulations that can now affright or deter us from our service and testimony to our God; for we have learned in all states to be contented. And if our tribulations abound for the gospel's sake, our consolation abounds much more; so that we can in the strength of God, give our back to the smiter, and turn the other cheek; and our face to them that pluck off the hair; and when all that is done, pray for these our enemies, and do them good against all this evil. And this we boast not of, as of ourselves, but as the gift of God, freely given unto us for Christ's sake, in whom our sufficiency is. And therefore, Friends, be wise and considerate in this weighty matter, and take heed what you do; if this work be of man, it will cease, and come to nothing, though you sit still in your places; but if it be the work of God, to break forth in his light, and make known his righteousness to them that have hungered and thirsted after it, then you cannot stop his work, but it will go forth when you have done what you can, as others have done. And, besides, your endeavouring to stop the work of God, will render you fighters against God, and kindle his indignation against you, and bring his judgments upon you. Therefore my counsel to you all is, fear the living God, who shows you your thoughts, and love the light in your own consciences, and then you will never persecute it in others, but it will break forth more and more, and become a blessing to you and your city; and this is my desire, who am your friend, and one that in obedience to God, and love to your souls, have thus far cleared my conscience to you, who am a servant of God, and one that in scorn is called a Quaker, who have rather chosen, as Moses did, to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are but for a short season. So the Lord give you a considerate and understanding heart.

STEPHEN CRISP.

A
LAMENTATION
OVER
THE CITY OF GRONINGEN.

CONTAINING

An Answer to Four Papers written against the People called Quakers, Two by the Magistrates, and Two Lies sung in the Street, by the wild and ungodly Ballad Singers, which shows that the Spirit of Persecution and Mockery comes all from one Ground.

Amos, v. 1. *Hear ye this Word which I take up against you, even a Lamentation, O House of Israel.*

Amos, viii. 10. *And I will turn your Feasts into Mourning, and all your Songs into Lamentation, and I will bring up Sackcloth upon all Loins, and Baldness upon every Head: and I will make it as the Mourning of an only Son, and the end thereof as a bitter Day.*

WHAT lamentation shall I take up over thee, O Groningen! that art a great city, increased in riches, people, and wickedness, and hast long lived without judgment in thy goings, and thy footsteps have been after the counsel of thy own heart, and the covenant of death hath bound thy inhabitants together with a general consent to walk in darkness, and to obey the power thereof; and to live in sin and ungodliness all their days. And in this path have thy leaders, that tell thee it is impossible to do otherwise, led thee; and so they have helped to harden thy heart against thy Maker, and to settle thee upon thy lees, and have for money sold thee a sound of peace, while thou livest in thy sins, and walkest in darkness, which is the way to destruction. And thy rulers have tolerated, if not promoted wickedness, and have not been

good examples, nor ruled for God, nor become a terror to thee in thy ungodly and wanton life, as they ought to have been. So that on all hands, wickedness is grown high, the trees of Sodom, and the vines of Gomorrha, bring forth plentifully in thee; but the plant of renown, the royal seed of God, that hath long been as a worm trampled upon, and the God of Israel, forgotten days without number, although his name hath been in your mouths, yet his fear hath not been in your hearts; and though you have drawn nigh him sometimes with your polluted lips, yet you have not brought your hearts nigh to him, but they have still wandered after your lusts and evil ways; and you have long taken the name of God in vain, and thereby brought guilt upon yourselves; and the Lord hath been patient and long-suffering with you, and hath not been hasty to anger, but hath waited to be gracious, and hath oftentimes smitten you in the secret of your hearts, and called upon you to leave off the evil of your ways; but ye have rejected his voice, and turned away your ears from hearkening to his reproof; and so by these things, ye have provoked the Lord to anger against you, and he is arising to make known his judgment in the midst of you, which still kindles more and more, till it burns like a flame, and there will be no abiding his presence but by repentance. And, Friends, a deep sense is upon me of the day of your visitation, and also of the calamity that will come upon you, except you repent, and break off the evil of your doings, and turn your hearts to seek the Lord. And I have warned you in love, and again do warn you to consider your ways, while a little time is afforded you; for the wrath of God is ready to break forth against you, and against all the inhabitants of the earth that slight the day of his tender visitation. And there is a lamentation in my heart for thee, O Groningen, that thou hadst a considerate and understanding heart, that thou mightest foresee thy misery, and escape thy calamity! My heart is grieved, and my soul is afflicted, to consider thy present condition, and also to consider what thou art bringing upon thy own head. Oh, be not like the foolish folk Solomon speaks of, who be-

cause judgment is not speedily executed upon an evil work, therefore their hearts are set in them to do wickedly: Oh! how doth abominations abound in thy streets like a flood! How is thy city filled with drunkenness, with oaths, with cursings, and how are thy streets filled with Ishmael's brood of mockers and scorners, whose bonds must be made strong! Read Isaiah, xxviii. 22. What care is there taken to suppress these things? Nay, the greatest care is how to suppress Truth, and keep righteousness from shining forth, lest the day-light should break forth into judgment against thy ungodliness. But alas! alas! the day of thy judgment is come, and that life is arisen that hath the power in heaven and in earth; and ye can no more crucify it, but it must and shall reign for ever, and judge the earth in righteousness and in truth. And it is the appearance of this life that comes into the world for judgment, that hath made your city like a sea, into which a tempest is entered. Your rulers are like fierce young lions that roar, because they are troubled, and think to affright the lambs with their thundering out threatenings. Thy priests are like the she-bear that is robbed of her whelps, seeking their revenge upon the innocent, and stirring up the young lions as to a prey. Thy people are like the wild beasts of the forest, which with a confused noise are gathered together to devour. Thy children run snarling to and fro in the streets, tumultuating and halloing, and uttering all manner of reproach and spite against the innocent and harmless people, who are departing from your ungodly course of life, and are called out of your Babylonish worships to be separated from you.

Oh, Friends, consider, are these the fruits of a gospel ministry, and a well-governed republic? are not these tumults and uproars, a shame to both priests and rulers, yea, and to all the masters and fathers of families in your whole city? Doth it not appear you have lost the good government that you ought to have over the people, and the children and servants in your city and respective families? Oh, consider these things! whence comes uproars, is it not from the spirit of the Sodomites that as-

saulted the house of Lot? And what was it set Jerusalem of an uproar? and what set other cities in the acts of an uproar, but persecution? And was not Gamaliel a Jew, yet wise enough to still the tumult, by persuading them to leave persecution, and leave the matter to God. Oh, that you who are called Christians, were but so wise! But, alas! it hath grieved my heart, while I was in your city, to see and hear, young and old, given up to an Ishmael spirit, mocking and scorning, and deriding the innocent, and to see how it is happened to you in Groningen, as it was in the rebellious house of Israel of old, they that feared the Lord, were as signs and wonders in Israel. Oh, a lamentation! a lamentation! let all that know thee take up over thee, for thy way leads with speed to destruction, and thou makest haste to fill up thy measure, Oh! that thou mightest but stand still a little, and consider thy ways before it be too late. I write these things in the love of God to all that have an ear to hear, and a heart to consider: and as to those that shut the ear, and will not hear, I shall be clear of their blood, and they shall know that they were warned.

And now all you rulers, priests and inhabitants of the city of Groningen, let me treat a little more particularly with you, and inquire what is the reason you are thus moved and driven on heaps, as you are? I know the answer is, Here is a people in our city, that men call Quakers, that in their life differ from us, and if we pipe to them, they will not dance, and if we mourn, they will not lament; they will neither rejoice in that in which we rejoice, nor grieve at that at which we grieve; but in their worship, and in their manners, and words and all they differ from us. Well, what then; what evil have they done to you or to your city, or what have such people done against any other city, where they have, and do live? Alas! say men, they are every where spoken against; well, that is no rule for you to hate and persecute them; know you not the religion of the apostles was every where spoken against? yet it was the truth, and after that way which men called heresy, worshipped they the God of their fathers; for the true Chris-

tian worship which Christ set up, was to differ from that in the mount of Samaria, and that at the temple of Jerusalem too; must Christ therefore be persecuted? Oh! how blind and ignorant is this generation, that ye should again run into the same error of the Pharisees, to condemn the old persecutors, and prove new ones yourselves, and persecute the same Life, (as it comes to rise in any, to witness against you and your lusts,) as they and their fathers did? and so ye manifest yourselves still to be of the same race and stock, and to be born of the same estranged flesh that always persecuted such as were born after the Spirit. And as they brought upon them all the righteous blood that was spilt from Abel to Zacharias, so you are about to bring upon you, and upon your children, all the righteous blood from Abel to this day, which will be enough to sink you to perdition. But I cannot rejoice in your destruction, but the labour of my soul and my prayer yet for you is, that ye might be wise, and learn understanding, and might consider your ways, and might no longer strive against God, and against his glorious work; for I tell you in his name, and his authority, he will be too mighty for you.

And the work which God hath begun in the earth, shall prosper and flourish, and none shall be able to stop it, for his seed hath suffered long, and many have cried in secret for a day of deliverance. And now the day is come, glory to God for ever, and the everlasting gospel is preached, and many are thereby turned from the former darkness, to the true light of Jesus, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. And many are brought to know the right way of the Lord, which is a way of holiness, and can no longer be content to walk in the unholy sinful ways, where the priests tell them, they must live in sin all their days. But now the hope of redemption is arisen unto many, glory be to God for ever; and some have received the Bright and Morning Star; and some are waiting for it in faith and patience, passing their time in fear and watchfulness, hoping for the crown that is immortal, which certainly shall be set upon the heads of all those that faint not by

the way, by reason of the tribulations that arise for the name of Christ's sake.

For, Friends and people, consider this one thing, the Holy Ghost signified unto John, that the dragon, beast, and false prophet, should rule 1260 years, (that is not Christ's kingdom,) and in that time the whole world should worship the beast and his image, (that is not the worship of God,) and that the whore should sit upon the beast that ruled, (that is not the true church,) and that the world should say, Who can make war with the beast? (they were not the saints that said so, for the Lamb and the saints must have the victory,) and all that while, while the whore was a-top of the ruling beast, the true church was in the wilderness, and the true governor or ruler was caught up to God. Now because it hath been thus 1260 years, must it always be thus? No, surely, this is a set time, and hath an end, and the end of it is come; and the true church is coming out of the wilderness, and the daughter of Zion hath a new spiritual instrument, with sharp teeth, to thresh the mountains withal, and her son is manifest upon the earth, which is the second birth, whose kingdom is not of this world, but his dominion is over all, (read who can,) and he and the saints must have the victory; for they have received power to judge the three unclean spirits, that are like frogs: the first that came out of the mouth of the dragon, which fills the earth with wrath and cruelty; the second that came out of the mouth of the beast, that fills the earth with pride, insolency and arrogancy; the third that came out of the mouth of the false prophet, that fills the earth with lying, idolatry, delusions and hypocrisy; these three spirits are now judged, and their works are judged in the name of him that lives for ever and ever; and the day draws nigh for the opening of the lake, and the casting in alive the dragon, beast and false prophet, from whence these three spirits came. And in that day shall the head of the afflicted be lifted up, and the seed shall rejoice, and the earth shall know that God hath remembered his people, and you shall know that you have striven against your Maker.

Therefore, oh people! consider your way. Serve not the beast, neither worship his image; but fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and now the dragon and his cruelty, and they that are his executioners, must be judged; the whore and her cup of fornication, and all that drink thereof, and commit fornication with her, must be judged; and the beast, and his seat, and his power, and his image, and all that wonder after him, and worship him and his image must be judged; and the second beast and his power, and all that are subject to him, must be judged, though his appearance is like a lamb; and the false prophet, with his lying wonders, and his false fire that he brings down in the sight of men, must be judged; and all his lies and delusions, and them that have believed them must all be judged; for judgment is Truth arisen in the earth; and therefore are the inhabitants moved like a sea, and the waves roll to and fro, and the princes imagine vain things, and the judges write grievousness, and they that remain in the state of the heathen, who know not God, they are all in a rage. But alas! alas! these things cannot stop the coming and shining of the Sun of righteousness, nor the breaking forth of his salvation to the meek, which have long hungered and thirsted after righteousness.

And therefore, oh ye rulers! be wise, and consider what you do, and if you can stop the ebbing and flowing of the sea, or if you can turn the sun or moon out of their course, or if you can number the stars of heaven, or sand upon the sea shore, then you may hinder this work that is determined and decreed by the same power by which all these things were made and ordered. But if you cannot do these, then attempt not to stop the light of righteousness from breaking forth, for your work will be in vain, and shame and confusion will be your reward. For assuredly, you will not find us like other sorts of people, whose foundation hath been upon this or that man, and in process of time, some one or other man hath laid them waste again by his power or policy. But our foundation is out of your sight, the Rock of Ages,

which when it appeared in a body of flesh, was crucified; but death could not hold it, nor the signet nor soldiers neither; but God raised his own, and suffered not his Holy One to see corruption. And that same power that raised him, hath quickened us in these mortal bodies; which we confess you can kill, if God permit you. But the power lives for ever, and the same quickening life and power shall appear in other bodies to witness against you and the world, and shall spread forth more and more, till the earth is covered with its glory, and till the glory of all flesh is stained, and their strength as tow before the fire.

Therefore, I say again, be wise, oh ye judges and rulers of the earth! and take heed of being found fighters against God, lest his wrath kindle, and you, and your strength and glory become like chaff before the wind in his presence; and remember you are warned.

And now Friends, I come more particularly to capitulate with you, the magistrates and people of Groningen, having before me four papers, all given out against a people called Quakers, and appearing to come all from one spirit, though it is sad to say, and to think, men called magistrates, and a city called Christian, nay reformed, should have such horrible work found therein as I found in two or three days stay in your city, and find in your papers; and because two of these papers come from you that are the magistrates, I think it good to say something to them. First, the one is a sentence given to several citizens, the other to some not being citizens, whom you had imprisoned, in which you have warned the citizens to meet no more in such meetings as they have done, and the other to come no more in the city to such meetings, and both upon the threatening of further punishment; and that the reader may the better understand where this sentence and threatening takes its rise, I shall set down the sentence verbatim, and then write something to it by way of inquiry.

The first complaint is irreverent behaviour. Secondly, that he is called a Quaker. Thirdly, that he was lately at a meeting. Fourthly, that it was the more to divulge

hurtful and pernicious errors and the spirit's leading; and upon these you say, that such forbidden conventicles and dangerous sects must not be suffered, but punished in a well-governed republic, and therefore you insinuate that if he comes any more at the Quakers' meeting, he must be looked upon as disobedient and rebellious, and be dealt with accordingly.

Now friends to the first, what was the irreverent behaviour? did you show them a law which they would not be subject to? came they not at your summons, in which they acknowledged you magistrates? and stood they not attentively to hear what you said? gave they you not necessary answers to your questions? but it seems they put not off their hats; was that an offence to you? Alas! that men of understanding should no more regard their reputation, than to take offence at such a thing, when there is neither law of God, nor nations, nor of your own city that requires it: you should have made a law first that they must do so, and then, for your part, you had done like Ahasuerus. There was something to say for bowing, viz. the king's commandment, the king's authority; what Mordecai, wilt thou not bow? the king commands it; well, but Mordecai cannot bow if he dies for it; then you know who set up the gallows; he that was angry, because he was not bowed to; were not these things written for your and our learning? ye never find in scripture that the Christians called it irreverent behaviour to have hats upon the head; and the three children had their hats on in the furnace: do ye think they put on their hats to be cast in the furnace, or had they them not on when they stood before the king? and then this great king came to the mouth of the furnace and saw them walk with their hats on; why did not they pull off their hats to the king? But neither Christians nor heathens have you for example in this matter, except the apostate Christians, in this time of the reign of the beast, in which he hath set up his worship in the stead of God's; but in this particular, I think the law is not yet made that I know of, that commands folks to put off their hats; and where there is no law, there is no transgres-

sion. But what is the matter here is such offence taken about the hat? is there any worship therein? if so, that belongs to God, and to no man. Is there any honour therein? if so, the receiving honour from one another is that which hindered the Pharisees and Jews from receiving the faith of Jesus, as you may read: so what part is that in you which is so highly offended? is it not come of the same line and stock with Nimrod that hunted before the Lord, when he ought to have come after; and Esau the profane man that was wroth with him that had the blessing, though he himself had sold him his birth-right, and of the stock of Haman, and Jezebel, and Nebuchadnezzar, and Herod, and Nero, and Dioclesian, and Maximillian, and others that might be named, among whom this principle of seeking worship and honour to themselves, hath stood always high, to whom the Royal Seed of God could never bow; and which think you now were the best sort? Abel or Cain, Nimrod or the sons of God that were in those days, Jacob or Esau, Haman or Mordecai, Jezebel or Elijah, that could not yield to her nor fear her? Nebuchadnezzar or Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Christ and his disciples, or Herod and Pilate, who could not agree till they went to crucifying the just? and then, (the scripture saith,) they were made friends. Then they could agree, and Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Aurelius, Severus, Maximus, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, Dioclesian, what think ye of these? were not they better that did not yield to them than they that did? It may be you will say, yea, but these were heathens. To that I answer, that persecution for conscience and religion sake, and forcing the conscience to the wills of men, is one and the same work in itself whoever doth it; but it is two-fold worse in one called Christian, than in a heathen. For your being called Christians or Christian magistrates, gives you no more power over other men's consciences, than heathens had, for that is God's throne in mankind, and he will not give this prerogative to any, but to his Son Jesus, and wo to them that rob him of it, for he will have his own glory and spoil theirs too.

Secondly, The thing is, he is one called a Quaker; I answer, what crime is that to be called a Quaker? seeing the Quakers are known through the world to be harmless and clear of wronging any kingdom, land, or city, or private person: their principle is to fear God, and to do justly, and to keep their conscience unspotted; so this is neither crime nor disparagement to be called a Quaker, but rather a crown and rejoicing; for upon that sort of men have always the blessing rested, that trembled at the word of the Lord, as you may read.—And they that mock at trembling and quaking shall know a day of howling and lamenting, in which they shall tremble and quake, and wish to die our death, though now they despise our life. And besides you have no law against a man being called a Quaker, and so here is no transgression yet.

Thirdly, The thing is, that he was lately at a meeting of the Quakers. Answer. Is that a crime? against what law is that? And when was it published, and in what book of record can we find that law that forbids the being at a Quaker's meeting? seeing you are within the compass of the Seven United Provinces, that are spoken of so far for granting liberty of conscience. If you are not of that mind why do you not publish yourselves to be of another mind? What, have you forgot your fathers and grandfathers already, that suffered so deeply to purchase liberty of conscience, and spent so much blood and treasure, and implored the aid of foreign protestant princes, (which was plenteously given them,) that they might above all things leave you this inheritance; to wit, liberty of conscience to meet together and worship God as you were or should be persuaded? And now, are you robbing and spoiling one another of this inheritance? What, are ye framing again the old rotten pieces of Duke D'Alva's yoke, to put it upon the necks of your brethren, to tell them what meetings they must go to, and what they must believe, and what religion they must be of? Oh, Friends! away with this work or else it will make you stink in the nostrils of the nations, and of your

neighbours, and besides it will bring a curse and blasting upon you.

Fourthly, But then you say, this meeting was for the divulging and spreading of hurtful and pernicious errors, and the Spirit's leading, &c. Now, Friends, these words are either true or false, if they are true that such things are divulged at our meetings, why do not you or your teachers manifest what these pernicious errors are, that people may know them, and how they are opposite to the holy scripture? For if you do not do this, your bare asserting them to be so, will hardly carry authority with it to make people believe it, except the rude tumultuous rabble, that are readier to believe lies than truth; and indeed, your authority may prevail further with them to stir them up against the Truth, than it will to keep them in the band of sobriety, and from filling the streets with tumults and uproars. But if you intend the sober sort should believe you, then discover particularly what these hurtful and perilous doctrines are, and how they are against the scriptures of Truth; and if you cannot do it, set your priests at work to do it, they have wages enough to engage them to serve you, if they be not too high for you; and when you and they have done that, we will have no more meetings in Groningen, but will come over to you and take up your religion, if it appears to be blameless and according to the scripture; but till this be done, we cannot believe men's words, especially, such men as in contempt to the Spirit's leading, persecute us for owning the leadings of the Spirit: for shame call this word in again, were not all that ever were sons of God, led by the Spirit of God? And did not the saints of old walk after the Spirit, and did not the apostle tell them if they did so, they should live. And what now, must we be persecuted for being led, and guided, and drawn, and constrained by the Spirit? Oh, abominable! if you had been born of the Spirit, you could not have written so, but being born of the flesh, persecution is as natural to you, as it hath been to such in former ages; but that same spirit that persecutes us for the leading of

the Spirit, and mocks at us for the witnessing of the Spirit, is that which persecuted Christ Jesus in whom this Holy Spirit lived without measure, that now liveth in us in measure; so we know we are not greater than our Lord, and if we patiently suffer for his sake, he will plead our cause with our enemies. But Friends, I do charge these words upon you to be false, and do require you in the name of the Lord to prove them true if you can, and let us know what those errors are; for I do absolutely deny the matter of fact wherewith you charge us, and that our meeting then or at any other time was for any such intent or purpose; so we shall leave it in the sight of God and men, till we hear more particularly what hurtful and pernicious errors are charged against us. And where you say such things may not be tolerated in a well-governed commonwealth, but ought to be punished, &c. Do you mean here your own republic, that you are so zealous to preserve in good order? If so, I ask if drunkenness, and swearing, and ballad-singers, and rope-dancers, and mountebanks with their jests and mockeries, and all such things as gaming, and fighting, &c. if these may be tolerated in such a republic, nay countenanced? Doth not your streets swarm with ballad-singers, and every one or two of them gets several great meetings in a day, some of them singing such horrible, bawdy, filthy things, as would, I believe, make the whores in Rome and Venice blush for shame; see Stemme Voorman Jop for one, with several others that I found in your city. And is this the republic that is so well governed, that the people of God may not innocently meet together in it, to wait upon God, and to exhort one another, and build up one another in the faith of Christ the Light, but they must be punished. Oh, Friends! if either men or women had not lost shame and modesty, such cursed abominable things could never be permitted in your hearts to be sung; these things do not show you to be such a well-governed republic, but your judgment is turned backward, and while you seek to terrify them that do well, you are the countenancers of all manner of licentious and ungodly persons, upon whom

your sword ought to lie. And as for your threatening, we have only this to say, we shall do nothing in contempt of you or your authority, and we hope we shall not forbear the doing of any thing that the Lord our God requires at our hands, knowing that it is better to obey God than man, and have learned of Christ, who said, I will tell you whom you shall fear; Fear not him that can only kill the body, and can go no further, but fear him that can kill both soul and body, and can cast them into hell. So our cause is before the Lord, let him do with us, or suffer others to do with us as he pleaseth, for his will is good, and we are given up to do and suffer his will; and if any men be our enemies for the Truth sake, we dare not but love and pity them, and when they know what they do, they will do so no more; and in the mean time the Lord God of heaven supports us by his power and living presence, in which is that life that we have hungered after.

And now a few words as to those scurrilous and filthy songs which are sung about your streets concerning the Quakers, which are as to us not worth the taking notice of, but for your sakes, the inhabitants of Groningen, that the sober among you may be stirred up to cry down such ungodly and filthy work; as to us, we can well bear such things. Drunkards made songs of David, and the rebellious of old chanted to the viol, and drunk their wine in bowls, but forgot the afflictions of Joseph, but these were they that were to go into captivity. One of these nameless songsters saith, That on the sixth of June, when ye came from church, these Quakers were diligent in their wicked work. Here he hath written like them that are or should be wiser, he hath in general terms upbraided us with wicked works, but not declared what that work was, but he saith the issue was, that they should be apprehended and sent to prison; now surely this was the same spirit in the schout, as is in this ballad-singer; for the one rejoiceth in the other's work, but neither gives a reason for the work, and why they did so, but only scoffingly said, the Spirit did command it. Now the Spirit of God did never bear such witness in any of his

people, that they should take any body out of a quiet meeting, and send them to prison; and the spirit of the Romans, which was but a manly spirit, that was more noble, than to condemn any man to prison or death, till his cause was heard with his accusers, except when they did it to please the religious persecuting Jews; it was below the Romans so to do. Now if this spirit was not the spirit of God, nor the spirit of well-ordered men, I leave the reader to judge, what for a spirit it was, that stirred in the magistrates to persecute, and in the ballad-singers to make songs of it; but it seems the matter this ballad-singer fears is, that the Quakers will overturn his church. Alas, alas! what, does your foundation shake already? Is the judgment of this world, and the worldly church come, that they are so moved? Alas! such kind of instruments, as foolish and ungodly songs sung about your streets, cannot help your church in this strait. But then this man takes in hand to tell us, the right way to God, is to bow to Christ; his disciples were no ballad-singers, and they that bowed to him, did not fear rooting out of their church as it seems he doth. But then he tells of hunting us out of the land; and that is very strange, that the magistrates of Groningen should proclaim their intentions in so weighty a matter as this, by such heralds as this; and how this pitiful fellow came so near the council chamber I know not; that he should as well make a song of the magistrates' intentions, as of our sufferings. But I shall leave that to them that know better than I; but it seems both these works are carried on in a sympathy.

There is another song come to my hand since I came from Groningen, called *De los Gesinde secte der Quakers*, or Loose Sect of the Quakers; and this savours something like a work becoming a priest, or such like man; and he saith, God sows his ground with good seed, and inquires how the tares came? I answer, primarily from the devil, but instrumentally from his ministers that have sown such a seed, as to tell people they must all live in sin all their life long, and must never be delivered from the burden of their sins as long as they live: these are

the seedsmen that get 1000, 1500, or 2000 guilders a-year for sowing this bad seed; and these are the enemies to the true doctrine of the light of Christ, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; but these cannot deceive the elect. And whereas he speaks of the Quakers hindering God's honour, and weakening God's heritage; alas, where is it? Are drunkards, swearers and liars, and persecutors, God's heritage? No surely. Are ballad-singers and mockers at the Holy Ghost, are they to the honour of God? surely no.

But this man that made this song, hath little skill in honouring God; for if he had, he had not sent forth such a fatherless brat as this into the world; and as to the choking of the good, which the devil seeks every moment to do, he is now found acting the devil's part, in this same work, to see if he can help with that little craft he hath, to choke the good. But I hope there are many in Groningen, that have understanding enough to judge such works of darkness as this, and to see that it is he that is coming forth in the dragon's host, as one that would darken the breaking forth of the light, and would turn people from the word in their heart. And as for his heap of lies, that we have perverted the scripture, and that we have witness by our spirit, that never was, and that we have that that is more precious than the life of the apostles, I shall pass over as a heap of lies, and bid him, when he makes another song, tell us who have done so, and set his name to his paper, and he shall have an answer. But the life of the apostles was Christ, and he is our life, and we know nothing more precious than that, and seek for nothing, but that we may win him, though it be to the loss of all things else. And as to our judgment, he is blind, and cannot know it, nor any such vipers as he is, till they be cleansed from their filth; and when he comes to know our principle, he will testify more against himself, than I now think to do; and he hath as little skill what opens God's throne, and shuts up hell, or what a lowly heart is, as in all the rest; for in this thing, he is but like a fool prating of things which he hath heard, but never knew

nor understood. And in the end our patience and long-suffering, will be found more like a work of the spirit, than all his malicious biting and snarling, like a dog at the heels of the innocent; and dare not come to our faces, nor own his work with his name. And for his upbraiding us about Cromwell, and about the death of the king of England, he shows his knowledge to be as little as his honesty; for there was not the name of a Quaker in England when king Charles died; and besides, if he had either read or known the tenth part of the cruel persecutions we suffered under Cromwell, and how many thousands of us he imprisoned, he would, it may be, have forborne that part of his song; for we are a people that God hath raised up, to witness against the ungodly in all nations and stations of men, which have corrupted the earth, and filled it with abominations. And so neither Cromwell nor Stewart, nor Dutch nor English, nor one nor the other, can have unity with us, while they love their wickedness; for as Christ said, he that doeth evil, hates the light; and then they must needs hate the witness of it. But at last this singer saith, he hath written this as the Spirit hath witnessed, in honour to him to whom he bows. Now mark, he to whom he bows, is one with that spirit, that guides and moves him; so if it were the spirit of God, then he doth it to the honour of God, and bows to him; but seeing he hath uttered several lies and falsehoods, it appears plainly that is the spirit of the devil that hath led him; for there is no lie of the spirit of Truth. Therefore his work is to the honour of the devil, and to him has he bowed like an obedient child; for the devil is the father of lies, and also of liars, of which he is one, and his lies many.

So, Friends, I have with as much brevity as may be, touched at these things, and what I have written, I have written in an universal love to you all; and do desire, that I may hear you grow wiser and considerate, and not like a company of mad people, run on heaps, you know not wherefore; but as you are called Christians, and reformed ones too, show forth fruits of sobriety; and if your priests think that any in your city are deluded, if

they be spiritual, let them take their spiritual weapons, and convince them in love and tenderness; and not show themselves so like the shrine-makers at Ephesus, to cry, help, men of Ephesus; so they cry help schout, and help burghermasters, and help wild and rude people, and boys in the street. Oh! shame of these things, and let your priests buckle on their armour like men, and maintain their church and doctrine, and religion, to be apostolical, and let us have liberty to dispute in their synagogues every sabbath-day, as it was in the apostles' time; and if any on their part, or on ours offer violence, let the schout lay his hand upon such. For methinks it is a pitiful case, that you that are burghers, shopkeepers and merchants, and the like, should be fain to help the learned divines, so called, in a matter of religion, and that you must use your civil power to defend them and their religion, against their adversaries, and antagonists, when they come against them with nothing but arguments and scripture, and such like weapons.

Consider these things, and stand still a little in coolness, and God will open your understandings, and give you wisdom how to do in this matter; so as that the Lord may bless you and your city, and you may all endeavour in your respective places, to stop the flood of iniquity and wickedness, and so prevent the curse of God, which otherwise hangs over your heads.

And so, Friends, in the sight of God, I feel myself clear concerning you, having warned you once and again; and if ye hearken and hear, it will be well; but if ye shut your ears to counsel, and harden your hearts to instruction, I shall return to my rest with the Lord, and ye shall know in the day of your calamity, that a prophet and a message from God hath been among you.

I am a friend to you all, and to all men, and one that labours for the good of all, and waits in patience to see Zion's redemption.

STEPHEN CRISP.

TO THE

BAPTISTS IN HOL' LAND,

WITH A

QUERY FOR THEM TO ANSWER.

FRIENDS,

THE occasion of my writing to you at present, is from yourselves. Some of you may well remember, that about two months since, I being at the house of Jacob Arients in Dezype, several of your people came into the said house, and desired to have some discourse or conference with us, which we very willingly accepted of. And so discourse having passed about several things, as about the light in the conscience; about perfection; about the Lord's supper, &c. But several were desirous to speak about baptism, which also we agreed to speak about; and they asked me if I did not believe, that the disciples of Christ did make use of outward water in baptism? I granted that I did believe they had so sometimes done, but I did not find in the scripture where their command was for so doing; but that baptism having been in use, and that by commission from God given to John, it was not easily left off; but in time the apostles did hold forth to the believers one baptism. And so after many words spoken about this matter, I asked a question, which now I am free to publish, because as yet I can get no answer. For at that time when I pressed for an answer, you, seeing what would come, which way soever you answered, you did like the Pharisees of old, Matth. xxi. 27. When Christ asked if the baptism of John was from God or from man, though they were convinced in their consciences it was from God, yet they lied, and said they could not tell; and so though you were convinced in this matter, what to have answered, yet because you thought that the speaking the truth was not for your purpose, therefore you answered, we

cannot tell. So I said, that if you could give me an answer the next day, I should willingly hear it; but though several came to the meeting, yet I had no answer. I desired them there present, to put the query to their teachers, and let them, if they could answer it, write their answer, and send it to W. Williams, at Alkmeere, that I might have it. But to this day I hear of no answer, and therefore finding it needful to be answered, I have thus openly and publicly set it forth, that so all that are concerned, may take notice thereof. And if any of you that could not then tell, can now answer it, you may; and if any other on your behalf will, I shall be willing to receive an answer; for it is a thing needful to be known; for I cannot believe that they that have this one baptism, can be ignorant what it is.

The question is this, that whereas the apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians, Eph. iv. 5, saith, There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; I asked, what that one baptism was? Whether the apostle in this place did intend that baptism which in scripture is called the baptism of John, which I confessed was with outward water, or whether he intended the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which in scripture is called the baptism of Christ; and I urging and pressing for an answer, you told me you could not tell.

Now, Friends, this thing is needful to be known, both by you and us, and by all men; therefore consider it, if the baptism be but one, and you be ignorant of that one, then have you none, or as ill as none; for if it be but one, and you take up another thing in the stead of that one, it is impossible it can produce that effect which the one true baptism would do; and so consequently is as bad as none. So search yourselves, Friends, for by your discourse you have given me ground to suspect you are as much strangers to the one faith, that gave the saints a victory over the world, as you are to the one baptism that makes clean the conscience, and is the answer of a good conscience in the sight of God, 1 Pet. iii. 21. And where these two are wanting, and their effects, there is nothing enjoyed or known, that is profitable to salvation.

And though men talk of these things, and make profession of them ; yet where their fruits do not appear, it is manifest the things themselves are not there, but a bare talk. So Friends, search your hearts, and consider your ways, and turn your minds to the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true light that enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world. And as you wait in that, it will give you an understanding in things you yet know not, and make you able in simplicity to answer this question, and also make you partakers of this one baptism ; which is my hearty desire for you.

So I expect your answer, either by writing or print, as you will, and remain a friend to the Truth, and one that wishes well to all men.

STEPHEN CRISP.

TESTIMONY

CONCERNING

EDWARD GRAUNT OF COLCHESTER.

EDWARD GRAUNT, a man of near seventy years, who from his youth upward, sought after the knowledge of the right way of the Lord with great diligence, and answered his profession with an honest and upright conversation, and was a constant worshipper of God, in that way which appeared to him most agreeable to the scripture of Truth, which saith, separate the precious from the vile; and was one of the first that embraced the light of the everlasting Truth that shined forth in his and our hearts, at the preaching of the gospel. And in that light hath he had his conversation for the space of almost nine years, without wavering; holding steadfastly the faith of the Truth, and keeping in the unity of the body. In which time he hath valiantly and patiently suffered many things, at the hands of them that have lift up their arm and power against the Truth, and them that walk therein; partly for his testimony that he hath borne to the same, and partly for the testimony that he hath borne against the false prophets, and deceitful workers, who have sheltered themselves under the divers powers that have been in being, in these nine years aforesaid. And as he hath formerly been taken notice of to be one of the first in coming to the assemblies of the people of God, thereby setting a good example unto the younger sort, so he continued in these late cruel and bloody days of persecution; and endured many sore blows, at several times, at which he was not deterred from that testimony and witness which God had raised him up to bear for his name.

Now in the end of his generation, upon the sixth day of the Eleventh month, this good man came to the place

where Friends did usually meet, soon after the tenth hour of the day, and having stood there with a few more about half an hour, came the troopers, riding upon them, and did very grievously beat this old man on his head, shoulders, back, and arms; and having received many blows, he went home, and continued very sore of those blows; but was walking up and down several days. Then it pleased God to visit him with great pains of a former trouble also; so that he began to keep his bed. And sometime during the time of his lying so ill, he was heard to say, he felt more of his blows than he did at first; and so he lay sometimes sensible of the pains of his trouble, and sometimes the pain of blows; so that he was in great misery in the outward man, but armed with a great measure of patience; and having one side somewhat swelled, he was taken notice of several times to raise blood, and the last words that he was heard to speak, he complained of his head, took a handkerchief, and blew his nose, and hard clotted blood came forth, which was this morning; and that which is remarkable, that that very day month, about the very same minute, as near as can be reckoned, that he was so beaten and abused, about the same minute he departed this life; and left his bruised and afflicted body behind him, a witness, yea, and his last witness against their cruelty, until their cruelty riseth up in judgment against them in the great day of account, who repent not. So that the Lord hath marked out the hour and minute for a memorial of their cruelty, in causing him in the same hour and minute to finish and complete his testimony; and in peace and patience to rest with himself.

STEPHEN CRISP.

AN

EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP,

WHEN

A PRISONER.

O YE lambs of the green pasture ! ye sheep of my Father's fold ! ye who by the word of life are made acquainted with the power of regeneration, and are born into the nature of the Lamb's innocency ; and are grown up in the virtue of sincerity. Oh ! how glorious is your appearance ? mine eye beholdeth, and my heart is ravished ; my soul shall praise the God of my life for ever and ever on your behalf. From the hill have I viewed you, and from the high tower of my refuge have I looked on you ; my eye is opened, and I see you the flock of undefiled lambs in whom my God is glorified. Oh ! feed ye, and be ye nourished ; for your pastures are enlarged, and your Shepherd's care is over you ; his arm is able to defend you from every beast of the field. By day will he feed you in his pleasant pastures, and by night will he fold you in a fold of rest. Oh ! my beloved Friends, this is the day of which we have spoken, and in which not only the words, but the nature must be manifested. And ye who bear the Lamb's image, and grow in his nature, first being proved, shall be preserved and delivered, and in the day of trial feel the word of patience ; for that stayeth the thoughts, and keepeth satisfied in the present state. And here is the glory of the saints, who only of all the children of men, can glory in tribulation, and can grow then in patience. Now doth the glory of Sion's daughters appear to be within them, and their strength is a continual spring, whereby her sons are armed with power, to tread down change and alterations, and dwell in the dominion over trouble. Glory, glory to the God of our strength, who keepeth us, who guardeth Israel, who armeth his chosen ones, and leads them to

the battle, and keeps our head covered therein, that the enemy cannot wound it.

And here, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, in the generation of our endless posterity, is my unity with you preserved, though by locks and bars I be separated outwardly from you, yet by the invisible flowings of life, do I reach you, and am felt by you, in that eternal Spirit which quickens and gives life to every member of the church of Christ. This present separation, is for trial of our faith, love and patience, that through exercise they may be perfected, and we all may learn the heavenly and internal knowledge, sense and feeling one of another, by sinking into, and waiting in the spirit of the Father, by which the whole body is knit and united together; and who knows us not in this, is not truly of us; for as we have said, declarations and prophecies must cease, but the word which begets and gives life, abides for ever, and is the daily bread, which is set before the mercy seat, in the house of our God, of which none may eat, but those who are sanctified, washed and clean, according to the law, and are witnesses of the offering, that makes atonement; and these may now feed together, being nourished, and grow strong, as well as ever; because the enemy cannot rob you of your food, and your water. Therefore eat, O Friends, and drink abundantly of the new wine, well refined; let your hearts be glad, and let your souls rejoice in the promise, for this is the day of the Lamb's battle, and the day of his victory is near at hand, wherein the carcasses must be buried out of sight, and all dead worship without life put under, and the living worship of the living God, be exalted more and more. Therefore rejoice ye, and I say again, rejoice. Let your hearts be strong, O my beloved Friends, and comfort ye yourselves therein, and one another, and love one another. Let the spirit of love abound in you, one towards another, in how much ye see the enemy seeks to discomfort you. Mark the weak among you in true love and compassion; beware of the wiles of those that are crafty, who seek to lead from the simplicity of the gospel. Keep your testimony alive in all

things, wherein ye are required by the Lord, and be not terrified at all that is, or may come to pass. And the God of peace and power, of eternal love and truth, preserve you all faithful to the end, to the everlasting consolation of your souls, and glory of his great name; for the sake whereof he hath saved us, and delivered us, and will yet deliver us; to whom be everlasting praises, and holy thanksgiving for ever and ever. Amen.

STEPHEN CRISP.

AN
EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP,
TO
FRIENDS.

DEARLY beloved in the Truth, of whom I have at this time a living remembrance in the living fellowship into which the Lord of his infinite goodness and mercy hath called you, and to this day preserved you, who have with diligence waited upon him. Dear hearts, in love unfeigned do I dearly salute you all, desiring your steadfastness and growth in the precious Truth; and that ye may be daily more and more established in the grace of God, by which ye are called to be his witnesses in that place; that you may witness the sufficiency of his grace who hath called you, let your temptations and trials be what they may. For, dear Friends, this is a certain saying, and worthy to be believed, that all temptations to evil, both inward and outward, of what sort soever they be, do spring from that power which God will in time bring down, and break to pieces for his seed's sake. And they that abide low in the lowly seed, shall behold their deliverance with rejoicing, and shall bless the God of their salvation for ever. But if any one in the hour of temptation, lift up himself above that tender principle that teacheth a whole dependance upon God; then such a one seems wise and strong in his own eyes, but by and by falleth into the snare of the enemy, and then sees his own weakness and folly, it may be when it is too late. Therefore let every one be kept in the pure fear of God, waiting daily to feel his strength renewed through the spirit of Christ that worketh in us, both the will and also the deed; and such as have their sole dependance upon God in the faith of his Son, take no care how to pass through the trials and difficulties of their day, but as children of a tender father, they cast their care upon

God, who cares for them, for his name's sake, and brings them through and over all, in his own time and manner; and then such have experience, and can speak a word to the weary soul, from the sense of what God hath done for them.

So, dear hearts, now you know the way of God, walk in it with an upright and an humble mind; and let your cries arise to God for the planting and spreading his name; and let your life so shine in the beauty of holiness, that the mouths of all Truth's enemies may be stopped, and the sober inquirers after the Truth, may be reached by your faithfulness and innocency, which is the loudest trumpet that can sound out God's praise in the earth. And without this life, all preaching and testimony is to no purpose, but tends to the condemnation of them who make profession of that they enjoy not.

And, my Friends, you know how the good seedsman hath sown a good seed in and among you; and no doubt but the evil seedsman is still watching to sow his evil seed; but be you all diligent to keep it out, and watch over that ground in your own hearts, which cannot receive any evil seed of what sort or kind soever. For in the good seed which is Christ, ye have life, ye have comfort, ye have heavenly fellowship, by the flowing forth of the love of God in your hearts one toward another. But wherever the enemy's seed is sown and received, that brings in death, sorrow and discord, and begets hard thoughts and jealousies in the mind, and takes away the sight of the single eye, which can see the single heart in one another. And if this be stood in a while, it destroys the tender birth of the true seed, in the womb, and begets and brings forth a false birth in his room, which exalts itself in the sight of things, which it must never inherit. Therefore, dear lambs, that ye may abide to the end, and accomplish your holy testimony with joy to the glory of God, and to your everlasting rejoicing, I say again, keep in the tender, lowly frame of spirit, which ye have learned in the Truth, in which ye will witness a growing up in strength and understanding.

And, dear hearts, love one another with the same love

wherewith the Lord hath loved you ; which is that love that forgives trespasses and covers offences. And hereby ye will always have a sense of each others life and sincerity, and be tender over the good in one another, and travail for one another's growth and prosperity. For this love teacheth to lay no burdens upon one another, but to help bear each others burdens, as Christ Jesus hath taught. And while this love dwells in your hearts, there is no room for evil thoughts, nor for jealousies, nor evil surmisings ; but whatever is seen in another that is not right, this love constrains the one, to deal uprightly with the other ; and the other feeling the virtue of this love is constrained thereby to submit to the word of exhortation for the Lord's sake, and so both are comforted and refreshed together.

And, Friends, wait diligently, daily to feel the life of your testimony renewed in your souls ; that ye may know the way of God to be still the new and living way. And this will keep you from fainting by reason of the length of time, that ye bear the cross and sufferings, and reproach of the gospel ; for when your life and inward consolation is renewed, as well as your exercises and trials, there can be no weariness.

And this keeps out of all dead formality, which all other professors fall into : when they have lost the life of their testimony, they retain a formal profession, which stands in words and outward things, which neither pleases God, nor brings comfort to their souls.

But you, dearly beloved, wait in diligence for the dew of heaven, daily to water the plant of God, that ye may be fruitful to him that hath planted you, and may receive his blessings in your bosoms, in your families, and in your meetings, and your souls may praise his name for ever.

And, Friends, let none be discouraged at the prosperity of the ungodly, nor at the length of their day, but in the universal spirit, feel the prosperity of the seed which is arisen to possess the gate of its enemies, and is prosperous in the hand of the Lord in many lands and countries : and Truth reigns over the head of deceit, and treads it

down, and breaks the head and power of the serpent, according to the promise of God. And they that believe, make not haste, but wait in the patience of Christ, to see the glorious work which is begun and carried on in the Lord's time, every one fulfilling their own part in their day ; and being then gathered to their fathers, they lay down their heads in the faith, steadfastly believing, that he that hath begun the work, will finish it to his own glory and honour.

So, dear Friends, the God of my life bless you, preserve and prosper you in his blessed testimony to which he hath called you, and strengthen you, and give you wisdom, so to walk as ye have heard and learned from the beginning, that in the end ye may rest in him, with all the faithful.

This is the earnest breathing and desire of your true Friend, in the fellowship of the gospel of peace,

STEPHEN CRISP.

AN

EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP,

TO

FRIENDS IN THE NORTH.

DEAR and truly beloved, in the everlasting seed and holy covenant of life eternal, doth my soul salute you with love unfeigned; for by the same holy pure spirit by which we have been comforted and refreshed in one another many a time, when we have been together; by the same are you brought into my remembrance, and my spirit gives thanks to God daily on your behalf, (to whom I am knit and united by a band inseparable,) because of your preservation in the faith, and patience of Jesus our head; that though the mountains have swelled to a great height, and the waves of the raging sea have rolled so violently against the rock of your dwelling, yet you are where you were, and your faith is confirmed through your tribulations, and your patience enlarged through the exercise thereof. Oh! dear lambs, what hath our God done for us? His arm hath been underneath in all our trials, else we must needs have fainted long ere now: but herein doth my soul rejoice, that your testimony doth live, and that all the strength of darkness hath not slain it, but it remains as a crown upon your heads. Oh! my dear Friends, let no man take away this your crown, and let none lose the price he hath already paid; for if any man suffer his testimony to fall, after he hath begun to bear it, he loseth his sufferings that he hath suffered, and it is not accounted unto him but as a reproach; as he that began to build a house and could not finish it. Therefore, dear hearts, you that have this glorious testimony of salvation and of life committed to you, be tender and careful of it, as of your most choice treasure, and count it not a small thing that God hath done for you; for no honour is like unto this honour, nor no freedom

like the being a faithful servant of God ; for it hath the reward of this life, and of that which is to come. But alas ! my dear Friends, none can accomplish this blessed testimony in these days of trial, but those alone who know the daily renewing of that power by which we were called unto it. And none feels that renewing, but they that daily wait upon the Lord, who is the well-spring of all our strength and refreshment ; and whensoever any come to slight their watch, and to neglect their waiting upon God, they are but as those who forsake the fountain, and so grow dry, and barren, and unfruitful to God, or to their own good. So keep your dependance upon the Lord, that ye may abide, for he abideth ; and they that are built upon him alone, do also abide unto the end ; for the unchangeable power is that which doth make you unchangeable in your testimony ; and as you dwell in that, you have the promise, and cannot be brought to nought, as many have been, who have been exalted in the knowledge, and grown careless of the cross, who are already fallen, and set forth as Lot's wife once was, as an ensample of the judgment of God. But such as have their dependance upon the Lord alone, feel cause in themselves to be humble and lowly minded ; and although they be joined to the power of God in the covenant of his light, yet self is kept in the death, and the confidence is in the power, and the honour of all is given to that which is eternal, and not to the creature, though never so pure. And they, who thus in the true humility, give the honour of their standing and preservation unto the Lord, and not unto themselves, nor their parts, wits, understandings nor resolutions, these doth God sufficiently honour with his glory and presence, and supports them in all their exercises ; but whoever comes to disregard the power, and thinks to stand by what he knows and hath seen, he stands but in a slippery place.

And, dear Friends and brethren, remember to keep holy the sabbath of your rest in Christ, which is now come, and see that you rest from your labours, and toiling your spirits in the earth and earthly things ; and whoever feels a burden, lay it off, whatever it be, that

ye may possess all things in the free spirit that looks not at the value of any thing in comparison of the Truth, remembering the words of our Lord, that where the treasure is, the heart will also be. So that those whose heart is in a wife, in a husband, in children, in trade, in riches, in house and lands, or whatever else, so far that they cannot willingly give them up for the Truth; these are such a one's treasure, and this treasure is in the earth; and the heart is there, whatever they profess. And these things come to be the gods in the secret chambers, besides the Lord; and so his first and lasting commandment, who said, 'Thou shalt have none other gods besides me,' is broken; and this brings guilt and burdens upon the soul, and then thou canst not keep the spiritual sabbath to God, for no burden must be borne therein: but he that is entered into the rest, is ceased from his own works, as God did from his; and such keep the sabbath holy.

So, dearly beloved, cast away that labour and toil which hath made some to walk uncomfortably in the way, and some to faint and fall from it; and lift up your hearts to God in the faith, and give up yourselves and all things to his will; and there comes an end of all your cares, saving only to be found doing his will in your generation.

And in this blessed service is my joy and my fellowship with you, and all the faithful in Christ Jesus, in whose love my heart is at this time enlarged towards you, beyond what words can utter. Yet having no new thing to write unto you, but the very same which we have heard and learned from the beginning, to wit, that glorious testimony of the resurrection of life and of salvation, which God, through the manifestation of his Son, hath committed unto us to bear. In which blessed testimony I still labour in the strength of the Lord, and he hath blessed me therein, and caused me by the operation of his divine love, to sound the same gospel unto several countries and nations in the eastern parts of the world, where a door of utterance is opened unto me; and many have believed and obeyed the Truth.

And having now been in England, visiting the churches about four months, I am again in the will of God about to cross the seas; though I much desired first to have seen your faces in the northern parts, whom my soul dearly loves; but the necessities of other nations and countries, bring a constraint upon me, at this time, to omit it. But the salutation of my love abounds towards you; and I pray God to give you a living sense thereof in yourselves, to the comforting and refreshing of every faithful one among you.

Farewell, and the God of peace multiply and increase his goodness in all your souls, and preserve you all alive to himself, to bear his holy testimony amongst his enemies, that the world may know that he is risen, that saves and preserves from falling. To whom belongs everlasting honour, everlasting renown and dominion for ever and evermore.

Your dear friend and brother in the Truth, and companion in the kingdom, patience, and tribulations of Jesus.

STEPHEN CRISP.

AN

EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP

TO

FRIENDS IN THE EASTERN PARTS.

Dearly beloved Friends,

IN that love that is better felt than expressed, do I dearly salute you, as having a true sense of a service to which the Lord God hath called you in that place, to witness to his name, which is holy, and must be exalted in the earth; and the power is making known itself abundantly in the earth; glory be to God for ever. And, dear hearts, my soul's cry to the God of my life, is daily, that you may be kept and preserved in the dominion of his holy, pure Seed, which is a lowly dominion, and a kingdom that comes in power, and stands in the power. And dear hearts, have a care of yourselves; I know, by large experience, it is a day of trial unto you; therefore keep your armour on, that spiritual armour of light, that you may see round about you which way the enemy works to betray you, and to do you hurt; and dwell in that which gives you an understanding and discerning between the clean and the unclean; that among the multitudes that come to you, you may know what to feed, and what to famish; to whom ye may open, and to whom ye must shut; for it is not lawful to give holy things to dogs, nor wisdom to cast pearls before swine; but to feed the seed, and to wait for the gentle showers that fall from the everlasting hills upon it, both in you and in them; that so it may come up, and answer to your life, and to your obedience and subjection; and that the world may see you are not your own, but that you are given up to obey him that hath bought you and redeemed you both in word and deed.

Dearly beloved, my heart is full of love to you, and my prayers are for you; and I believe the Lord will do you good, and bring you into a good experience of things relating to the kingdom of God, which may be for the service of his church, and to the comfort of his people. I am writing something in answer to Alexander Rosse's lies and slanders, which I shall speed, and send you a part of, as soon as I can. Here is also a fine book which George Keith hath written to the Mennists, showing how they err from the scriptures, in five principal particulars, as baptism and the Lord's supper, their foundation, ministry and worship, which I would also further as fast as I can.

I shall not enlarge, but remain your dear friend and brother in the Truth,

STEPHEN CRISP.

ANOTHER

EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP

TO

FRIENDS.

Dearly beloved Friends,

IN the fellowship of that pure Spirit by which the Lord hath reached unto us, and quickened us, and brought us from that sleep and death of sin, and made us sensible of a life that is eternal; in this holy fellowship, I say, doth my soul dearly salute you, earnestly breathing unto God, who is our fountain, that he may daily multiply his grace, mercy and peace upon you, and in you all; and may by the influence of his good Spirit, and blessed presence, make up unto you, that which others in England and elsewhere do enjoy, and you want; viz. the many precious opportunities of being comforted together in our general and large meetings, and the large flowings forth of the spirit in the ministers of the gospel.

But, Friends, the Lord our God can be all, and will be all in all unto you that trust in him; and this know, you are often in our remembrance, and that spirit of life that is in us, doth often bring you to mind for good, as members of the same body, nourished by the same bread by which we live. And, my dear Friends, your testimony for God, in that howling wilderness, (where Sion our mother, and all her children are yet in suffering,) is very dear and precious in the sight of God, and of me his servant; I have with comfort and refreshment to myself and many brethren, been drawn forth to speak of what I saw and felt among you, as to your patient and joyful suffering for the gospel's sake in which you have believed.

And now, dear hearts, go on in the name of the Lord, until your testimony is accomplished, and let your trust be alone in God, who hitherto hath made way for you

beyond expectation, and will still take the care of you, as a father over his children; and have a care that nothing be suffered or permitted among you, that hurts your testimony for God and his blessed name: Oh Friends! it is more than our lives; for this is the day in which God is making known through us unto the world, that there is a power able to keep them that trust in it, in the path of righteousness and holiness. Now as we walk steadfast in it, notwithstanding all opposition, and without being turned aside to the right hand or the left; so come men to see that among us, which is not elsewhere to be found, to wit, a restoration from the sinful and fallen life of the whole world, which they, through unbelief, do say is impossible. But when the work of restoration is wrought, it shows forth the glory of the power that wrought it, and the witness shall rise and answer to the glory of God.

Therefore, I say, Friends, let nothing hurt this honourable testimony which to you is committed in that dark country; and if any among you walk disorderly, and not as becomes the holy calling wherewith you are called, take notice of such; and if they repent not and reform their evil ways, let the world know that such are not guided in their evil conversation, by that pure Light and Spirit in which you have believed. And seeing it hath pleased God to put it into the heart of our dear sister E. C. to visit you in the love of God, and fellowship of the gospel, which I doubt not will be to your comfort and spiritual advantage; therefore let us by her have an account how it stands with you particularly; and if any be disorderly and rebel against the Truth, send us the particulars, that they may be considered at the general meeting here, and our best counsel, advice and assistance we shall send unto you.

And, dear Friends, let none be weary of tribulations, knowing that the glory of God and the gospel is thereby advanced, and the seed that is sown in this generation through sufferings, shall come up in the next, in great glory and dominion. Therefore, be of good courage; your

work, service, tribulations and afflictions, will never be forgotten.

And, dear Friends, I came lately out of England, where there is the greatest addition and increase of the church of God that ever mine eyes beheld; and the occasion of it, (as to the outward,) is a certain law that is made to plunder Friends' goods, for meeting and preaching; 40*l.* sterling for preaching, except the first time, which is 20*l.* and 20*l.* for the house where the meeting is, and 10*s.* for every one that meets. And hereupon many Friends have been spoiled of their goods; and their boldness, steadfastness, faithfulness, and courage have astonished the nation from the greatest to the least; and many have believed; and many officers and magistrates rather chose to suffer themselves, than to execute the law. So that Truth's prosperity is very eminent in that nation; and in Scotland and Ireland there is also a great increase; and remember, my dear lambs, ye are the first fruits unto our God in these countries; that is your crown; wear it honourably, and suffer for the remainder of the seed in meekness and patience, and commit the work to God, who will break through the nations in his great power, and will make our innocence shine as the sun.

So, dear lambs, God Almighty preserve you to himself, and comfort and guide you as a Shepherd, and feed and satisfy you with heavenly refreshments; this is the desire of my soul for you; and I know it is your desire; and I know God doth and will hear the supplications and cries of his own; and in this confidence and faith, I remain your true and real friend in the gospel of peace,

STEPHEN CRISP.

TO
THE RULERS AND INHABITANTS
IN
HOLLAND,
AND THE REST OF
THE UNITED PROVINCES.

(The Original Manuscript of a Book in Dutch, called The Ground and Cause of the Misery of the Netherlands.)

OH, Holland, and the adjacent provinces, a renowned land, a land full of riches, full of people, full of religion, and full of all iniquity! Oh, what lamentation shall I take up over thee, oh, Netherlands! My soul is afflicted for thee, and my heart is filled with sorrow concerning thy state; how is distress and anguish come upon thee ere thou art aware? And how are thy bowels filled with confusion and distraction, breakings and shatterings on every side? Thy wise men and rulers have lost their ancient policy, and thy whole land hath lost that unity in which thy glorying was; and misery is broken in upon thee like a sea, and there are no banks to keep it out, thy strong holds have been and are still but snares to thee, and gins of thy own preparing, wherein thou art caught and taken, and hast none to deliver thee; thy gold and money are now no saviour, neither availeth it thee that thou hast gotten great riches, for that doth but sharpen the force of thy enemies against thee; thy multitude of counsellors is now no safety to thee, because they are broken in judgment, and confounded and shattered in their counsels, every man being joined to his own faction, and seeking the promoting thereof; thy allies stand afar off to see what will become of thee: Oh, re-

nowned land, of whose fame and greatness the whole world rung, and all princes and potentates had an eye upon thy affairs and prosperity, marvelling whereto it would grow: how is thy glory stained, thy name and fame decayed, thy beauty turned to ashes, thy strength to weakness, thy unity to confusion and tumults, thy dread to reproach and shame, and the eyes of all potentates now looking out at thy fall and desolation which hasteth upon thee! These things are greatly to be lamented, and yet is there a greater lamentation over thee, and that is that few or none have laid these things to heart, nor sought out the cause of this misery, nor set a hand to remove it; but the nearer the plagues come, the more pride, looseness, and hardness of heart, do fill thy land, and cities, and people; therein few or none stand in the gap, few or none plead with God by true repentance, and turning from those abominations for which the mighty God of heaven is come to visit thee; but thy eyes and mind are out at this cause and that cause, crying out this is a traitor, and that is a traitor; and one makes lies, another reports and spreads them, and a third proceeds upon that as upon a foundation, and so judgment and justice is turned backward, and your fingers made foul with blood, and your hands full of iniquity, so that your sword cannot prevail, nor your designs prosper, until you repent and turn to the hand that smites you; and then on the other hand, how are the eyes of the people out at saviours upon the earth, feeding yourselves with vain and windy hopes to rid yourselves from your calamity by this means and by that means, setting up one man, and pulling down another, calling strangers to your assistance, rather than making peace with an offended God, whose anger is justly kindled against you because of your abominations!

Another great misery upon thee at this time is, that thou hast few or none, to deal plainly with thee in this thy forsaken condition; but thy teachers, who have been the great stirrers up of this confusion, and makers of parties within thee, are as blind seers that can see no way for thy escape, but are putting you upon desperate designs, which tend more to their own interest and ad-

vantage than to yours, so thinking to make an advantage of your misery, and build their tower higher with your ruin; and in place of telling you how you were brought into this condition, and how you might come out, they are crying out, that they have been too much despised, and their church counsels too much inspected, and their power too much limited and restrained, and you have given too much liberty for people to exercise their consciences in matters of religion as they were persuaded, though contrary to them and their prescriptions; so that if you will but serve them in persecuting all their opposers, though more upright than themselves, and if you will but set them up, and put more into their mouths, they will cry peace to you: oh beware of such blind guides that see not the danger, nor the way to escape it, but such have you too long followed. Oh ye Netherlanders, until now both the leaders and the led, the rulers and the people, are fallen and falling into a pit together.

And now that things are thus far gone, oh that there were yet but an ear to hear counsel, that I might have hope concerning you, that ye might yet turn to the Lord, and that he might have mercy on you before utter ruin hath laid you desolate: yea, a travail is upon me for you, that ye might be saved if it be possible, and the decree be not sealed against you: and, however, that I may be clear in God's sight, and free from the blood of all men, it lies upon me to spread a few things by way of counsel and consideration before the people of these countries, that the just principle in all consciences may be reached unto, unto which I do appeal; and they shall testify in the day of judgment in the face of all the rebellious, that they were warned, and that they rejected counsel.

And first consider the great hypocrisy that is in this land, which is a crying sin, and provokes the Lord to anger; how is the simplicity of your forefathers lost? Where is that zeal and fervency that appeared for reformation a hundred years since? nay, is it not become a crime for any man to seek a further reformation than that which is stinted and limited by men of corrupt minds?

Steets genegen tot alle boosheit, alle de gebooden godts brekende. Belid. 5. Dort. 61. Art. Is not this the top of your reformation? and if any come to preach a freedom from sin, and a clean sacrifice out of a clean heart, and the change of the nature that God works in his children, that they come Steets genegen tot alle good heyt; how hateful is such doctrine both to priests and people, as if they should say, we will have no more reformation than we have, that is, to pray and preach with sinful hearts, and to perform sinful performances, to transgress and break all the commands of God, and to abide in the sinful state till we die; this is the pitch of our religion and reformation; oh ye hypocrites, can ye bring forth a clean offering out of such an unclean vessel? and if the offering be polluted, will it not be abominable to the pure God? Said not Christ, first make the inside clean; therefore, oh ye inhabitants, cease from all your polluted service, and sit down in silence, and say as they did of old, the Lord hath put us to silence, Jer. viii. 14, 15, 16. And in this silent submission to the will of God will you come to find every one the cause of the plague in his own bosom, to wit, an unclean heart never yet made clean, and yet undertake to be a worshipper; an old corrupt nature never mortified, and yet undertake to talk of a new birth: oh this hypocrisy hath rung loud in the ears of the God of heaven, and hath pulled down judgments upon you, for his soul is weary of your worships and services; either come down to his witness in your consciences, the light which shows you your uncleanness and inclinations to all wickedness, and believe therein, and humble yourselves before him, or else cease from worshipping in your vain and empty forms, for the longer you go on therein, the more will you provoke the Lord against you, and that shall ye know to be true from the Lord, to you all, both one sort and another, who worship in that fallen state, and sinful condition, and neither come to know a cleansing, nor so much as a hope thereof raised up in you.

2. Again, consider the rendings and tearings that are among you upon the account of doctrine and worship, which you have all laid upon God, as if he were the au-

thor of it all; and that he stood on the part of every party, though never so opposite one to another, and herein is the Lord highly provoked, yea his name blasphemed, of which he is and always was very jealous. How many rents and divisions are there at this day among the priests of these countries? how many among the states and rulers? how many among the ministers? how many among all other sects beyond number? and which of them is it that doth not endeavour to espouse God, and Christ, and scripture, &c. as the head of the quarrel and controversy, as if God were like unto you, broken and divided in counsel; oh for shame put a stop to this taking the name of God into your mouths, till ye come to know his will better, and name him not in your rents, and divisions, and private interests, carried on with specious pretences; for he sees all your deceitful purposes, and will not hold that man guiltless that takes his name in vain. *Exod. xx.* And know this, that before any man should dare to make use of the name of God, to maintain his party and cause, he ought first to know that his cause is God's cause, and how should you, any of you know that, while you deny any infallible spirit in you, or revelation thereby; do not all your discords remain as doubtful to you, on one side as on the other? how dare then one man or people persecute the other, and that upon the account of God's work, and use his name thereto? Did not God reprove this work in the days of *Isaiah, ch. lxvi. 5*, yet ye are going on with it against them whom ye hate, and thereby provoke the Lord to anger.

3. Again, consider the means you are using for deliverance in this day of your distress, and see whether you are not working the contrary way, and thereby provoking the Lord more and more. The first means is by proclaiming a fasting day to pray for a blessing upon your arms by land and sea against your enemies, &c. Now may not the Lord justly say, Who hath required this at your hands? What prophet have you among you that hath received the word from the Lord to say with *Joel, Jo. ii. 15*, Blow the trumpet, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, &c. No, you have denied that spirit, and de-

nied that which should sanctify your congregations. And further, in case ye be persuaded it is your duty to keep a fast, let as many as are so minded observe it in quietness and humility, but make not your fast an occasion of strife and persecution against your neighbours and friends who are not like minded; for how can you expect a blessing upon your arms, by forcing people to observe your fast, who neither have faith in your fast, nor arms neither; and would it not be hypocrisy and sin in such as are otherwise minded to dissemble with God and you, and make you believe they had unity with you, and have it not? said not the apostle, Whatsoever is not of faith is sin? Rom. xiv. 23. And those that because they have no faith either in your fast or in your arms, cannot dissemble and make a show of fasting with you, those you persecute. Do you think this can bring a blessing upon you and your proceedings? I tell you nay; but ye will find one day that ye pull down judgments faster by persecution than you can prevent them with all your prayers and fastings, therefore, cease from using force herein upon the consciences of any, and they that find their hearts prepared to keep a day, let them keep it to the Lord in peace and sincerity, and not to strife and debate, and to persecuting them that will not do like them. Read Isaiah, lviii. 4, 5, 6, 7, see what fast the Lord did then call for, and he is God and doth not change, and till you come to break off from strife, envy, persecution and oppression, your fast will not avail you. Another way which you have taken for your defence is to make bulwarks, and to take up arms, which, instead of being a voluntary work, ye impose it, and enjoin it upon the people as you do your fast, laying force upon the consciences of people, though you knew there were many a thousand in the land who had long made profession against these things, whose hypocrisy is now largely manifested, and it is seen it was but a profession without power; but if they had kept to their principles, we see what great persecution must thereupon have followed by the few that have suffered, and borne their testimony in these things. Oh Netherlanders, is this the way to pros-

per, to put force upon the consciences of people, which alone belongs to God, and which your fathers a hundred years ago did understand no man had power over? (See the proclamation of the States-General in the year 1581.) And have you more power in these causes than the king of Spain had? Or is it any better for the people of this age to observe your holidays when you impose them upon them, if they have no faith in them, nor unity with them, than it would have been for the people of that age to have observed the holidays of the papists, which were imposed upon them, in which they had no faith nor unity with them. Oh! consider these things, and let conscience be free for God to rule there, for it is his dwelling-place.

4. Consider what use is at this time made of your low estate, that instead of turning to the Lord, whose heavy hand is upon you, and passing by offences wherein ye have offended each other, and forgiving injuries, and joining together in covenant with God, and one another in love, as Christians ought to do: I say instead hereof, how is one taking advantage of revenge upon another, and bringing forth mischief and evil against his neighbour and his brother, and by all means true or false, sometimes seeking the ruin and destruction each one of him that is against him, or hath injured him. This is not the way to healing thy wound, Oh Netherlands, but is the way to make thy wounds daily bleed afresh, and to give matter to thy enemies to rejoice over thee, who can so easily rejoice and triumph one over another; far better were it, that ye did humble yourselves and forgive one another, and seek the public welfare by banishing each one out of his own bosom that traitor called wrakesucht, and enmity, which hath been the ruin of many famous countries, and hath begun to ruin yours, and will certainly ruin it, if not cast out; for self-interest always breeds contention, and contention wrakesucht; but the universal love of God which teacheth in the first place to give no occasion of offence, that preserves all societies in peace; and had this universal love of God prevailed in this land, things had not come to the pass they are come to: but pride and haughtiness went before a fall,

and now are the lofty fallen, and they that have been long contriving how to get into great honours and dignities, are as in a moment fallen. Oh that all that are concerned both in this falling and rising would consider the just hand of God in these things, but let none act in revenge against his neighbour, nor his brother, for vengeance is the Lord's, and he doth and will repay it; and if some magistrates must be turned out because they have been exalted, let men more humble, more wise, more fearing God, and hating covetousness, be nominated in their places, and not such as will step but into their decaying glory, and withering dignities, and there exalt themselves as they have done, for that is the way to bring down more judgments and plagues upon this distressed land, and always to be unsettled and filled with confusion.

5. It is worth the consideration of all men how the mighty hand of God is manifested in this our age in breaking the decrees and force of men, and in overturning all devices which are contrived of men for the settling their own interest: by which all men ought to learn to take heed of binding, or seeking to bind the hand of the Almighty; when was there more policy and counsel employed for the settling of self-interest than was in England against the present king? And when men's bands were at the strongest, then the Lord confounded their counsels, and brought him over them, whom they had most excluded; yet this served not the rulers of this land for a warning, who trusted not so much in the Lord for their establishment, (if it were his will,) as in their own edicts and contrivances to keep out the young prince of Orange, and how suddenly were all their bands and edicts broken? Therefore how had all men need to stand in awe, and to fear before the Lord, and every one to act quietly in his own sphere, without having regard to self-interest, and endeavouring to establish it by deep and crafty contrivances, and without having an eye to what shall be, except they knew the counsel of the Almighty therein! Therefore, O prince, rulers, and people, be wise, sober, and watchful, and fear, and dread the living God who sees all your thoughts and purposes; and so many of your

purposes as are contrary to his holy, pure, and righteous will, he will either prevent and bring to nought, or else suffer to come to pass to the hurt and sorrow of the proposers thereof; and in both he will glorify his name, and make the inhabitants of the earth, both high and low, to know that he is God, and there is no God besides him that can pull down and set up at his pleasure; and that arrogancy, pride, cruelty, and oppression, are no more pleasing to him in one man's name or appearance than in another: and that no throne can be established but in righteousness, nor no counsel nor government prosper but what is grounded upon justice and truth, which is the foundation of every thing that is fast; and what is not built thereupon is easily shaken and removed, as experience hath always taught, and doth teach; therefore saith wisdom, Proverbs, viii. 15, By me kings reign and princes decree justice, &c. and happy is that king, prince, and ruler, who take wisdom for their guide, and the fear of God, which is the beginning thereof, for their counsellor.

6. Consider the condition of the burghers in this land, who in most cities have put themselves in a posture of defence against their enemies, and let the wise in heart judge whether in their present state and condition they have any reason to expect a blessing upon their endeavours; O ye burghers, awake and consider how your time is spent, night and day, in your court, guards and watches, and lay it to heart, and bethink you, whether it be now a time for you to multiply your sins and wickedness, and to provoke the Lord to blast all your endeavours by your drinking, carding, dicing, and playing, by all manner of wantonness, idleness, and light and filthy discourses, and these exercises you call pastimes. Alas, miserable men, you know not how soon your time may be short enough, yea, so that you would be glad it were longer, when a bullet may pass through your head, or a spear through your bowels, as it has done with many of late, and may do with many more. Oh! then a little time would be precious to you, and especially you that have not been brought up to such lascivious exercises, but to

your shops and trades, and worldly business, for you to fall into such courses, and corrupt yourselves, and make your guards as schools and nurseries of wickedness, and that in such a time when the Lord hath filled your land and towns with amazement and confusion; is this a time to devise ways and means to shorten your time, and to spend it worse than ever you did before? Oh! be ashamed of these things, and banish cards, and dice, and all wantonness out of your guards, and fear the Lord God to whom you must give an account of all your words and actions, and of every minute of your mis-spent time; and how soon you shall be called to an account hereof you know not; but this I am sure, there is a witness for God nigh in every one of your consciences, which reproves these things in secret, and if you would give ear thereto, you would be called to an account every day and hour, and would spend every day and night as your last, and then when the end of your days did come, you would be able to give an account with joy: and know this, that although this witness of God be despised by you, and the counsel thereof rejected, yet it will leave you without excuse in the day of judgment, and then shall you know that your looseness, wickedness and hardness of heart, hath grieved the spirit of the Lord, that hath striven with you every one, as you may see, Job, xxxiii. 14. 29. 30, and consider every one, if God hath not striven with you to turn you from your evil way, and what is the reason you are not turned. And consider also if it be not high time to leave off wickedness, and not multiply it, especially when death stands by the door, and in the grave there is no work; and let none say, our city is strong, our burghers are valiant, our commanders are true and faithful; for if all these things be so, yet these cannot save you, for the hand of the Lord is above, and beyond all these things, and his hand is upon you for your sin and iniquity, and from it can no man protect nor deliver you; read Psalm, cxxvii. 1, Except the Lord keep the city the watchmen watch in vain; and how can you expect the Lord to be a keeper of your cities, when you are daily filling them with those things that are abominable in his

sight? May he not justly cast you out as a reproach and shame before your enemies, who exceed them all in profession, and yet daily increase your sins and wickedness. Oh! repent, repent, and cease to do evil, and cleanse your hearts, and purify your hands, ye double-minded, or else the hand that is lifted up against you, will lay you waste, and none shall be able to deliver you.

7. In the next place, consider what you are doing all you who are daily raising tumults and insurrections in the bowels of this distressed land, breaking the bounds of all order or moderation, stoning, plundering and killing, and evilly entreating whom you please; yea, your rulers themselves, upon the bare suggestions of every idle and unruly tongue. What do you think will be the effect of these things? How shall your fastings and prayers procure a blessing from the righteous God, while your hands are full of blood and cruelty, disorder and misrule: is this you that used to be crying out to those, who for conscience sake, could not in some things be subject to the commands of rulers, but rather exposed themselves to patient suffering, oh ye must be subject to magistrates, ye must not rebel against authority, nor be seditious and such like? Where now is your zeal for the authority and for the magistrates? Doth it not appear that deceit and hypocrisy have lodged in the secret chambers of your hearts, and now it is manifest that ye regard neither magistrates nor authority? but the bringing to pass your mad and monstrous wills, raging as madmen without either bounds or order; tossed like a sea, one while one way, another while another, without any stability; by which you are a shame both to your religion and government, and a grief to all that have the fear of God before their eyes. Were it not better that every one rested in quietness and in peace, waiting upon God, to see him bring down and set up at his pleasure, and discerning of God, who is the fountain of wisdom, to endue your prince and rulers with wisdom, how to remove evil men out of authority, and to place better in their places, and you to continue in obedience to the power of God, wronging no man, and abusing no man? Would not this be a

speedier way to bring down a blessing upon you, and your land and government, and to stop the proceedings of your enemies, than by filling the land with tumults and uproars, with violence and cruelties? to that of God in all consciences I speak, let that answer me.

8. And now the bands of government are broken among you, and must be again made up, or else you must inevitably perish; let every one, both high and low, consider what government in itself is, that so ye may from the true original thereof, proceed every one to know your place in the creation, both how to rule and to be ruled. The apostle Paul saith, the powers that are, are of God; but that power by which a magistrate becomes a tyrant, or a subject becomes a rebel, that is not of God, but of the devil, who is the author of evil; but the power that is of God, leaves neither ruler nor subject to the liberty of their own will, but limits both to the will of God; so that the magistrate hath no power to command evil to be done, because he is a magistrate, and the subject hath no liberty to do evil, because a magistrate doth command it, but both must be subject to the supreme power of God, if they will be happy, for that is the ground of happiness: now this power as it is in God is incomprehensible and without limit or end; but as it is manifest in the sons and daughters of men, it is the pale and limit that stands between all good and evil actions; and all good that is done is done in it, and all evil that is done is done without it; and this power stands in all men as a fixed, settled principle to rule them, and to give them law in every action and word, what they must do, and what they must forbear; and he that acts by, and within the compass of this, he hath no cause to fear the power of the magistrate, because he hath unity with it; for his sword is his praise, and a terror to those that do evil, Rom. xiii. 3. And therefore God who is a God of order and peace, hath made known this just and equal principle, called power, wisdom, light, truth, justice, &c. in every man both high and low, that men might live in order and in peace upon the face of the earth, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. By this the ruler knows it is not good to be fierce, cruel nor in-

jurious; and also that if he were a subject, he would not be so done unto: by this the subject knows that he ought not to be stubborn, rebellious nor treacherous; and that if he were a ruler he would not be so done unto; so, as long as this blessed principle of God is submitted to, both by rulers and people, so long they are a blessing, comfort and strength, one to another, and not longer; for the power in the ruler is one with the power in the subject; and whosoever turns from the power, the power turns against him, and the unity is broken, and instead of peace and tranquillity, there are discord and trouble; therefore happy and blessed are that prince and people, who are both subject to the higher power, which is the power of God; for such feel perfect love and unity one with another, and the prince commands in obedience to God, and the subject obeys for God's sake, and not out of fear, 1 Pet. ii. 13; and a government, and a rule built upon this foundation, and kept here, shall always prosper: here no man seeks to vassalize his fellow-creature to his own will, and no man counts obedience to his lawful prince a vassallage; but both serve God in their several places with cheerfulness: and how happy would such a nation be and such a people; and how ought every one to labour to attain to the knowledge and obedience of this power which made all things good, and keeps all in good order! This, this alone, oh Netherlands! can heal thy wound and cure thy breach. This is that can drive away thy enemies, and reconcile thee with thy friends and brethren, and until this blessed power of God be had in more esteem in thee, thou canst not be healed. To this alone belongs the titles of groote, hoogen, moogen, achbaer, &c. and not to frail and sinful men. And such as have taken these titles upon them, or do still take them, the hand of God is, and will be against them; and will make them know, that out of this power they are neither hoogen, nor moogen, nor achbaer; but full of breakings and confusion; and this pride and exaltation, have been one cause of thy wound: and if thou should be made whole on one side, thou wilt break out of another; and if thou had no enemies, thou wouldest prove thy own

destroyer. Therefore whoever hath an ear let him hear the voice that calls for truth and righteousness, and judgment among you; and when ye are willing to hear the Lord, then he will hear you, and not before; and so in the mean time, while his voice and power in you are slighted and despised, he will despise and slight all your fasts and prayers; yea, and all your labour and toil to settle yourselves either in religion or government, shall be in vain. And this shall you know from the Lord, when he hath fulfilled his purpose upon you, and laid waste the heritage of the rebellious, and brought you down to lowliness and to repentance, and to confess unto him and to his power, which is over all, blessed for ever.

So, Friends, thus far have I cleared myself and dealt faithfully with you, and warned you of the causes of your evils, and, whether you will hear or forbear, the Lord will one day make you know that he hath raised me up as a watchman to your country, and that I have seen the evil coming upon you, and have faithfully warned you of your evil ways, Ezek. xxxiii. 7. 8, both now and before at divers times, as may be seen in my Complaint over Groningen, printed in the year 1669. *Vrieslant terst & twede deele gedrukt.* And well had it been for those Netherlands if they had taken counsel then; then had these evils not come upon them. And now I am again drawn forth in the love of God, once more to write unto you, though I would willingly have forborne writing at such a time as this, if I might have been clear in God's sight; and glad should I be that you had an ear to hear while yet the day lasteth; and let none be offended at the plainness of my dealing with you, for it is high time to speak plainly, destruction is at the door, and it is not my work to flatter you, nor to advance any party or faction among you, as the most of your manifold foolish scribblers at this time do by their pasquils and pamphlets, which tend more to the increasing your misery, and kindling up more animosities and feuds among you, than to taking away either the cause of your misery, or to the healing your breach: and for my part, I have learned not to fear man, nor seek the favour of any party or faction,

but to answer the witness of God in all men's consciences, is my aim and desire. And so, hoping there is yet a people in thee, Oh Netherlands! whose day is not yet over, nor to whom the word of prophecy and counsel may not be sent, to make your ears deaf, your eyes blind, and your hearts fat, Isa. vi. 9, 10; but that it may tend to the improvement and amendment of life; I say, hoping there is such a people, I leave this my testimony, to be read by them in the fear of the Lord, and to be improved to his glory and their comfort. And for the rest, who cannot endure sound counsel and reproofs, but persist in their iniquity, and harden their hearts against the Lord and his truth, and against the testimony of his servants, such shall be forced to endure his plagues and judgments, until they are converted or consumed. And to conclude, I say with Malachi, both to priests and people, They shall find the day of God to be as a fiery oven, and all that do not lay his word to heart, shall be as fuel. Read Mal. ii. 1, 2. iv. 1.

AN
EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP,
TO THE
PRINCESS ELIZABETH,
IN GERMANY.

IN that love that is universal and free in its own flowings forth, am I at this time drawn forth to visit the beloved seed of God, with a tender salutation which will be better felt and understood in that tender lowly seed of the kingdom, than it can be read or comprehended in the sensual or carnal comprehending wisdom of this world. Therefore, my desire is, that with an inward retired consideration, thou mayest consider what I have to say, which I was desirous, and did hope to have signified unto thee by word of mouth, but am hindered at present through weakness and inability of body, and other urgent concerns for the precious Truth's sake, (of which I am a servant,) which doth not admit of so long a journey, nor of any long stay at present in these parts. Neither could I be clear in God's sight, without signifying somewhat of that which is upon me concerning thee. And I pray God thou mayest have a sense of the depth of that love from whence it springs.

Well, my friend, for a long time hath a love wrought in my heart to your family, and great pity wrought in me many years since, in consideration of the distresses of the years of your childhood; and a secret joy was in me, when it pleased God to end those long German wars, and to restore you in some measure to your former dignities and capacities, wherein you were made capable of serving God in your generation, who had been so gracious to you. And when I heard that thy brother Charles had laid his hand upon God's little heritage in the Pala-

tinatè, it grieved my soul for his sake ; and I was drawn to go to him at Heydelburg ; and in great meekness and fear of God to warn him of God's displeasure, which I felt kindled against him ; and this was about the year 1669 ; and I was constrained to tell him, that as he had stretched out his hand against God's heritage, the Lord would stretch out his hand against his, if he did not cease persecuting the Lord's people for their conscience towards God. And oh, that he had taken counsel in the day of his visitation !

And when I heard that thou didst receive several under thy protection, which were expelled and banished from other places, (though I knew their root and ground to be, that which would not abide in the day of trial,) yet I did rejoice on thy behalf, as believing that it sprang from a tender principle in thee, which was willing, as far as thou knewest, to receive disciples in the name of disciples ; and did hope, that in time thou mightest come to have a disciple's reward ; and that thou mightest in the end, come to know the revelation of that root and foundation, which hath been the rock of ages to the righteous in all generations.

And, according to this hope, a travail was in my spirit for thee before the Lord, that he, by his divine power, might open thy understanding, to see beyond, and over the offences and stumbling blocks that some pretenders to high things had cast in thy way, and might learn thereby to cease from man and men, and their words and ways, and might be brought to the holy anointing in thyself, through faith in Christ Jesus, the quickening spirit ; that by it thou mightest be taught to know the unchangeable Truth, and how to walk therein with a steadfast and upright heart before the Lord, to his glory and honour, and to the good example of those committed to thy care and charge.

And now, according to the inward travail of my soul, a day of visitation is come upon thee from the Lord, and his secret and divine power hath reached thy heart, and hath as it were shaken the earthly foundations, that that which cannot be shaken, might be manifested. And

in this tender visitation of God to thy soul, doth my soul rejoice; but my joy is mixed with fear and with a godly jealousy, lest thou shouldst notwithstanding be beguiled of the inheritance prepared for the faithful. And therefore, that I may clear my conscience in God's sight, and answer the tender operations of love, which I feel in my heart towards thee, let me exhort thee to faithfulness to the love of God so manifest unto thee.

And first, I say with the prophet, despise not the day of small things, nor the branch that springs out of a dry ground; for he whose visage is more marred than any man's, is the fountain of treasure to them that believe and obey him. For although the Truth doth not appear in such forms, styles, and methods, and with such drest up articles, confessions and creeds as the divers invented ways of men have done, whose mountains have all of them had hands, first to make them, and then to defend them; yet this stone which is cut out of this mountain, and without hands, will in time break down the images, the carved, the graven and the molten work of men's hands, and then increase and fill the whole earth.

Therefore I say again, despise not the simple, plain appearance of the light of Christ in the conscience, as a low thing, and a mean dispensation; for through it, is the knowledge of the Father and of the Son unto eternal life, in all them that believe and obey it; and those that say it is a low and mean thing, let them first learn to be obedient to it, in all its requirings, reprovings and discoveries. And this will stop the mouths of all opposers, who are finding fault with it, as low and mean, and yet walk not up to it.

Secondly, Beware of that which would exalt itself in the vision of heavenly things, and take the vision for a possession, as too many have done; but in times of openings and discoveries, keep low, and be of a plain and single heart before the Lord; for vision is for encouragement, and not for exaltation; but whosoever makes images of those things which they have seen in heaven, will also bow down to them, and endeavour to make others bow too, and thence comes a worse Babel, and a

worse idolatry, than that which is set up among them, who never yet saw into heaven, and so only can make images of things on earth, and bow and cause others to bow thereunto. Therefore, if the Lord enlarge thy sight of divine things, by his divine, pure spirit and light in thy inward parts, walk humbly before him in lowliness and fear, that thou mayest feel his gentle leadings to lead thee into the enjoyment and possession of what thou hast seen, that thou then mayest witness forth his praise to the sons and daughters of men.

Thirdly, Beware of thy own will, which would run hastily forth after those things which in and by the will of man, cannot be attained; but watch diligently to know thy own will subject to the will of God in all things; for it is not lawful for us to will those things of ourselves, which are good in themselves; but to possess our souls in patience, supported in faith, believing that in God's due time we shall reap, if we faint not. And if the saints had need of patience to wait for the promise, when they had done the will of God, how much need have such to be patient, and to watch the hasty will which would have the promise, and the power, and peace, and rest, &c. when they are yet far short of having done the will of God?

And, Fourthly, let no man deceive thee, either by puffing thee up, or casting thee down, for it is the Lord that knows the heart, and not only knows it, but discovereth it, and his discovery is true, and ought to be believed; and no better or worse is any one's state, than just so as it is represented to them by the pure divine light of Christ Jesus in their own consciences; and whoever represents them better or worse, are deceivers, or mistaken guides. This is the standard of true knowledge and judgment, that we all must make use of to believe, and be subject to, whenever we would take a true measure of ourselves. This is he that said to some, I have a few things against thee, and to others, I have many things against thee, &c. And this is the minister of the tabernacle of God that is with men, who deals out to every one their proper portion, according to their state, and present condition.

This is the voice of the Son by whom God now speaks, and whom all must hear, and they that hear him live: he hath power to cast down and to raise up, to wound and to heal, to kill and make alive, and so hath no one else. Therefore wait upon him with an upright mind, and wherein thou hast at any time been unfaithful, he will show it, and give thee repentance unto life, and heal thy backsliding, and at last show thee the consolation of her whose warfare is accomplished: but it must be accomplished in thee first, and that by his divine assistance, and through pure judgment; for Sion was always redeemed with judgments, and her converts with righteousness.

Fifthly, Beware of the friendship of this world, for it is destructive to the work of God, and is oppressive to his seed; and when his seed cries to him, from under the oppression of the spirit of this world, the Lord will hear, and visit thee in judgment for his seed's sake; and thou wilt want that inward comfort thy soul desires: for in the world's friendship lodgeth, very hiddenly, the real enmity against God; so that when we came but to break off from the outward forms and tokens of the world's friendship, the enmity wrought mightily against us; but the Lord hath crowned his faithful seed and people, with dominion and power, and slain the enmity, and led captivity captive, glory be to him for ever and ever. And for this cause is the love of God shed abroad in thy heart, that it might overcome the enmity, and that wherein it lodgeth, that thy soul might reign, through a death to the world, and its glory, over the world, and over the spirit that rules in it; and might tread down the vanity and emptiness thereof, in the dominion of the just; not regarding, but despising the shame and reproach that belong to the gospel, and the present tribulations that may attend it, which are but for a moment, as knowing that they work for the faithful, a far more exceeding weight of glory. So keep thy eye to the recompense, and to the crown which God the righteous judge shall give in that day, when sheep and goats, lovers of this world, and lovers of Christ more than all, shall be separated one from

another, and the world's lovers shall perish with the world, and Christ's true lovers shall reign with him for evermore.

Sixthly, Let thy power which God hath given thee in the earth, shine forth in righteousness, in mercy, and in truth; for, for that end art thou called, to set forth a good example in the administration of justice, and easing the oppressed, encouraging them that do well, and being a terror to all evil doers; for that end is power in thy hand, that the giver of it may be honoured; and they that honour God, God will honour. Therefore wait for wisdom's voice, by whom princes decree justice in the earth, and she will be thy great counsellor: and know this, that the glorious power of God by which thy heart and soul is enlightened and quickened, comes not to destroy rule and order in the earth, but to establish justice and righteousness, and take away oppression and violence, the hard heart, that his name may be feared and dreaded on the earth by the sons of men, and his power over all may have dominion.

Thus, dear Friend, have I in simplicity and uprightness discharged what lay upon me in great plainness and openness of heart, desiring the Lord God Almighty may be thy director in all things, and that thou in the innocent seed of life, may be able to understand in thy day, the things of thy peace, and may become an instrument of his praise in the earth, and for the setting forth his great name; and in the end, may have thy portion with the redeemed and sanctified believers and members of that holy head, Jesus Christ, for ever more.

So I remain a lover of thy soul, and of the souls of all men, but especially of such who are come to a travail in Sion's travail; among whom give the salutation of my tender love to the church of Holland; and so many as in measure are made partakers of the precious faith that is in Christ Jesus our Lord; in whom farewell.

STEPHEN CRISP.

AN
EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP,

TO BE READ IN THE
WOMEN'S MEETINGS.

OF
FRIENDS IN IPSWICH.

FRIENDS,

IN that love that springs from the root of life, which hath brought forth many living branches, doth my salutation reach unto you, in which we have our refreshments and encouragements in the work of God, in this our generation : and the more your minds are gathered into that living root, Christ Jesus, the everlasting head of all living members, both male and female, the more encouragements you will feel in your service to God. And therefore, dear Friends, though you be weak in yourselves, yet in him is strength ; and when ye lack wisdom, wait upon him, and he will replenish you, and fill you with his heavenly counsel, to your souls' refreshment.

And, my Friends, above all things, live in the fear of God, and in love and tenderness one towards another ; and let not the enemy that lies in wait to destroy, break the band of your peace ; for while ye keep the peace of God unbroken, ye can communicate one to another of the gifts and grace of God, and so will daily feel a being the better one for another, which will beget a dearness and esteem in you towards one another. And in that dearness and tenderness meet together about the Lord's work, seeking with one consent to exalt the name of the Lord, and to honour it above your own merits ; and let none seek exaltation, but know this, the humblest and most

self-denying, are most highly honoured of God, and fit-test to do him service ; and they that are most long-suffering and patient, are most like to Christ the head ; and in such his virtue will shine, and so make itself known.

And, Friends, have a care in your meetings, to give due honour unto every member in the body, remembering none are useless ; but stir up one another to their proper service in the house of God, and let not the foot be troubled that it is not a hand, nor the hand that it is not an eye ; but every one give thanks, that by the grace of God you are what you are ; and be faithful in your place and service, that ye may witness a growth. And in your meeting together, wait to feel the rising of the life, and opening of the wisdom of God in one another. And let that speak and propound things needful and necessary for your welfare, and the welfare of the church ; and in that wisdom choose out two of your meeting, to commit the trust and charge of the contributions that are among you unto ; and let them keep a book, in which your charity and good works may be recorded, for the comfort and example of them that follow after. Also choose out one of each particular meeting, and lay it upon them in the Lord, to take care in their respective meeting on your behalf.

1. That no women, young nor old, in their respective meetings, walk disorderly or wantonly, but that they be admonished and counselled speedily.

2. That no necessities that may fall upon any who are worthy, may be neglected or disregarded, nor delayed, until a meeting, but they may be forthwith comforted ; that so the enemy who lies in wait to tempt the poor in the hour of their distress, may be prevented.

3. That no maids carry themselves unseemly toward their mistresses, nor mistresses toward their servants : but if such things should happen, let the matter be taken up and ended, and not to part asunder with evil in their minds one toward another ; for that will spread and hurt others.

4. That all women professing Truth, and having children, may bring them up in the fear of God ; and that

they use no uncomely, rash nor passionate words unto them, for that sows an evil seed in the children, which may come up, and dishonour God in the next generation.

5. That no Women-Friends may speak evil of one another, nor fall out with one another; nor carry evil in their minds one against another; nor bear tales about, to beget others into evil, and into partyship, but that all such things may be speedily suppressed and borne down in the power and judgment of God.

And let that Woman-Friend give account to the meeting, of such as will not receive admonition, that some other Friends may take the care of such a matter upon them, and endeavour to break through the hardness, in the wisdom and love of God.

And if that Woman-Friend have laid out money, let the meeting order the two Friends who keep the collection, to reimburse her; that so every one may be encouraged in the work of the Lord, and ye may, as with one shoulder, bear the Lord's burden in this day of travail, and also the burdens of the weak, who sometimes are neither strong enough, nor wise enough to bear their own burdens; and afterward, they may grow up to be sensible of your tenderness, and to bless you in the name of the Lord.

So, my dear Friends, feel my love, and live in that from whence it springs, and the God of love and life, bless, prosper, and keep you in his fear to the end, to be fellow-helpers with the Lord in his work, comfort and refreshment to your brethren, and to leave a holy, innocent, upright testimony and example to the generations that shall follow after.

I rest your Friend in the Truth,

STEPHEN CRISP.

AN
EPISTLE
OF
TENDER COUNSEL AND ADVICE,

To all that have believed the Truth every where, to exhort them to Faithfulness thereunto.

1. In taking heed of settling in a Formality, without Power.
2. To take heed the Spirit of this world doth not drink up their Spirits.
3. To keep their word, and let their yea be always yea.
4. Not to trust too much to Education, &c.
5. To love one another.

Written by one that travails for Zion's Prosperity,
STEPHEN CRISP.

Dearly Beloved Friends, Brethren and Sisters,

THE salutation of my dear love, in the flowings forth of life in the Lord Jesus Christ, our only head, reacheth unto you all, in the spiritual way of communication, which you are made partakers of in the Holy Spirit, in the reachings forth of this love and life, which we have received from the Father of Life. I am drawn forth to visit you all with An Epistle of tender Advice and Counsel; and especially you, my dear Friends. among whom I have travelled in this and other nations. Oh the remembrance of the glory and power of God that hath appeared amongst us in days past, doth much affect my soul at this time, knowing the Lord is the same to them that do hold fast the things they have heard and learned from the beginning. And my spirit is exercised amongst you,

caring and praying for your stability and continuance in the Truth, although my outward man is so far decayed, that I cannot travel so much as I used to do, (insomuch, that I know many of you, among whom I have travelled in the gospel of our Lord Jesus, will see my face no more,) yet my travail in spirit is not lessened, nor my love to you, the Lord's people; but my cries are day and night to the Lord, that ye may be preserved blameless unto the day of his coming, and that ye may be armed with power, and furnished with wisdom, and may be prepared with every good gift of the spirit to stand against the wiles and subtle workings of the devil your adversary, who is upon his watch, which way he may destroy you, and spoil you of the lot of your inheritance, prepared for you in Christ Jesus our Lord: and for this purpose doth he set all his subtlety to work, and doth inspire many whom he hath already caught in his snares, and sets them as snares to catch more of you, that by their example, ye that do yet stand, might also fall from your steadfastness, and be a prey unto him.

Therefore, my dear Friends, gird up the loins of your minds, and put on the whole armour of light, then you will see round about you, and which way soever the enemy comes to assault you, you will be prepared to resist him; for your sufficiency is in the light, and in the Truth, which the devil is out of; and if your eye be kept single to Truth in your inward parts, it is not all the deceit of the devil and all his instruments, can beguile you; but a certain sense will be given you of his mysterious workings.

And, my dear Friends, I would not have you forget that there be many ways to weaken and to darken you, which must all be watched against; therefore walk circumspectly, keeping your eye in your head, waiting to feel your strength renewed daily: for be assured, your trials and temptations will be renewed, and if you be destitute of the heavenly daily bread, there will be a daily weakening, which will appear by your being overcome by such things, as once you had a power to stand against, which is a great grief to behold in many.

And now I come to warn you of a few things that have for some time lain upon me, to send among you; which I do in faithfulness recommend to the pure witness of God in all consciences, not as if I judged any; but this I must tell you, there is one that judgeth, and will give an answer in every one that listens to him, by which he may know how far any of these things have prevailed upon him; and he that judgeth, will also by judgment deliver them that are caught in satan's snares, if they do hearken, and submit to his leadings.

1st. Take heed, my dear Friends, of holding the Truth in a bare formality, satisfying yourselves that you have for a long time owned the way of Truth, and the assemblies of the Lord's people, and appeared as they have done in all outward things, and have hereby obtained the repute to be one of them; and under these considerations sit down at ease, as to the inward man, unacquainted with the inward travails, either for thyself or others; unconcerned whether the noble plant grows, either in thyself, or in others. Oh! my Friends, this is a dangerous state, yea, more dangerous than my tongue or pen can declare; though so far as to clear myself, and to warn such, God will give me utterance: therefore consider how thy poor soul is beguiled in this condition; for in the first place thou art deprived of that daily enjoyment which others do enjoy, in waiting upon the Lord; they feel his refreshing presence, which either fills them with joy and comfort, or else opens their understandings in the light to a certain knowledge of, and testimony against, such things as yet stand in the way, and hinder the joy of his salvation from them: but thou that sittest in a dry formality, without an inward travail upon thy spirit, thou knowest neither of these things, but goest on in the dark, not knowing whither thou goest, and so in time, thou being such a stranger to the powerful working of Truth in thyself, it grows to a question with thee, whether others do witness any such powerful workings, yea or nay; for every thing that is not experimental, is liable to question; as he that never saw, knows not what seeing is, and he that never smelt any thing, he knows not what smelling

is; so he that through long continuance in this formal manner of going to meetings, continues still unacquainted with the power, will at last be easily made to question whether there be such a power or no, and in this state the dark power will work insensibly, and prevail upon thy spirit, and fit thee for his own purpose, and will minister a secret liberty into thy mind, and a looseness, even as to the form itself by degrees, and so will prepare thee against a time of some sharp, smart trial that will come to try thee, either in having something, or parting with something, which may be had or parted with, if thou wilt turn thy back on Truth; and when this time of trial comes upon thee, then the strength and advantage that the enemy hath gotten upon thee in the time of thy lukewarm, loose profession, are made manifest; then thou art in great straits for a season: if the temptation be in having a wife, or husband, or a portion or legacy, or gaining a suit at law, or recovering a debt, or such like things; and the things cannot be had without letting the testimony of thy profession fall, by swearing, or going to a priest, or some other matter utterly contrary to thy profession, oh! what struggling is there in thy soul to obtain the thing thou desirest, and yet wouldst fain be reckoned a Friend still, and art loth to be publicly numbered among backsliders and apostates. And so if the temptation and trial comes on the other side, in parting with any thing which thou lovest, for thy profession sake, as thy wife and children, thy liberty, thy money, thy cattle, thy house and land, or what else may be dear to thee, oh, how doth self work to save itself, and loth it is to part with the name and reputation of a friend of Truth, and as loth to part with any of these things for the Truth's sake, not feeling the hundred-fold in this time, which Christ spoke of, nor the life everlasting neither. Here is a day of great difficulty and distress, which is come, and is coming upon many of such careless professors, in which they do stand in need of the help of the divine power of God to support them, and to give them victory; but alas, they are estranged from it, and now the form will not support in the hour of this

great trial, but the flesh and blood consultings are grown strong for want of living in the daily cross; and that nature cries aloud in the ears of thy soul, which thou hast indulged and suffered to live; and if thou considerest the Truth, and weighest the testimony of that against thy own will and desire, then thou easily seest which is of most weight with thee; for a false weight, and false balance, and false judgment, is got up in the time of thy careless profession, and then the old deceiver comes in, and tells thee, thou seest no evil in it, or at least not so much as on the contrary side; so that of two evils, it is wisdom to choose the least; and such like reasonings fill thy mind, till at last thy will being strong, and thy understanding darkened, thou takest up a resolution to hazard thy soul, and to part with thy dry, withered testimony which thou hast for a long time borne without life, and embrace the price that is bidden for it, as Esau and Judas did, and so sellest the Truth which thou once followedst, and deliverest it, (as much as in thee lieth,) into the hands of its enemy, to be mocked, and reproached, and trampled upon. And this is the fruit and effect of a long carelessness and remissness, which thou thoughtest once would never have come to this: and when the servants of the Lord have declared what sad effects such negligence would produce in time, thou hast been apt to bless thyself, and to reckon thou wouldst never run so far out, as publicly to bring reproach upon the way thou professedst. But, alas, thou little knowest that thy soul's enemy was all that while but preparing thee against the day of thy greatest trial, and as it were, unarming thee against the day of battle, that he might the more easily overcome thee: but now thou seest thou art fallen, when others being tried with the same temptations, stand and abide in their testimony; and so mightest thou also, if thou hadst waited upon God as thou oughtest, in diligence for the renewing of thy strength; but now, alas, miserable man or woman, what wilt thou do? thy cloak is now pulled off, thy fig-leaf profession is rent, and thou hast now but two ways; and well if there be so many, to wit, to turn thy mind from the object of thy delight, to

the Truth which thou hast sold for it, and by repentance and through judgment, to wait to see if God will be merciful to thee or no, and to spend thy days in sorrow and mourning, and to give up now at last to that work thou so much before slightedst; or else to take the other way, and that is, to go on in thy rebellion against the light of Christ Jesus, and add sin to sin, until the custom of sin may take away the sense of judgment, and so thou mayest grow to a fleshly ease, and give over caring for thy future well-being: but like the beast that perisheth, set thy heart upon the things of this life for a little season, and then cometh the end; and thou who wert once called of God to an inheritance in his light, must now have thy portion in the utter darkness; and thou that wert once called to have been a vessel of honour, art now become a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction: Oh! my soul laments the condition of such, and glad would I be if any of these careless professors of Truth might be awakened before it be too late: but, however, I am thus far clear of their blood, and if they perish, the fault will be their own.

2dly. A second thing that lies upon me to warn you all of, my dear Friends, is to watch against the spirit of this world, lest it drink up your spirits too much in an eager and greedy pursuit after the things of this world, which happens to several in divers manners to their great hurt and damage; and the snare lies deep and hidden, under a subtle covering. For whereas it is the duty of every man to take care for his family, and to be diligent in the calling God hath set him in, and to improve such opportunities as God pleaseth to put into his hand; here the subtle enemy works to make the care immoderate, to turn the diligence to slavery, and the improving opportunities which God gives him, to a finding and searching out of opportunities, sometimes by indirect causes, and sometimes to the prejudice of his neighbour, and all to try, to satisfy a greedy desire after the heaping up of treasure in this world, and through the earnestness of the affection that kindles daily more and more, after these things a man comes in time to have the increase or de-

crease of these things to be the objects of his joy or sorrow ; and then he is miserable, for joy or sorrow are the highest faculties of the mind, and ought to be pitched upon the highest objects, and not upon transitory things under the sun, by which neither love nor hatred can be known : but alas how are many cast down at losses, and lifted up at profits and gains : oh my Friends, take heed of this fickle and uncertain state, for while some have too much set their minds after the things of this world, they have erred from the faith, and have placed their trust in uncertain riches ; and when they have taken their wings and fled away, their hope hath gone with them : therefore I beseech you, dear Friends, have a care of suffering your spirits to be sharpened and set on edge about these outward things ; and take heed of enlarging your trades and traffics beyond your ability, and beyond your capacity, for both these evils have been the ruin of some ; for every one that hath ability, hath not capacity for great things, and every one that hath capacity hath not ability ; and where either of these are wanting, such ought to be content with such low and mean things as they are capable to manage, and able to reach, and not to bear themselves too much upon the one, and then seek by indirect means to make the other answerable ; for no man knows the issue beforehand ; and therefore even in these things every one ought to wait to know the guidance of the Lord, and to be subject unto his will, though in a cross to their own ; as the apostle said concerning them that said, We will go to yonder city, and we will buy and sell, and get gain : which were all lawful things in themselves ; yet for this, saith he, you ought to have said, if the Lord will : so he that saith, I will increase my trade, and enlarge my adventures, that my gain may thereby be enlarged ; even in this he ought to say, if the Lord will.

Oh Friends, wait to feel the governing hand of God in these things, to govern you in your affairs, that so he may as really be acknowledged by you, the Lord of earth, as well as heaven, the ruler of your trading and dealings, as well as of your religion and profession.

3dly. And, Friends, I desire you to remember, that the crown of our profession was, that our yea was yea, and our nay was nay, and so it is still with all the faithful followers of the Truth; though too many have let in a false liberty since their first conviction, and have not that respect to their words as they ought to have, to the great dishonour of God, and grief of the righteous, and wounding their own souls. Oh! my Friends, let this be amended by every one that hath been overtaken in it, as you tender the honour of God, your own prosperity, and the good of others; for many stumblings have hereby been laid in the way of some who have been near to Truth, and they have fallen and been lost; but they that laid the stumblings, will not be found clear of their blood in the day of the Lord's inquisition.

Therefore, let all take heed for time to come, to be true to their word; for all who do profess the Truth, do in a kind, pawn the Truth as much as in them lies, or at least their part in the Truth, every time they do pass their promise, or sign a bill or obligation for any payment to be made at such a time as is mentioned in the said promise, bill, or obligation, and such a one hath now no power to dispense with the payment at the time appointed, without the consent of the party to whom he is so engaged; and if he doth of himself delay, or deny payment, he forfeits what he pawned, namely his truth: now which of you having pawned your coat or cloak for the half of the value to redeem it again such a day, or to lose it, would not you be very careful to observe your day? But oh! of how much greater value is this pledge, when Truth lies at stake? And I am sure they that truly love it, will have more care of it than of a cloak, coat, or any earthly thing.

Therefore the ways to prevent all such miscarriages, are to be taken notice of; and that in the first place, that none run themselves into necessities by indirect courses, as by an overcharging themselves in trading, nor in overbuying more than they are able to compass, nor by suretyship, which makes a supposed debt, though uncertain, and therefore the more dangerous, because it may come

upon you at unawares, before you are prepared for it. These things ought in wisdom to be prevented beforehand.

Also every one that upon a just occasion doth borrow, and doth pass his word upon the reputation of Truth, by promise, bill or obligation, ought at the same time to have something in his eye of most certainty, by which he shall be enabled to perform his word, and not to trust to returns of adventures, increase of crops, gains of trade, or others keeping their word with him, or any such like uncertainties; for if any do so, they may be in this snare of being unfaithful to their promise before they are aware. But although there is a kind of uncertainty in all these things below, yet where a man's truth and profession lies thus at pawn, and must be fetched home or forfeited, there ought, as I said before, to be something most certain in such a one's eye, by which he may save his word; as money that he knows to be at his demand, or goods in possession, or lands that are free, and can be engaged if the worst come; for you will find more peace in conscience, and a better answering of Truth to make a new engagement of land or goods, than to break an old engagement of your truth and profession.

Dear Friends, my heart is very full in this matter, and much I could write hereof, but I spare you in love and good will, believing a word to the wise will be sufficient; for if a fool be brayed in a mortar, he will not depart from his foolishness. Therefore, dear Friends, be wise in all these things, that so ye may not be in bondage and slavery to the things of this life, but may have a dominion and reign over them according to your calling in Christ Jesus, that every one of you may wear your crown, and none may have cause justly against any of you, to say, such a one's yea is nay; for then he takes your crown and your pledge, which is hard to gain again. Oh Friends, I write these things unto you in true love, and in a holy respect unto the holy name of God, that is made known among us. Therefore let not a cavilling wisdom rise up against the word of exhortation to apply it wrongfully; but in love and meekness let it be receiv-

ed, as from one that travails for your prosperity, and warns you of the snares of your souls' enemy.

Fourthly. And, Friends, the next thing that lies upon me, is in respect unto such as have been brought up and educated amongst us, and are grown up, and do make profession of the same way and truth in which they have been educated; that all such may take heed that they rest not in a bare educational form of the Truth, without having regard to their inward travail of the soul, and to their growth in the power of godliness; for the snares of their souls' enemy lie deep in this matter, and his working is to draw their minds into the world, while their bodies and their public profession remain amongst Friends, and to keep them at ease and liberty from the daily cross, and from the crucifying power, by which they should travail to subdue that nature in themselves that is grown up in their youth, as well under this profession as under any other, where the power is not minded diligently; and by this means many are and remain unfitted for the testimony of Truth, wanting to be rooted and grounded in it, through an experimental warfare in their own particulars. For, my Friends, I say unto you in the word of the Lord, Except ye be born again, ye cannot see the kingdom of God; and if ye cannot see that, what availeth it what you see? For all sight, vision, and opening of things will not save nor deliver your souls in the day of trial that will come upon you for the trial of your faith; and then if your faith be such a one as stands in words and terms, though never so true, yet it will fail you in that day, and you will not be able to stand. Therefore, dear Friends, sink down in lowliness and humility, and wait to feel the power revealed in you, which was revealed in us in the beginning, and join your minds to it, in a living faith, that you may come to experience its condemning power, to judge every vain thought and exalted desire, and every idle word and evil action; that so by the pure judgment of Truth you may come to witness a cleansing and a subduing of that nature that lusteth unto disobedience of the righteous law of God in your hearts. And as that nature is kept

under the daily cross, it will weaken and die daily in you; and the weaker it is made, the more you will feel of the powerful quickenings of the word of God in your souls, and a tender life will spring up in you, to your great comfort, that will be tender of the glory of God, and of the honour and reputation of your profession: and as you join herewith, you will be acquainted with the travails of the true Zion, the mother of us all, who brings not forth but through deep exercises; and although this will take you off from the delights and pleasures, and loftiness of this world, yet the end will repay all your sorrow and travail, for this will bring you to know the worth of Truth, and teach you to set a value upon it, and upon every testimony of it, beyond all transitory and fading things, whereas others who have lightly come by their profession, will lightly esteem it, and lightly let it go again. Therefore, my travail and cry is, that you might be wise unto salvation; and for that end do I send this to you that ye might be brought to try your foundations, every one in yourselves, before it be tried for you, for then it will be too late to come to the true foundation, or at least it will be through greater hardship. When the cry at midnight is heard, and the time of entrance cometh, it will be too late to buy oil to your lamps, and then such as have a lamp and no oil, will be shut out; therefore, prize your time, and examine yourselves, what reason you have in yourselves, to make profession of the name and way of God, more than that you were educated therein, and brought up to it by your parents, guardians, or masters. Have you ever felt the heavenly virtue of it overshadowing your souls? And if you have, do you retain and keep the savour of it still upon your spirits? Do you feel yourselves possessed with that awe, fear and reverence of the Lord's presence which the Lord's people felt in the beginning of their day, and the faithful do still feel? Is the inward enjoyment of the life of Truth a greater joy to you than all your outward enjoyments? If so, then you will not sell it, nor part with it, for any thing in this world: and the testimonies which such do bear for the Truth, will not be traditional, but from a

sensible convincement in themselves, so that they will be able to say, These things have we received from the Lord, and they are the testimonies of God manifested to us in the light of his Son Christ Jesus, in whom we have believed. Oh Friends, how will this drive back the storm of temptations that will come, both inwardly and outwardly, in a time of trouble? How many are there who, for want of this experimental assurance in themselves, have been brought to great questionings and doubtings, and knew not whither to go, backward or forward, and many have halted and staggered, and some have fallen, and rise no more, to the ruin of themselves and others; therefore, my dear Friends, trust not to the resolutions of your own spirits, without a sense of the power, nor to a receiving the Truth by your education, but all wait to be made living and true witnesses of the rising of the power in your own hearts, and the carrying on of the work of the power in yourselves, to the regenerating you, and bringing you to that birth that trusteth in nothing but in the Lord alone, and hath him for its support in the greatest exercises: then shall ye stand and remain, and be a generation chosen of God, to bear his name and testimony, and to commit it to the next generation.

Fifthly. And, Friends, let the brotherly love that was sown in your hearts, as a precious seed in your first convincement, continue and increase daily, that as ye are made partakers of one hope of salvation in Christ Jesus, so ye may continue of one mind and heart, according to the working of his Spirit in you, having a tender respect one for another, as children of one father, and as such as feed at one table; for Christ hath ordained, and doth ordain in all his churches, that we should love one another, that we should shun all occasions of offence and grief, that we should walk orderly, and as becomes his holy gospel, that we may be an honour thereunto, and a strength and comfort to one another: this is our great ordinance, our new commandment, which was also from the beginning, and will always abide the same through all generations. Therefore, my Friends

and brethren, let the fruits of sincere and brotherly love abound amongst you both in word and deed, and let none be wanting in fulfilling the law of charity, without which all profession will be but like sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

But if this law be kept to, the life of religion will be felt, and each one will thereby be taught their duty and charge concerning another, and know how to comfort in charity, to admonish in charity, to reprove in charity, and also to receive all these in charity; and this will exclude for ever all whispering and tale-bearing, and bring every one to deal plainly and uprightly with every one, not suffering sin to rest upon the soul of thy brother, but to deal with him quickly, plainly and tenderly, even as thou thyself wouldst be dealt withal; and however this kind of dealing be taken, thou shalt not miss of thy reward, but thy peace will remain with thee. For while Friends' eyes are fixed upon the power of God, as their guide and leader in all these things, and their design is simply God's glory, the clearing their own consciences, and the good of their brother, they will not be discouraged in their undertakings; for they know the power will certainly come over whatsoever opposeth it, and this will keep your minds quiet and free from disturbances, when you see men, and things, and parties arise against the power, knowing that the power is an everlasting rock. But as for those things that appear against it, they are but for a season, in which season patience must be exercised, and the counsel of wisdom stood in, and then you will be kept from staggering, or from scattering by all the fair shows the spirit of opposition can make.

For they that do enjoy the life and substance, and feed daily of the bread that comes down from heaven, have a quick sense and discerning of things that are presented to them, and do know them that are of the earth earthly, by their earthly savour, from those that are of the heavenly with their heavenly savour; they know what feeds the head and the wit, and carnal reason, and what will nourish the immortal soul, and so come to be fixed, and are not ready to feed upon unsavoury food, nor to be easily tossed, nor

to be troubled at evil tidings; nor can they be drawn after one thing or man by an affection, nor set against another man nor thing by a prejudice, but the true balance of a sound judgment, settled in the divine knowledge, according to the measure that the Father hath bestowed, keeps such steady in their way, both in respect to their own testimony and conversation, and also in respect to their dealing with others. Oh, my dear Friends, in such doth the Truth shine, and such are the true followers of Christ, and they are worthy to be followed, because their way is as a shining light, shining on towards the perfect day. And in this sure and steady way, my soul's desire is, you and I may walk, and continue walking, unto the end of our days, in all sobriety, truth, justice, righteousness and charity, as good examples in our day, and comfortable precedents in our end, to them that shall remain, that so we may deliver over all the testimonies of our Lord Jesus unto the succeeding generations, as pure, as certain, and as innocent as we received them in the beginning; and in the end of all our labours, travels, trials and exercises, may lay down our heads in that sabbath of rest that remains always for the Lord's people.

This is the breathing desire that lives in me, for all you who have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name, and in the sense of his power, and of the life he hath revealed in every member of his whole body, I salute you all, and bid you farewell.

STEPHEN CRISP.

AN
EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP,
TO
FRIENDS AT DANTZIC.

Amsterdam, this 19th of the Fifth Month, 1680.

DEAR FRIENDS,

IN the fellowship of that life that was before death was, do I dearly salute you, praying to the God and Father of life, that ye may livingly be made sensible of the increase of his power, grace and virtue from day to day, that as your trials and tribulations abound, you may really feel that seed in yourselves for whose sake the trials and persecutions come; for it was, and is the seed-birth of life that was and is persecuted and afflicted in all ages, as the apostle said, Against thy holy child Jesus have they done all these things; for you know, my Friends, that before this birth in some measure did appear, you were at peace with the world, and the world with you; but when ye were turned from darkness to light, then the dark power began to work against you, and doth still work, and will work so long as its hour lasteth; and what is the work thereof? Is it not to draw or drive you again to darkness, from the light to falsehood, to hypocrisy from truth, to death from life, all which in the light of life you comprehend and discern; and by the operation of that love to God which he hath shed into your hearts by the spirit of his Son, you are upholden and preserved in your testimony unto this day, and by the faith which God hath given you, you have the evidence of things you do not yet see, and do enjoy the substance of the things you hope for, even immortality and eternal life, the first fruits whereof as an earnest are revealed by his spirit in your inward parts; and by this faith it is that we know God will put the Seed's

enemies under his feet, both inward and outward, according to his promise; but, Friends, it is not the part of him that is a true believer to make haste, but to leave the times, seasons, ways and means to the Lord alone, whose will is to be done in earth as in heaven, and shall be done, in spite of all his enemies. Therefore, dear Friends, stand given up in the will of your God, who hath chosen and called you, to make known his name and power in you, and to let all his enemies know that he is able to support his children in the greatest exercises, by which his name in due time by others shall be acknowledged, as it is among you this day; for whose sake others have formerly suffered and laboured. And, dear Friends, keep your eye to the power of God, to which all things are possible, and look not too much upon the power of death and darkness, for if you do, you will be captivated in the natural sense, and so will be weakened: but being diligently waiting upon God in the light of his Son, in whom he hath appeared to you, you will be so confirmed in the faith of his power, that you will be able to believe beyond what your natural sense can comprehend; and then feel you the life of the true Christians in all ages of Christendom, in which they have overcome and trampled upon all manner of sufferings, and even death itself. For alas, my Friends, what is this life? What is this breath? What is this time that we have here on earth but something given us of God wherewith he hath ordained that we should glorify him? And if we love this life, and the things of it so much as not to part with it and them for his name's sake, then are we unworthy of him; but, my Friends, you have seen how the Lord your God hath dealt graciously with you, and hath not in a long time of suffering permitted the fierce waves to devour you, but that both you and your testimony are kept alive unto this day by a secret divine power, and it shall live and outlive your adversaries; therefore be of good courage, the cause in which you are engaged is the Lord Jehovah's, who will arise for his name's sake in his own time, way and manner, so you need not to take care how worm Jacob shall arise; your

care is only to be faithful to what God hath made manifest to you, to keep your consciences free, though you should be bound, that your witness may live though you should die; the Lord knows how to raise his seed, and to support his servants. And, my Friends, this I must say unto you, that since I came hither I have been truly refreshed in the account I have had out of your letters, and my heart is drawn forth in tender love to you; and were my body able to sustain travelling as it hath been, I should, I believe, come to see your faces; but I am much decayed in body, howbeit my spirit is at liberty, through the grace I have received of God, in which I both rejoice and suffer with the flock and heritage of God every where; and this, my dear Friends, I lay upon you in the name of the Lord, even the same that our Lord hath laid upon us all, to wit, that ye love one another with sincere love, and that ye be of one mind, in all humility, bearing each others burdens, and washing each others feet, when need requires, and be a strength one to another according to the ability which God hath given you, that so none may be lost by means of any one's laying stumbling-blocks in their way; but if any will wilfully turn back, and cause the offence of the cross to cease, for the sake whereof you suffer tribulation, their condemnation may be wholly upon their own heads, and you may be kept perfectly clear of their blood. So the God of peace and of mercy be with you, and multiply his blessing upon you, and shine into all your souls, in the glorious manifestations of his presence, to your joy and comfort, amen.

Your Friend and brother in the tribulation and patience of Christ, the head of the true body, which is his church,

STEPHEN CRISP.

A
BABYLONISH OPPOSER OF TRUTH,
BY
THE TRUTH REPROVED;

AND
His Enmity, Falsehood, and Confusion manifested. In Answer to an
Impertinent Paper sent abroad by THOMAS CRISP;

IN WHICH
His False Foundation is discovered, and his Building brought upon
his own Head.

Written by a Servant of Truth, and Witness against Lying and
Liars, STEPHEN CRISP.

THOMAS CRISP, thou or some other of thy party, having directed a printed paper to me, called *Babel's Builders* unmasking themselves; I have read the same, and well considered the contents thereof, and do find, that not only a great deal of enmity, but also of falsehood and contradiction is contained in it; which when it is laid before thee in a spirit of love and tenderness, from one that seeks and desires thy salvation, perhaps it may have some effect upon thee, to the abating thy foolish rashness, and may bring thee to a better consideration of thy work, which is that I chiefly desire and aim at; else I am not apt to meddle with things of this nature, having never loved controversy, for controversy's sake; but am one that satisfies myself in an assurance of faith in the power of the living God, believing it will break and confound all that rise up against it, as it hitherto hath done.

Now, considering the time in which thou hast published thy book against us, it seems to be the only time the devil could have taken, advantageously to work in the minds of people, a belief of our being in a hidden confederacy with Rome, when many of them of the Romish religion have, by their wicked works, rendered themselves obnoxious to the punishment of just law, and to the abhorrence of all good men; at such a time it is, that thou renderest us, the people called Quakers, to be at least half way in unity with them, having taken such a stride over to them, as such another may make us meet and embrace; as in page 9. And that our judgment, or the judgment which we take part with, is barefaced popery, as in page 14, and in divers other particulars in thy book. By all which, thou dost but show how willingly thou wouldst have us fallen upon as papists, or render us suspicious both to magistrates and the vulgar, by thy crooked insinuations, as dangerous persons to the true protestant religion. Oh Thomas! who hath set thee on work herein, and so timed thy book, is manifested in the sight of God to be the father of lies, with whom thou wilt certainly have thy reward, if thou repent not. And when all is done of this kind, that thou and they can do, yet shall we appear in the sight of God, and in the sight of the magistrates, and in the sight of the men of this and after generations, to be in our principles and practice, and life too, at a further distance from that sort of men thou wouldst link us to, than ever your ranting libertine spirit will lead you: and when you shall see us delivered from the evil you thought to bring upon us, and see our testimony shine over the heads of papists, and you too, and yourselves, for want of the divine assistance of God's power, crouch and truckle under, as you do already to the spirit of this world, then will you gnaw your tongues for very pain, and the reward of your enmity will come upon your own pates with a witness. Therefore, if there be yet a day, seek mercy and forgiveness at the hand of the Lord, before he comes to render his vengeance upon you for all your hard speeches which ungodlily you have spoken, written or printed against the Lord and his heri-

tage; a people that fear his name, and walk in the light of his everlasting day, upon which your clouds and smoke can no more bring a night.

In the next place, I take notice of thy deceit and falsehood in this little book, which is grounded upon a lie, viz. G. F., G. W. and A. P. have not denied the matter of the Barbadoes paper, they have not given one word of reproof to it, nor disowned the principles therein contained, &c. Now, how notoriously false this is, every unbiassed reader may judge; first, they declare that this, (meaning the matter or doctrine of the paper,) would be the way to bring them all from the measure of the spirit in their own particulars. What Thomas, is this not a word of reproof? is this not a disowning the principle? It is well said, a liar had need of a good memory. Again, all are to give up to the universal spirit of God in their own particulars; what, is not this a disowning the position of the paper neither! Again, as to subscriptions to an outward tie, be above such things, &c. we desire you would stop this paper from going any further, &c. What! not a word yet of reproof or disowning in all this, but G. F. &c. must bear the reflection of this position, as if he and they had been the authors of it: hath not thy enmity betrayed thy reason, and robbed thee of common justice and ingenuity too. Yea, but thou objectest page 11, that they are more afraid of the publication, than ashamed of the matter, &c. This seems to me a very silly allegation; for if the paper were so much according to G. F.'s &c. minds, yea, the very product of what we had laboured for a long time, what should make G. F. or any of us afraid of the publishing of it? Hath that ever been our practice, to be afraid to publish the conclusions and agreements of friends and brethren, who, in the name and power of God, have concluded and agreed upon things that we knew would stand and be justifiable by God's witness, though we knew they would meet with opposition from bad spirits? What needed G. F. &c. care what bad spirits or apostates would say of the paper, if they got it; but only because we knew there was a ground given them so to say. We did not use to be afraid

of what you can say to us or our papers, which are written in the true and divine authority of the power of God, which is over you all; but let them go abroad freely for you to say your worst of them, as knowing that barking at the sun or the moon cannot keep them from shining: so that it must needs appear that it was the dislike that G. F. &c. had to the paper that caused them to desire the stopping of it, more than for fear of the use you could make of it; and yet that fear not wholly excluded neither, knowing that you might justly reflect upon it in some things which we could not stand by.

But thou seemest to be highly offended at the kind and friendly language of G. F. &c. in their paper, by which thou showest how little savour thou hast of the spirit of a true Christian, or Christian minister, who is to restore such as are overtaken in a fault, in the spirit of meekness. What if they said, we know you mind the best things; the letter being written to a body of people, dare you say that none of them do mind the best things; yea, they were that very day minding how they might keep down such loose libertines that had for a long time sought to disturb the peace of their Christian society; though they might possibly exceed in the method of proceeding with them by the arguments or influence of some few among them. What then? must they all be unfriended and denied brotherhood hereupon, and be written to, as wicked and ungodly, after thy uncharitable dealing: and here thou seemest to quote my words, though fallaciously, to make a seeming opposition between us, that I said the paper was not only ill worded, but ill meant; my words did not reflect at all upon the subscribers generally, as thou quotes them, but upon the contriver or drawer up of it, who ever it was, that I feared it was not well meant in him or them, and I am still of the same mind; and it is my desire, and the desire of us all, that every Friend may keep in a sense of the measure of the spirit of God in their own particulars, that in that they may feel their unity one with another, and with one another's testimonies; according to the ancient doctrine preached among us from the beginning. And those that

keep in this sense, feel what flows from the universal spirit of Truth, and receive it in their own measures, from a sensible satisfaction in themselves, and not from an implicit subjection or blind obedience, as thou enviously intimates we aim to set up; and if it should come to pass, that a thing should be declared from the motion of the spirit of God, and that some particular Friend doth not presently have that sensible satisfaction in himself concerning the matter, what then? do you think that the measure of the spirit in himself, will stir him up to oppose it, and war against it? surely no; but it will teach him to wait in quietness upon God, who is the opener of the understanding, and doth by his spirit bring his people to the unity of the faith. But that sort of men whose quarrel thou hast so much espoused, are a sort of heady, unruly opposers of themselves, fierce despisers, who malign the prosperity of the Truth, and those that labour in it, aspersing both them and their labours with nicknames and reproachful speeches, and bloody and murderous insinuations and suggestions; and must all this be fathered upon the spirit of God? Oh, horrible darkness! Well may it be said night is upon you, and blindness is happened to you. Are not you ashamed to plead for the primitive doctrine of Truth as it was practised among us in the beginning, that every one should keep to the measure of light and grace given them of God? when thou seest before thy eyes, whither J. P. and M. P. are come; and may see if thou wilt, whither thyself, and many more of thy loose libertine associates are coming. What! did the measure of the grace of God in the beginning teach a conformity to the world in ribands, lace, pendants, bowings, compliments, paying tithes, and marrying with the priests? &c.* Did the spirit of God in the

* *The 8th month, 1681.*—Thomas Crisp said, that he had paid tithes lately, and that the spirit of God did or might allow him to pay tithes, or marry by a priest: and that by the same spirit of God, another might be required not to pay them, or not to do the same things.

This Thomas Crisp spoke the month and year abovesaid; and consented to be written and printed; and took a copy of the abovesaid words with him. Witness, J. Field, jun.

beginning, teach such an industrious improving of failings and weaknesses, such a raking for evil things, such heaping up accusations, such rendering of them that fear God, obnoxious both to reproach and sufferings? Nay, nay, Thomas, this is the spirit of the world, entered in another appearance, which hadst thou and they been faithful to the real gift and grace of God, it would have preserved you from it.

Now, as concerning that disingenuous manner of reflecting, which thou frequently uses, I hope thou wilt meet with a sufficient reproof in thyself for it, and therefore shall not say much, only to put thee in mind, to see if thou would be so dealt by: as where thou supposest our meanings, and then comments upon thy own suppositions; as that G. F. &c. mean by the universal spirit, that spirit that set up these orders and meetings; and I take it to be meant the judgment of the ruling party, or Foxonians, &c. And he seems to place more virtue and power in conforming to his orders of women's meetings, than in all faith and fruits of the spirit, &c. Hast thou here dealt like an ingenuous adversary? (I say not a Friend,) nay, many that never knew Truth, would scorn such a kind of treating us; but enmity is blind. I pray God if it be his will, open thy eyes to see thy own state, and then thou wilt know that G. F. &c. have deserved to be better treated at thy hands.

But one thing I marvel at, and that is, how this author T. C. should labour so much to make his reader believe G. F. &c. their owning the matter of the paper, and rendering the consequences thereof to be the very doctrine and government that he hath laboured to set up, upon which he hath fixed so many heinous names, as clear evidence of apostacy and ambition, p. 7. This unlimited power, the pope's yoke, a making men slaves and vassals, p. 9, arbitrary, unlimited power, implicit, blind, and unacceptable obedience, p. 10. The judgment of the ruling party, or Foxonians among the Quakers, p. 11, and so on to the 12th page. And then he tells his reader a quite contrary story, and acquits G. F. &c. again of the matter charged, and tells us that G. F. differs from the sub-

scribers of the paper. G. F. &c. have borne their testimony against their subscription; for G. F. &c. say, This would make the belief which is in the Light, and the measure of the spirit in their own particulars, not one with the universal spirit, &c. And then T. C. adds as an amen to G. F.'s position, Indeed so it does. Could any one that had read this book, have thought the author should before he had done, have acquiesced with G. F. &c. and cleared him of his high charge he had laid; and he who had so endeavoured to make folks believe that the answer was but a seeming one, an answer for fashion sake, for fear the paper should be published, not one word of reproof, no denial in fact, but G. F. and they all one in the judgment and sense of the paper, &c. I say, who would have thought the same should tell us that G. F. &c. differ from the subscribers, and that in a most capital point of their paper, and tell them, their paper would make the faith, and the measure in which it stands, not one with the universal spirit, &c. It is well truth is come, though almost at last. Who is Babel's builder now, Thomas? Hast not thou played the foolish woman, that pulled down her house with her own hands? But as if thou had herein spoken too much truth, thou seekest to bury it again with three or four palpable lies in the next page.

First, G. F. seemingly disowns the paper, yet owns it too.

Secondly, The whole scope of their letter is, that they are only dissatisfied with the wording of it.

Thirdly, That we have nothing against them we call opposers, but their not submitting to G. F.'s orders without conviction.

Fourthly, That G. F. &c. does not at all contradict the principles in the paper, only the subscribing of it, p. 13.

Is not this strange work, that thou shouldst set thy name to such notorious untruths, and things wherein thou thyself showest every body how to contradict thee too. First tell them that G. F. &c. differ from the subscribers; and wherein, even in such a principle of their

paper, as thou differest from them in, and indeed I too: and then to tell them that G. F. does not at all contradict the principles, &c.

This is even sad work, to see men grope at noon day, that might have enjoyed the light of the sun as well as others, if they had kept the love and fear of God in their hearts. I intend not at present to bestow much more pains about this matter; the foundation upon which it was built being discovered to be enmity and falsehood, the structure cannot stand. In the mean time, glad should I be that thou, or some of you, may sink down into coolness, and remember whence you are fallen and falling, and what a spirit is entered you, that is refreshed at any thing that is a grief to the innocent people of God, and are fretting and grieving at that which is our greatest joy and comfort, in which many among you sometime did partake with us; I say, when ye see what spirit this is that hath prevailed upon you, it will make you wish you had not wandered from the flock, nor from the shepherd's tents, though it may be, when it is too late. Therefore, you that have time, prize it; the Lord's day is come, and his judgment hastens, and he will decide the controversy.

As for S. E.'s paper which thou puttest in the end of thy book, we look upon it to be more a fruit of a general enmity against us as a people, than any particular grudge against S. E. for we see how thou improvest it; and at last with a bold-faced lie chargest us generally with it, saying, these things are covered, excused, or justified? Who among us have either covered, excused or justified S. E.'s paper? I never knew any, and I believe thou neither; but on the contrary divers did testify against it before it was done, and after it was done, before it could be outwardly known whether it would be true or no; but he did give out such a paper to his own hurt and sorrow, and to the grieving of many; and it serves thee and you for food and nourishment, and for a stone to stumble upon: but alas, what will you gain by it? Do you think to make this conclusion, S. E. was mistaken, and wrote that as the word of the Lord that was his own word, became

his own burden, ergo, G. F. and the people called Quakers, are led by a wrong spirit, and will and must fall. Do you think this would not be sorry arguing, if turned upon yourselves? But I let it pass, and leave it to your better considerations. And seeing thou hast published S. E.'s letter to J. S. in which the offence lies, here followeth his own testimony against himself and it long since, which though I know it will not satisfy those that seek occasions of stumbling, yet it may be a help to the simple in heart, and a warning to all that may be tempted in like manner.

AS I was sitting waiting upon the Lord, on the 29th instant, these things rose in my heart, that I should acknowledge my offence to all the brethren in London and thereabouts, and Bristol, and to all the brethren north and south, that have been witnesses against the spirit of separation; and am to let you know, that it doth truly repent me, and sorely grieve me, that you that do bear a faithful testimony for God, should have any prophecy thrown at you, which I spoke to John Story in an angry spirit. I do therefore acknowledge, as I have signified in my last paper, about two years ago, that I have had little rest day or night, at times, ever since I spoke these words to John Story, [that it was the word of the Lord, that he should die that year,] which were mine own words, and soon became my burden, and were spoken in the dark, and darkness was upon my spirit, and so, under a strong temptation, which I was suffered to fall into, I not standing in the counsel of God; for which I bore God's indignation. But I soon saw I should have gone to him in a meek spirit, to beseech him to be reconciled to his brethren. But I do judge and condemn that hasty spirit, that set time for his dying, and called it the word of the Lord, and do desire this may go as far as wherever it may have a service for 'Truth. S. E.

Barbadoes, the 30th of the 3d Month, 1681.

AN

EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP,

TO

FRIENDS IN NORWICH.

DEARLY beloved Friends and brethren, whom God hath called to the fellowship of his blessed gospel, to partake of the cross and sufferings that remain to be fulfilled in the body of Christ, my spirit is led forth in the tender love of God, to visit you with a few lines by way of salutation, that ye may be comforted in all manner of tribulations; and to put you in mind of the great sufferings under which the precious seed hath long lain, when ye were strangers to it; and how all your iniquities were borne in those days, and the patience and long-sufferings of God were lengthened out for his seed's sake, and many weights and burdens; and some had power given them to cry for deliverance, and sought it many ways, but could not find it; and that increased the cry; and the sorrows of those times were very great to them that were most sensible of their state. And in an acceptable day did the Lord God make known unto you, that he had heard your cry, and had pitied your case, and gave you a gentle visitation of his love, and opened that eye in you, which the God of this world had blinded; and then you could see the gospel shine. And he sent his ministers and messengers among you, to preach the gospel of eternal life, in the name, power and spirit of Christ Jesus, whose message ye received, being prepared by the inward working of his power. And as many as received this testimony, received therewith the hope of eternal life, that should arise and spring up unto you through

death, that was to come upon all that was corruptible. And from that time the seat of the beast began to fall, and the birth that had its life in the corruptible things fell in pain, and the true seed was refreshed, and hope and consolation were ministered to your immortal souls; which hope was the occasion of your not being ashamed of the cross of Christ; but obtained inward courage to bear an outward and visible testimony to his name and power, who was thus come to work your deliverance; and you thought it worth your while to wait upon him: yea, you saw no other way for the completing the good work which he had begun, but to depend and wait upon him; that he that had been the Alpha, might be known to be the Omega. And hereupon a godly resolution was raised in you, not only to begin, but to go on, and to hold out to the end in this good work; and the daily comforts, nourishments and illuminations that you met withal from his hand, did strengthen and confirm you in this your godly resolution and practice; whereby ye grew strong in the Lord, and were as a well-watered garden; and the Lord distributed the gifts of his Holy Spirit among you, and his loving kindness abounded unto you, and he knit you up together in the unity of his spirit, according to your measures who were faithful to him, and put beauty upon you, and ye became a people to his praise.

Now, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, it was not to be expected but while all this was bringing to pass, the enemy of mankind and of the Truth, would rage and be angry, and seek a time to show his old enmity against the work of the Lord; and you know he struggled hard divers times, but was limited by him that hath all power in his hand, who doth still limit him. And so far as he permits and suffers his dark agents to proceed against his work, and against you for his work's sake, is but for a purpose of his own glory, and of your consolation: for it had been as easy for him to have kept them in as formerly; but he that hath given you to believe in his name, will also give you power to suffer, that so through patient enduring your part in the sufferings and tribulations

of the body of Christ, ye may plentifully partake of the joy and glory that is afterward to be revealed: for as many of you as abide faithful in the time of these light afflictions, will see a far more exceeding weight of glory brought forth, and shall feel your share and portion in it.

Therefore, my dear Friends, look not out at satan nor his instruments, but comprehend them in the light of your Saviour, and you will see them limited as the sea, that thus far shall they go, and no farther: and so far as they have power to go, let no man grudge it, but acknowledge as our Lord did in the day of his sufferings, when brought before Pilate, thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above. So keep your eye to that which is above all Herods, Pilates, Judases, and High Priests, to the eternal power by which you were called of God, to bear a testimony for his name in your day; and as long as ye feel this power sustaining you, ye cannot be weary, but rather rejoice, yea leap for joy, considering the crown of your calling, and that ye are counted worthy to suffer for the name's sake of him that died for us, and that is risen again, and reigneth for evermore: and if we suffer with him, and abide faithful to the end, we know we shall reign with him for ever; and not only so, but even in this life, he will make a way and deliver his people, and crown them with victory after their sufficient trials.

And as concerning the outward goods and sustenance of this life, dear Friends, observe the command of our Lord, to take care but for one day at once, and he will give sufficient for that: for his purpose is to wean you from the visible dependencies, that ye may with the more brightness and clearness embrace the true riches. Therefore, it will be good for every one to contract all their outward affairs, into as narrow a compass as may be, and to owe no man any thing but love, and to let that have a free passage, even to their persecutors; that so with a clear and a free spirit, you may behold all things here below, without joy in their increase, or sorrow in their decrease; giving up yourselves and yours into the

hand of God, who cares for you, and who hath not let forth the wrath of man upon you in his anger, but for the trial of your faith, which is more precious than gold or outward goods: and as for them, the loss will be rewarded in this life an hundred fold, besides an inestimable treasure laid up in heaven. So God Almighty keep you low and tender of his glory, and furnish you with patience, wisdom, and with every good work.

This is the earnest prayer and breathing of life for you all, in your friend and brother in the fellowship of the gospel of peace,

STEPHEN CRISP.

AN

EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP,

TO

FRIENDS IN AMSTERDAM.

Dear Friends,

YOU who are kept alive to God in your several measures of his grace and Truth, to you is the remembrance of my love in a heavenly band, in which my life reaches you, rejoicing with you in your rejoicings, and suffering with you in all your sufferings; and my tender advice to you is, that you dwell in the seed that gives you life, and renews it in you daily; and in this you will have wisdom to judge, and strength to bear contradiction of sinners, as he did in the days of his flesh, and doth still in his members; but in this seed, Christ Jesus, is your victory; for he shall overcome, and his enemies shall be his footstool; and every one that riseth up against him and his power, shall be confounded and brought to nought; for it is given to this seed to break the head of the other seed. And therefore it hath been his policy from the beginning, to put his head that was to be broken, under something or other, that had a show of holiness and righteousness, that he might save his head. And while he is there, he hath his time to bruise the heel of the true seed, and grieve and hurt the just, and to make the hindermost of the flock to halt, and to walk lamely and staggering; but when the covering comes to be rent, and his head appears as it is, then he cannot do so much harm. But it is a time for the true seed to show his power, according to promise, and to break it in pieces; so if ye live in the faith of the seed, ye shall see the fulfilling to your joy and comfort.

And, dear Friends, be not dismayed nor discouraged, when you see this evil seed to put up its head in any where it hath been long covered; for know this assured-

ly, the serpent can do less harm when manifest, than he can do when covered ; and it is the working of the power and spirit of the true seed, that rends the coverings, and makes a discovery of the evil ground which was hidden for a time ; but when it is manifest, then it brings forth according to its own nature, wrath and bitterness, clamour and reproach, and foams out its own shame ; and such grow fierce, despisers of those that are good, heady, unruly, not easily entreated ; by their fruits ye may know them ; such were in the primitive days, and such are now ; but the power and life of the true seed was over them then, and so it is now. Therefore, live in that innocent life, above the striving, reasoning nature, and meet in the name of Jesus, the seed of promise, and ye shall feel first the promise ; and as ye lay hold of that by faith, ye will wait for the fulfilling, and in time the power will arise, and you will see the fulfilling, and that head broken, which is so put up against the anointing. And then your joy will be full, and praises will be offered to God through him that hath received all power in heaven and earth, to whom belongs the kingdom, the power and the glory, for evermore.

STEPHEN CRISP,

A

FAITHFUL WARNING AND EXHORTATION

TO

FRIENDS,

TO

BEWARE OF SEDUCING SPIRITS,

And to keep on the Armour of Light in Simplicity and Sincerity,
as their best Armour in all trials.

Written by a Lover of Sincerity, and a Travailler for Zion's Redemption, and for the removing of all Oppressions from off the Souls of them who have believed, STEPHEN CRISP.

Dear Friends,

YOU know how that God in his infinite love hath visited us with a very glorious day, in which his Sun of righteousness is so risen upon us, that the heavenly warmth thereof hath quickened and enlightened us, and made us to stand up and serve him in our day and generation; and the virtue of that blessed life in Christ Jesus being revealed in the souls of them who have truly believed, hath given them great power over death, and hath made them able to grapple with satan in all his diverse appearances, and to overcome him; so that which way soever he hath hitherto sought to eclipse the glory and brightness of this great and notable day of the Lord, he hath hitherto been frustrated in his purpose, and his instruments have been made ashamed of their work: for all that are true children of the day, do find that their stand-

ing is by faith, and not by knowledge, and are by their faith kept in a holy dependance upon the power of him that can overcome all things, and bring them under; so that whatever doth arise against the Truth, the faith of them that are in it lets them, even in the beginning of it, see to the end of it, and gives them a certainty in themselves, by which they are settled in patient and quiet waiting to see the thing they believe brought to pass; and this is their victory, even their faith, and they who dwell in this faith are not weary, neither do they faint in all the various exercises they meet with by the way, but can endure contradiction without discouragement, knowing that whatever it is that riseth up against the power and purpose of God, shall in time be laid low.

And this is the same faith that was once delivered to the saints, in the primitive days, when Christ the resurrection and the life was preached unto them, in whom they believed, and by whom they were enabled both to do and to suffer what his will was, and to withstand the torrent and sea of contradictions they then met withal; and the word of God grew mightily, and their zeal and courage grew for the name of God, so that no stratagem devised against them could prosper, as long as they kept in the simplicity of the gospel, and held their faith which they had in a pure conscience; here were their great fortifications, that made them so prevalent and immutable, viz: simplicity and cleanness of mind; and as long as this continued, they continued of one heart and mind, glorifying God, and building up one another, and comforting one another, and were as epistles written in one another's hearts.

Now, when the devil saw that it was impossible to stop this glorious work of God by all he could do, by stirring up the priests and rulers against them, but their strength was in the Lord, they standing in their simplicity and pureness of mind; then the adversary sought out ways, means and instruments, how to disturb their progress, by drawing one or other among themselves from that simplicity of the gospel of Christ, in which they had been of one heart, and had believed and practised the same

things, without vain disputations; and having found some unstable souls fit for his purpose, he wrought powerfully in them to move questions, which had a tendency to draw others forth to striving about the question; then one would have it thus, and the other would maintain it to be so, neither of them minding whether the question itself tended to the use of edifying the church; but a great stir was quickly raised, and that about some few Jewish rights, and about some right or wrong descents of genealogies; one would prove it thus, and the other so; and here was a door opened to let in the carnal wisdom to be the weapons of this war, by which the pure innocent minds of many were corrupted, and some whole households subverted; which when the devil had thus far prevailed, he went on further, and gave courage to some of these his high-minded, heady, unruly servants to go abroad through the churches, and preach up these his questions as doctrines, and to seduce and draw away all they could from the simplicity of the gospel. And these were so prevalent as to bewitch and betray many; so that they were emboldened to withstand the true apostles in that glorious work in which Christ Jesus had employed them; so that now a great deal of their work was to warn the poor flock of Christ of these wolves in sheep's clothing, and to give out testimonies of their own sincerity, and against these deceitful workers, and to open and unfold the mysterious working of that evil spirit, and how it wrought cunningly to make void the offence of the cross, that they might carry on the name and outward profession of Christianity, with more reputation and less reproach than at the first. For this was the design, to get the Christians into a false liberty, and to loosen their hearts from that sincerity and watchfulness which was taught them in the beginning: and to what a height the serpent carried on his work in that day, you may read at large in the scriptures of Truth, and what sad and woful work it made in Corinth, in Galatia, in Smyrna, in Thyatira, and in Laodicea, and also in Achaia, and what sorrow and labour it cost the good apostles, and

how the good spirit was grieved by these things, and the hearts of the righteous made sad thereby.

Yet the enemy had in those days another stratagem as bad as all the rest, whereby he sought to lay waste the work of God; for after the gospel came to spread abroad, and many were convinced, both Jews and Gentiles, many Greeks also came to acknowledge the Truth, who had been great seekers after natural wisdom, and had sought to fathom natural causes and effects, and had studied many curious arts, and philosophical strains and methods, which suited well with their heathenish worship and religion, for them to endeavour to find out the benevolent or malevolent influences of Mars, Saturn, Jupiter, or other of the gods whom they worshipped. But when they came to the acknowledgment of the one only true and living God, the creator of all, and of Jesus Christ whom he had sent, then they found their curious arts needless, and their books fit for nothing but the fire, and burnt in one city as many as were worth 50,000 pieces of silver: but alas! the spirit that made use of them was not burnt in several, but wrought cunningly to bring many of those their tricks and quirks in among the poor believers, and endeavoured to make them believe they were such knowing men, and had such rare things to acquaint them with, far beyond the apostles: and then they went to work with the opposition of science, as they falsely called it, and then things must be questioned and disputed that had not a philosophic or natural reason, to demonstrate to the senses or understanding. And hereby was the faith of some made void, and many were spoiled of their sincerity and uprightness by these vain deceits, and then came in looseness in conversation; then a Nicholas with his ranterism; a Jezebel with her pretended loose and wanton prophecies; a Balaam with his covetous design upon the people, might find some to side with them; for the holy tie and covenant of their religion of bearing a daily cross, that was broken; but alas! alas! the effect of these things was very lamentable.

And, dear Friends, having briefly touched at these things, and set these proceedings of satan against the

Truth among the primitive Christians before you, I now come to tell you in great plainness and sincerity, what hath for some months lain upon my mind relating to this subject, and concerning the day in which we live, and the dispensation of that everlasting gospel which is now preached again unto us, in which we found the very same blessed effects as they did. For when we had believed therein, it brought us into great simplicity, and into cleanness of mind, and into an unfeigned love and unity one with another; and from what parts or countries soever we came, we all spake the same things, and the quirkling, querying, disputing wit was brought down, and cast out from among us; though we could query and dispute with the opposers that were without in defence of the Truth, yet we had then no such occasion among them that professed Truth; for we were of one heart, and mind, and judgment, and in that universal love we laboured to build up one another in our most holy faith, and to publish and make known the blessed name of Jesus, in whom we had believed; and many were daily added to the church, and came to partake of the same faith, and of the same love, and grew into the same simplicity of mind, wherein we found a harmonious rejoicing in spirit, whenever we saw one another. In this state did the Truth preserve us, and our faith was firm in that name and power by which we were called, that the Lord would go before us, and prosper us in his blessed way, in which he caused our souls to take great delight, and take up the daily cross cheerfully, and deny ourselves for the sake of him that had called us.

But the old enemy of Truth envied this our tranquillity quickly, and began to work in some where he found a ground to work in, and sought to lead them from the simplicity of the Truth, and to exalt their minds in the sight of things opened by the Truth, and so did not abide in the tender fear of God, and in the humility of the innocent seed, but flew up in airy notions and imaginations; some into a false liberty, and others into strange imaginations of their own growth to some high state, and so grew heady and unruly, and were hardened

against exhortations; rather judging themselves fit to teach, than to be taught, and these drew several after them through an affection that was not subject to the cross, and became an occasion of offence and stumbling to many who were inquiring after the way of the Lord, and a great exercise and sorrow to such as kept in the travail and labour for Sion's redemption. But those that abode in the faith, knew that the power in which they had believed would arise, and crush down and bruise that lofty, airy spirit, and all that abode in it, and did not repent and return to their first love, and do their first works; and according as we believed it came to pass, and their works with which they sought to amuse and astonish the nations, were confounded and brought to nought; and divers that did adhere and cleave to that spirit, were lost and scattered, and grew into profaneness and uncleanness, and strove against the power of God that wrought in his people to reclaim and regain them, till at length the very power of God turned against them, and cut them off who had been the troublers.

Yet did not the serpent leave off attempting to betray the innocent, but found out other instruments fit for his purpose, whom he raised up under pretence of some new discoveries, accompanied with a voluntary humility, and a seeming self-denial, when indeed, the design was to exalt self and man's work, wit and reason, above the eternal power of God, and through feigned pretences, to obtain a dominion over the heritage of God, and to impose and obtrude upon them things which were not taught by the living spirit of Christ Jesus in themselves, nor had been received by doctrine or message from the true spiritual labourers in the gospel. By which means the minds of many were betrayed, and they were exercised in contending about some outward signs or tokens of their separation, till the weighty matter they should have minded, viz. how to be kept in the love of God, and in the heavenly unity, was in many lost and forgotten, and instead thereof, a secret root of bitterness grew up, and a hatred against the prosperity of the church of God, and the faithful servants and ministers of it, insomuch

that they lost the very sense of God's blessed presence amongst us, and reckoned he had forsaken us ; and thereupon many of them also forsook us, and were as another people, and were puffed up with great expectations of our downfall, and their own exaltation, and began to spread their design of separation into other nations, to the hurt of many who were deceived by them ; so that the tender love of God, that had wrought in the hearts of the faithful labourers and ministers of the gospel, to the gathering them out of the world, now wrought again effectually, to gather many of them out of this self-separation, and with great patience and long suffering, did we travail and labour with many. And the Lord beheld our sincerity and care, and blessed his work in our hands, so that the eyes of many were opened to see the crafty snares by which they were entangled, and power was given them of God, to break through and testify against the crafty wiles of them that had deceived them ; and the Lord arose in his great and mighty power, in and among his people, and set an eternal judgment on the head of that spirit, and its work of dissention and separation that it had wrought ; and it could then proceed no further, but withered and came to nought ; and those who wilfully resisted the offers of the love of God, and of his people, they grew more and more corrupt, and perished wholly from the way of the Lord, and the society of his people, and turned back, some into the world's worship and religions, and others into the gross pollutions that are therein ; and the churches of Christ, who stood faithful and true to the leading of his spirit, came to have rest from that extreme labour and travail which they had lain several years under, by reason of these things ; and God fulfilled the prophecies of divers of his faithful servants, who by their faith had seen, and by the spirit had testified at the beginning of that spirit's work, what the end of it should be ; for many there were who saw, that it was from the earth, and thither it would return ; and there it was swallowed up, and all its substance ; and as many as refused to be warned, perished with it : then did the souls of the faithful give glory and honour to God, in whose hand is

power and dominion, and he reigns on high in his strength, and is king of saints, and the defence of his Sion, now, henceforth, and for evermore.

These exercises put and stirred up all the faithful to great vigilance and watchfulness, for the keeping the enemy out for the future, at least, as much as in them lay; and those that were faithful and ancient Friends, both men and women, found it incumbent upon them to meet together to watch over the flock, and to see to the conversations of them who professed the Truth, that it might answer their profession, and where the contrary appeared, to deal with them, and to reclaim them, if possible, or else to deny them, and to clear Truth and Friends of them, and their disorderly courses. And in this good work the Lord blessed them, and showed his presence among them, and gave them wisdom and understanding; and they took care of the widows and fatherless, of the poor and afflicted families among them, and had the care upon them concerning marriages, that none might come together in a disorderly manner, but that all things might be clear on either side, and the consent of parents might be obtained before marriage, and that all things might be kept in good order, and savoury in the sight of God and men. And divers epistles were written from several elder brethren for their encouragement and direction in this good work; for we knew it was God's work, and would tend to the limiting of loose and unruly spirits, who sought liberty more than sincerity; and sensuality, more than Christ's government, and their subjection to the divine power of God. And when some exalted spirits came to see unto what this work would tend, they took offence thereat, and sought to weaken the hands of the faithful Friends in this good work, under pretence, that all must be left to the witness of God; and if people did not find judgment in themselves for what they did, they must not be judged by others, being themselves gone from Truth's judgment and hardened: then they cried out of innovation and imposition, and such like.

And hereupon were many again seduced and subverted, and drawn away from their steadfastness in the Truth,

and began to appear against the good order of the Lord's people, and to reflect upon the godly care that lay upon them, with unhandsome and unsavoury speeches and writings, till a secret root of bitterness and enmity got into several that had been convinced ; and in this root the enemy wrought with great craft and subtlety, to draw them from the blessed unity that is in Christ Jesus, the true head of the true church, and begat them into many jealousies and groundless fears of an apostacy, while in the mean time he drew them so far to apostatize from their first love and first works, that they proceeded to expose Friends both in particular and in general, to the reproach and scorn of the world, as much as in them lay.

All which was borne and suffered with much long-suffering and patience, and a great travail lay upon many to endeavour the reducement of them that did thus oppose themselves ; for we knew our sincerity, and knew that the Lord would stand by us, and bless our work and labour of love, and blast their work of enmity, and that their striving against the Lord and his blessed work in the hand of his innocent people, neither would nor could prosper. We doubted not at all, but he that had stood by us, and helped us from the beginning, would still stand by us, and give his Truth and people the victory over every tongue and pen that rose up in judgment against us, as he hath done to this day, and their work is manifest, and they can proceed no further, blessed be his name for ever.

Now, dear Friends, I have made this brief relation of the forementioned passages, that they that are young in the Truth may see, and they that are older may be put in mind, how the old adversary of Truth hath already wrought in this our day, and what hath been the end and tendency of his work in all his various appearances, even as in the primitive days, to stop the bright shining of the gospel, if he could ; and whereas he is not able to do that, his next work is to see whom he may devour, that is, whom he may so ensnare and entrap with his subtle baits and gins, as that he may, first, draw them from the

simplicity of the Truth; next, into an exaltedness in knowledge; then, into prejudice and enmity against those that stand in the way to hinder their exalted notions. And by this time he hath taught them to break the law of charity, and to think evilly of the upright, and to disesteem the blessed unity and fellowship that is in the Truth, and then they are fitted for schism and separation upon one specious pretence or another: therefore, how watchful ought every one to be, for the keeping out this destroying spirit, which hath brought several already to that pitch of enmity and defiance to the Truth and people of God, that if it had been told them in the days of their tender conviction, they would have been ready to say with Hazeel, is thy servant a dog that he should do these things?

And, Friends, know this for certain, that satan is still working, and seeks to winnow you; and where there doth remain, after a long conviction, a lightness and an airiness in any, such are easily driven with his pernicious winds. And to this purpose he hath stirred up some in several cities and countries, such as he knows are fit for his purpose, who never knew a real mortification upon that earthly, sensual wisdom, that is from beneath, but have too much saved that alive in themselves, which God did in their first conviction pass a sentence of death upon; and these, as they cannot reach to a partaking of the life of Truth in themselves, no more can they reach nor attain to the hidden mystery of the unity that the Lord's people have one with another in that life of Truth, but another life and a power they have, and in it they grow headstrong and fierce, despisers of them that are born of the spirit, yea, they grow in wisdom from one degree to another, but it is neither pure nor peaceable, gentle, nor easy to be entreated. By their fruits ye may know them; for from this wisdom are they often found starting some subtle and abstruse questions, to amuse the minds of the simple, and to cause the weak in the faith to err, and to draw away unstable souls after them, as if they had brought forth some new discoveries; and then here is work for disputing wits, by

all which the minds are drawn further and further from the true watchfulness, that becomes those that have such an enemy to deal with.

Hence it is that all those janglings are sprung about the forbidden fruit, what it was, and whether good for food, or not good for food ; upon which some have closed with that primitive and first error, with which Eve was ensnared, and have judged it good for food ; yea, and have fed upon it too, till their knowledge hath grown greater in the evil than in the good. Hence it is that another starts questions about the mortality or immortality of the soul. Another, of the state of the soul after the death of the body, whether it abides a singular essence, or ceaseth to have any singular essence or being. Another about the state of the body after death. Another about how many bodies one and the same soul may or must have at sundry times. Another, how long the wicked men or angels must endure the wrath of God for rebellion. Another comes forth and says, there is no such thing as wrath or anger in God, and all that is written thereof in the holy scriptures is but metaphorically spoken. And many more such like fancies and doting questions, doth this birth bring forth for the trial of your faith and steadfastness in the Truth, by which the enemy is, as I said, trying and winnowing, to see where he may meet with his own, and may deceive and draw away some from the faith and unity, and teach them some other way and doctrine besides the narrow way of regeneration.

Now, my dear and well-beloved in the Lord, you are witnesses unto this day in how great simplicity and plainness of speech we have preached the word of God among you, from the day the Lord sent us forth to this day : we came not unto you with enticing words, we needed not logical nor philosophical demonstrations ; for our testimony had the demonstration and evidence of the spirit of Truth in your hearts, and our words, or the word of God in our mouths, hath not altered nor changed unto this day, but remains the same as it ever was. The great doctrine of the gospel was and is regeneration, without which there is no entrance ; the only means and way to

attain it, was and is that light and grace that comes by Jesus Christ, and sanctifies, and purifies, and brings to him, by whom the entrance is ministered into the kingdom; these things have we declared, and these things ye have believed, and in this faith are many of our faithful brethren fallen asleep, and their precious souls are at rest with the Lord. And herein, if ye abide steadfast to the end, ye shall do well.

And, as concerning all such who seek to trouble any of your minds with the things above-mentioned, or any subtle and crafty questions, keep you your habitations in the power of God, and you will daily come more and more to discern the tendency of them; how it is a spirit that works against the cross, and seeks to cause the offence of it to cease, that they might bear a profession of Truth, and live in a loose conversation without control or judgment; and you will see them come to nought like others before them.

And for the carrying on this kind of libertinism, divers strange notions are hatched and spread about to corrupt the minds of whom they can; for the devil, who is the author of them, knows well how to apply them to the advancement of his own kingdom, and for the easing, or rather hardening, the consciences of such who receive these things, that they may thereupon shake off the sense which sometime they had of the righteous judgment of God, and slight the judgment of his people, and give the reins to their lusts and passions; and yet all the while make a profession and outside appearance among the innocent people of God. Oh Friends! these are the blots and spots that are among us; these are they by whose means the holy name of God is blasphemed, and his blessed pure way evilly spoken of by many, and the hearts of the upright made sad from day to day; these are such as cost the apostle tears when he wrote, "I told you of them before, and now tell you weeping; they are enemies to the cross of Christ." These cause the feet of some to stumble, and others to perish from the way of the Lord, and yet all the while carry a secret bolster under them to bear themselves upon, having let in a belief or sup-

position, either that there is no such wrath and judgment to be expected from the hand of God, as hath been largely spoken and written of by the prophets, Christ and his apostles, and all the faithful ministers of the gospel unto this day: or if there be wrath and judgment to be revealed, it will be but for a time, and then they shall be restored to glory and happiness, or if they fall short of a due fitting and preparing for the kingdom of God on this side the grave, it is no great matter, for they shall have other opportunities even in this world hereafter, when they shall be born in other bodies.

Some few secretly bolster themselves up and endeavour to possess others with the supposition or notion of the finite punishment of wicked men and devils in the world to come, as where the holy scriptures mention, viz: everlasting fire, the sin against the holy ghost, never to be forgiven in this world, nor in that which is to come, eternal judgment, vengeance of eternal fire, the smoke of their torment shall ascend up for ever and ever, &c. as plainly declared by Christ and his holy apostles and gospel ministers, these they limit only to ages.

Another bolsters himself up with a belief, that if he doth evil, his hell is only here in his own conscience, but when he leaves the world, all things will be as if they had not been, and the soul shall die with the body, and suffer an annihilation as well as the body, or shall be swallowed up out of all particularity, as a drop of water into the sea, and so then what matter. And this is the evil seeds-man, sowing these cursed seeds of fleshly liberty and ranterism, even in our day, and hath prevailed upon some to their destruction; and they that are seduced, as the apostle saith, do wax worse and worse, seducing whom they can, by these their pernicious ways, the consequences whereof are woful and lamentable to consider, and hath cost me and many more great sorrow and grief. And truly, Friends, the weight of these things was heavy upon my mind for some time, and it lay upon me to give a warning to all that have an ear to hear, lest they suffer their minds to be corrupted by the subtle laying in wait of satan and his instruments; for though

I know there are many thousands who know the price and value of their immortal souls, and many who have truly travailled for the redemption of souls, who do not stand in need to be warned of these subtle designs, but do live in that which comprehends the devil and his crafty working, yet I am drawn forth in true love and tenderness to the weak, and such as are not yet grown to a stability in the everlasting and elect seed of God, to exhort them to take heed to themselves, and to be stirred up to faithfulness and diligence, and to approve their hearts in the sight of God, in sincerity and lowliness, that so they may feel his secret preserving power to keep them from these gins and nets of the cunning hunters, who lie in wait to beguile and betray whom they can.

And, Friends, to you who have not known the depths of satan, I have a few things to offer to your serious consideration: First, you know in what manner you were convinced, and how your understandings were opened, and you brought to the acknowledgment of the Truth; was it not by the shining of that true light of Christ Jesus in your souls, which by its inward working showed you that your souls were made subject to a power of darkness, that had defiled them, and made them unfit for God to dwell in and to take delight in? then you saw what a contrariety and disproportion there was between the pure light and your impure souls. Whereupon judgment from God was manifest for the curbing, limiting, and destroying that power that had thus defiled the minds and consciences; and when ye came to believe this judgment to be the very judgment of God, ye submitted to it, as right and due unto you; and as ye thus submitted to it, ye quickly found some power to withstand the temptations of the dark power that had captivated you. And did you not then feel your souls somewhat eased, and a hope raised, that as ye abode faithful unto that light, you might obtain power to withstand your souls' enemy in all his appearances? so that the faith that was delivered unto you in the beginning was, that your souls should be so sanctified, fitted and prepared, as to become a habitation for God, and that he

would so strengthen you, that ye should be able to stand against the devil and his power, who sought to defile and destroy the soul. And they that have been diligent and kept this faith, have found it to be a shield and a defence in the times of their trials and temptations; so that they have found victory by it, and their souls have come to know a deliverance from under the enemy's power, and have received ability to serve the Lord, and have felt the blessed freedom and liberty in the Truth, which they so much desired and longed for.

Now, wherefore hath all this work been to redeem the soul, and to convert it, and change it from under the dark power, and to bring it under the heavenly and glorious power of Christ Jesus? I ask them that have known this work, was it only for a few days or years that we are to continue here in these bodies? Or, was it not the effect of the eternal love of God in Christ, that in him our souls might be eternally happy? I know such as have truly known this travail, do know the soul to be more worth than the value and worth of the whole world, and they are not liable to the seducements of such as would undervalue the soul. But alas! there are too many that never knew what it was to travail for souls, neither in themselves nor in others, but have received a sight and knowledge of things at a distance, in a speculative way, as lookers on, and these, having grown up into a profession by a sight, without a real work in themselves, are very ready to be seduced, and to seduce others; and wanting the substance that never waxeth old, are always itching after some new thing, which for a time seems to be delightful to them, till a newer thing is presented, and then they are for that also, and so are always gadding and changing their ways, till at last they are by the mastering subtlety of their souls' enemy, who hath power in such unstable minds, led back again into the world, or into divers sects, heats, and opinions, that are of the world; and a false liberty gets up in them, in which they grow heady and stubborn, and look upon every one that seeks to reclaim them as their enemy, and let in hard and bitter thoughts against them; and the ene-

my fills them with prejudice, and in that state they seek for the failings of others, and feed upon them as bread to strengthen themselves, and so grow more and more estranged from the innocent life that is in Jesus, and which he hath given for food for the children of the kingdom.

Oh! this is a sad condition; and I have often with deep sorrow lamented the state of some to whose hands peradventure this may come, when I have seen what a good beginning they have made in the way of God, and have been as pleasant plants, and hopeful to bring forth much fruit to the honour of God and comfort of his people, and especially to the comfort and salvation of their own immortal souls: and yet after some good progress made in the Lord's way, for want of a diligent watchfulness and keeping close to the daily cross, and the self-denial, have laid themselves open to the spoilers, who have cunningly got an entrance into them, some in the affectionate part, some in the wise reasoning part, some through sowing the seeds of prejudice, and some one way, and some another, and have beguiled them of the simplicity, and drawn them from the sincerity that is in the Truth; and so they have both lost their first love, and their first work also.

And of these some are so far dead, that they have lost all sense and feeling of that love of God that worketh in the hearts of his people, for the regaining of them; and to such I shall say little, but tell them, my soul shall mourn for them in secret, until the Lord easeth my spirit concerning them. But for the rest who do yet retain something of a love to the Lord's people, and have sometimes an ear yet open to hear counsel; to these I say, God hath put it into my heart to warn you, that ye strengthen those things that are ready to die, before the Lord appear against you for your hard words and hard thoughts; and come down in humility, and feel after the first tenderness and brokenness of heart which once you felt, and hold a fast to the Lord; feed no more upon your carnal reasonings, hearken no more to those seducers that have drawn you from your steadfastness in

Christ Jesus, and your place in the body : for be ye assured, as your food is, so will your life be ; and if ye will still feed upon the airy notions of that carnal wisdom, into an airy, light and wanton life you will grow ; and if your food be to lick up the dirt and foulness that you can find here or there, and to feast thereon, and then be liable to vomit it up again, as some have done ; this will nourish nothing but the serpent's life, which the power of God will overcome. But, dear hearts, sink down, sink down, while yet an arm of love is reached out to you to receive you, and wait in lowliness to be brought into that heavenly house, where there is meat indeed, and drink indeed ; and remember that express sentence of our Lord, who said, except you eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have no life in you : this is the holy nourishment that nourisheth up the heirs of the kingdom, into which many are entered, and many of the dear people of God whom ye count lightly of, are travailling to obtain an entrance.

And, Friends, let me use yet one argument more with you, to persuade you to turn into the unity and fellowship of the Truth and power of God, in which ye sometimes took delight with us to walk in it, and that is an argument from your own experience, to wit : the feebleness that hath fallen upon many of you, since ye departed from the heavenly unity with your ancient Friends and brethren ; what a decay of strength and courage in the bearing forth the several testimonies for the name of Christ, as they were received from the beginning ; and by the faithful followers of him, are to this day kept and accounted of, as of more worth than a little outward liberty or estate, or such like.

But oh ! my Friends, how is this tie loosened ? and how is fleshly reasoning gotten up to shun the cross, and the sufferings that attend the gospel, and an unwillingness in many to give up themselves for his name's sake ? so that they are as if they had lost their spiritual armour, and their fervent zeal and love to the Truth, and the testimonies of it, which once were dearer to them than their

all in this transitory world; and it is indeed impossible that the love to God and his Truth should remain in its former strength, when the love to the brethren decays. They came together, and they will go together; and the want of this love to God and to his people, is the ground of declining Truth's testimony, and using indirect ways to shift and shun the sufferings that come for Truth's sake, by which the hands of Truth's enemies are strengthened, and many stumbling-blocks have been laid in the way of the weak; I beseech you to consider these things, and lay them to heart, while there is a day and opportunity to return to your first love, and to your first zeal for the Truth.

And, dear Friends, I might go into particulars, to lay before you, wherein this decay of love and zeal for God and his precious Truth, is manifest in many; but I spare you, knowing there is a faithful and true witness for the Lord, that will, if you mind it, show you more particularly wherein any hath failed, and to that witness of God I do recommend what I have written to you, which will testify that I have written in true love to your immortal souls; and whosoever slights this tender warning and exhortation sent unto them in the love of God, will but harden their own hearts more and more, and lay themselves open to the seducing spirits, to be carried away by the subtle wiles of subtle men, who seek to draw from the foundation that God hath laid, and to bring you again to trust to uncertainties, and to fill your minds with unnecessary things, and to neglect the weighty matters, and the one thing needful.

Therefore, Friends, wait to feel the daily renewings by the Holy Spirit in yourselves, and that will renew your love to God and to his Truth, and the testimonies of it, and to the brethren that have laboured in it for the good of your souls, and to all the faithful followers of the Lamb of God every where; and that will renew your love and zeal to the Truth, and to the testimonies of it, and keep it fresh, and give you a sense of the exceeding great value of it, and then you will see that the service

of all that is given you, is but to serve the Lord in his Truth; and in the holy faith, you will have a sense of the reward of all, in your own bosom, that ye lose and suffer for the Lord's sake, and in this you will have an inheritance with all the sanctified children of light; which that ye all may possess, and none fall short of, is the earnest desire and prayer of your faithful friend in the unchangeable Truth,

STEPHEN CRISP.

AN
EPISTLE FROM STEPHEN CRISP,
TO
FRIENDS.

DEARLY beloved Friends and brethren in the everlasting fellowship, that stands in the spirit of Christ Jesus our one head, I do at this time dearly and tenderly salute you, in a fresh and living remembrance of the precious unity and joy in the pure spirit of life, in which we have been mutually refreshed together in years past, when I, according to the will of God, travailed and laboured among you, in my younger years, with great consolation, rejoicing greatly in beholding your order and unity in the blessed Truth, in which ye prospered, and were as an army with banners in the Lamb's host; who went forth conquering among you, and defending and preserving you by his Almighty power, from the manifold snares of satan, that were laid for your feet; but you that are ancient can remember with joy, how you were kept steadfast and immovable in the holy path of life, and in the blessed concord, being of one heart and mind, bent to serve the Lord and his blessed Truth; I say, the remembrance of these things is precious to me, and to you who retain the simplicity of the gospel of Christ our saviour.

And, dear hearts, as ye have met with many assaults to break your blessed unity, so it is not to be expected, but that still your great adversary will go about seeking whom he may devour; and he, knowing that your strength is not in yourselves, but in that seed of life that hath in all ages broken his head, and overcome him in and for the faithful; therefore, his work is to draw from that

seed, and from that sweet dependancy upon it, into some strange ground, where you may be removed from your strength, and be made a prey to his net. And, therefore, as that seed is meek and lowly, if he can but exalt any into the contrary property, they are prepared for him. And as that seed is not of this world, if he can draw any into the spirit of this world, they are prepared for him. And as that seed is patient and long-suffering, if he can draw any into haste and passion, they are prepared for him. And as that seed made himself of no reputation, and sought not honour in this world, if the enemy can but draw any one to the affecting reputation and honour, they are prepared for him. And from hence come grindings, heart-burnings, backbitings, jealousies and mistrust, which gender strife and contentions, which break out into schisms and rents, under various pretences, which give room for the corrupt wit and wisdom that are from beneath, to raise disputes and janglings, which are not of God, but of the lusts, the ground of wars and contentions, which are hurtful to those concerned in them. But in Christ Jesus is our peace and tranquillity, in whom we have grown up to be a church and body, to his honour and glory, and to our salvation; in whom we rejoice together, and have dominion over the work of the wicked one, in the particular, and in the general, and by his power have seen the counsels of the disobedient brought to nought many a time, and he is the same still as ever he was. Therefore, be ye not discouraged at any work of the enemy, which you see appearing, but keep in the Lamb's patience, and have faith in the lion of the tribe of Judah, and be assured his work in your hand shall prosper, as ye abide in his spirit, which is unchangeable and invincible.

And, dear Friends, as concerning your present exercises that ye labour under, through the discontents of some amongst you, let none faint in their minds, as if some strange thing had happened to you, nor any be overcome with a zeal beyond sound judgment; but remember that the dominion belongs to the meek and innocent seed, which will guide you to be tender and conde-

scending to the brother of low degree, and to keep inviolable the law of charity, and to heal the broken and the wounded, and to restore that which is hurried out of the way by temptation, making a difference between the tender-hearted, and the wilful, and heady, fierce despisers, who are easily known by their fruits.

And, dearly beloved, this is a windy day, or a day of winds, in which that which is in itself chaff, will be blown away, and what the north wind doth not remove, will be driven with the east wind, and what persecution doth not cause to start presently, the winds of dissention and seducements will drive away, and many are lost already, and many more will be lost, who have lost the innocent and beautiful love that first shined among us, and made us amiable to one another. These having lost their first love, it is no marvel if the first works decay also.

And hence come the self-love, and shunning the cross, and a desire after the worldly and fleshly liberty, in which many are entangled, and become enemies to the cross of Christ, and seek to make the offence of it to cease, by which an enmity doth arise against them that bear it, though it works under other specious pretences, whose end will be according to their work, and the day will declare and make it manifest.

So, dear Friends, in bowels of dear and tender love, having a little opened my heart unto you, as a remembrance of that ancient and lasting love that hath abounded in my soul to you from the beginning, I bid you farewell in the Lord; and the God of power keep you in the unity of his spirit, and in pureness and cleanness of mind, serving the Truth with one heart and mind; and keep down the captious wit, and carnal reasonings and disputation for mastery in all your assemblies; and let the divine sense rule your affairs, and the wisdom that comes from above, which ye may know by its being peaceable, as well as pure; and those that trust in this gift, need not strive nor be hasty, but wait in faith, and exercise their patience the appointed time of the Father, and they shall see the desire of their souls, and be satisfied. So

the God of power, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, keep and support you by his divine, comfortable presence, and direct you in his heavenly wisdom to do his holy will in your day and generation, which is the hearty supplication of your

Sincere and faithful Friend and brother,

in the kingdom and patience of Christ Jesus,

STEPHEN CRISP.

A
TENDER VISITATION
IN
THE LOVE OF GOD,
UNTO
THOSE PEOPLE CALLED FRENCH PROTESTANTS,
WHEREVER

They are scattered in this time of Tribulation and Persecution, raised against them by those called Roman Catholics, about matters of Religion.

FRIENDS, in the movings of God's love in my heart, I write unto you, and my prayer to God is, that he may by his invisible power, open your hearts to receive a word of counsel, which might tend to your eternal happiness.

It is evident that you are great sufferers, and the same thereof hath reached over many lands and countries, and hath occasioned many to take notice of your hard measure, and to compassionate your state and condition, and to reach out a hand of charity to your relief and assistance, which is indeed a real fruit of true Christianity, and a duty that all Christians do owe one to another; yea, to do good to all men, and especially to the household of faith.

And in this charity, I am drawn forth to visit you in these days of your distress, with these few lines of counsel and advice, which, if you receive in sincerity, and with an humble mind, ye shall do well, and may reap some benefit by it.

And, first of all, let your minds be seriously exercised, to consider what is the cause of your sufferings, and why

the Lord hath permitted these days of trial and hardship to come upon you ; and by the way, take notice, I dare not take upon me to be a judge over you, and to conclude that God is always angry with a people, whom he permits to fall under great sufferings. No, far be it from me, for who hath suffered more than God's dear children in this world ? Neither is suffering a certain token of being the children of God ; for many suffer because they have provoked the Lord to anger, by their disobedience to him ; and others suffer for the trial of their faith ; and that they may be thereby the more purified and prepared, either to bear witness to his holy name on earth, among the children of men, or to possess his heavenly kingdom, into which, nothing that is not purified and cleansed can enter. Now, to which of these cases shall be ascribed your present sufferings, is best to be known and found out by the light of Truth in your own hearts and consciences. And, doubtless, so many of you as will please to sit down and seriously to consider your ways in time past, will come to an understanding how it stands between God and your own souls ; for the Lord hath a faithful and true witness in the consciences of every one of you, that hath registered your doings from your childhood ; and this will bring to your remembrance, how you walked before the Lord in the days of your prosperity and liberty, in your own nation, when you sat under your own vines and fig-trees, how short you came in answering the loving kindness of God, how little that light of understanding was prized, which God had bestowed upon you more than the rest of your nation. This will show you that it was as abominable in the sight of God, for you to bow down and serve the lusts and passions of your own evil hearts, as it was for your neighbours to bow down and worship their images of stocks and stones. This will bring to mind the luxury and wantonness, the strife and emulation that was among many of you, and how a great part of you pleased yourselves with a formality of religion, something differing from the rest of the nation ; though your lives and conversations differed little from others, but too much liberty was taken to looseness and vanity, and to

the lusts and concupiscence of the flesh. 'These things were a grief to the spirit of God, while ye called upon him in words, and dishonoured him in your lives, and gave your adversaries occasion to speak evil of you, and of your religion ; insomuch that it hath been the common report of strangers and travellers for a long time, that there was little difference to be found in the lives and conversations of protestants and papists in France, till the day came that they went to their several worships.

Oh, Friends ! where was the talent of knowledge all this while ? For as you knew better than others, and that more light had shined unto you, so should your conversations have shined forth, beyond others, in sobriety, in temperance, and in the fear of the Lord, to the honour of his holy name amongst his enemies ; and this would have stopped the mouths of gainsayers more abundantly than all the scholastical and critical arguments formed by force of logic and rhetoric, or philosophy, either could or ever did.

Now, Friends, when these things come to be brought up in your remembrance by God's remembrancer in your consciences, showing you your mispent time in days past, it will work you into humility, and prepare your hearts to say with Saul, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? And the Lord will then draw nigh to you in a strange land, even to as many as seek him diligently ; for all lands are alike to him, and in every nation, and among every people, those that fear him and work righteousness, are accepted with him, through Jesus Christ our Lord ; for he teacheth the humble, saith David, and instructeth the meek in his ways ; and I must tell you, Friends, the reason why you are still such strangers to the inward and divine teachings of God, is because you are not humble enough, nor poor in spirit enough, and so do not know the necessity nor want ye have of it ; but are heaping up teachers to yourselves, that may please the itching ear, and so are diverted from a diligent hearkening to the voice of God, who is a reprover in your own hearts. In the next place, it is expedient for you seriously to consider the cause for which your great sufferings

come upon you ; it may be, you will say it is, because you cannot, for conscience sake, subscribe certain articles, nor perform and practise certain things, which you believe to be contrary to the mind of God, &c.

You say well : but, my Friends, if conscience must be hearkened to in these respects, pray why is there not as great need to answer it in your whole lives and conversations? So far as our consciences are illuminated, it is by the light of Christ, who lighteth every one that cometh into the world, with the true light ; and so far as conscience is guided by this light, and men suffer themselves to be governed by such an illuminated conscience, they are kept from every thing that offends God by the same law of conscience, which is light ; for the same light that convinceth my conscience, that it is sin to bow down to an idol, or worship a crucifix, the same convinceth me in my conscience, that it is a sin to lie, to swear, to commit fornication, yea, to speak so much as a vain and idle word, or to let any evil communication or foolish jesting, proceed out of my mouth. Oh ! what a blessing would this be to you, and what peace of conscience would it bring into your bosoms, if this rule were observed in your whole life and conversation ; and, surely, the reason is the same ; for if the dictates of Truth in the conscience be, as you confess, to be followed in one thing, why not in all ; especially so far as we are equally illuminated and convinced ? And I would ask, which of you is not as completely and fully satisfied in respect to your conscience, that drunkenness, swearing, lying, hypocrisy, pride, &c. are contrary to the holy will of the pure God, as bowing to an image or crucifix, or subscribing any superstitious articles whatsoever ? and the same light of Truth which discovereth the one, discovereth the other, as the apostle saith, whatsoever is reprovable is made manifest by the light, for that which maketh manifest is light.

But, by the way, I must put you in mind of a diversity of working in the consciences of men, for all men do not make scruple of conscience in matters of religion, from one and the same ground and cause ; for if they

did, all would be of the same mind with Christ and his apostles, and the primitive believers; who, while they had their consciences all governed by the spirit of Christ Jesus, continued together, and were of one heart and mind. But there be three things principally that divert men's consciences from this universal rule of holiness, faith, and charity; and by these three means, people come to be led from the holiness, divided in their faiths, and broken in their charity; and I shall touch briefly upon these three, that so the searching, inquiring soul may be somewhat helped to find whether any of them have the rule and government of his conscience or no.

1. The first is Education.
2. Worldly Interest.
3. The subjecting the conscience to the government of other men, and thereby being made liable to their interest and passions.

For the first, Education, it must be considered in a two-fold consideration, good and bad; for good education, it hath a great prevalency upon the mind, as to doctrines, principles, and forms and modes of worship; but it doth not alone convey from the tutor to the pupil, the life and virtue of religion, that must be done by the immediate operation of the power and spirit of Christ; and, therefore, it is the duty of every one, how good soever their education hath been, and how sound soever the principles are that they have received, to wait for this divine operation in their hearts, to season and sanctify them, and to fit them to bear a testimony to the Truth, which they have learned in words and terms, or else they will grow up in a formal dead profession, and will want the oil in their own lamps, although their tutors might have it: and such, for want of the true life and virtue of religion in themselves, may make conscience of this or that form and mode of religion, in which they were educated, and may stand in a profession of such or such doctrines and principles; and yet may be never the better for them, as to the great and main end, namely, the sanctification of the soul, and reconciliation with God, which the most sound doctrines and principles will not alone do.

And, as to bad education, and being tutored and nursed up in the dark and erroneous ways of the world, that fallen man hath invented, this makes a conscience too, though corrupt and defiled through the darkness that is in them and their teachers. They grow stiff in their error, and set it up for Truth, putting their darkness for light, and walking by the light of the fire of their own kindling; crying, thus did our forefathers, and pleading antiquity for a cloak for error, which makes it not the better, but the worse. And these deceived consciences have commonly this property, that they will endeavour to make every one's conscience like their own, which, if any cannot yield to, they are for destroying their bodies, which shows they are children of the destroyer, and do his works; of whom Christ our Lord prophesied, when he said, they shall think they do God service when they kill you; and still these will tell you it is their conscience, but by their works it is manifest what it is that hath the government of such consciences; not the sweet spirit of Christ Jesus, but the force of a corrupt education, nourished and strengthened by the daily motions of satan.

Another thing that seeks to take the government of some men's consciences, is worldly interest. These are men of no settled, hearty religion, but allow themselves a latitude to square their consciences and professions to their worldly profits, pleasures and advantages; and so are a sort of Christians without the cross of Christ; and consequently, no disciples of Christ: for he said, unless a man take up his daily cross and deny himself, he cannot be my disciple; but how hard is it for such men to make conscience, to keep or to act according to a good conscience, where worldly loss and damage either in their profits or pleasures present? What screwing and windings do they make to form their consciences to look another way? What seeking out of arguments and carnal reasonings to make themselves believe otherwise than they really do believe; nay, sometimes forcing themselves for their interest, to profess that which they do not, nor cannot believe; and this is a great abomination in the sight of God, and such are oftentimes shut up in

darkness, and given over to a reprobate mind, because for worldly ends they choose the darkness rather than the light, and come to have their portions in it.

The third thing is, where men give over their consciences to the regulation and government of others; and these may be said to be men without the exercise of their conscience, for they have not the use of it, nor do stand in a capacity of accepting any illuminations by the working of God's spirit, but are bound as slaves and vassals to him to whom they have subjected themselves, and receive their precepts by the teaching of that man, though he be never so bad; and of this God complained of old, saying, their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men; then it seems they should have been taught of God. But, alas! what a condition are those souls in, and how uncertainly do they go on that have given themselves over to another to govern their very thoughts, their faith, their living and works; if he err, they must err too; if he fall in the ditch, they must fall in too. Nay, and this is not all, for he himself is not his own, nor the Lord's freeman, but he is bound under somebody else, as much as thou art under him, and he again under another, and so on; so that error, darkness, and blindness, spread themselves over all, and all have wandered from that spirit which Christ hath sent, according to his promise, to lead his people into Truth, whom, he said, the world could not receive; and now it is manifestly true the world will make any shift rather than come to the teachings of his spirit, yea, will pin their faith upon the sleeve of a priest or a monk, although they know them to be so far from infallibility, that they see their failings daily, in pride, covetousness, luxury, wantonness, and hypocrisy, and are such as are not able to preserve themselves out of the snares of satan. Who would think any man of understanding could be so blinded as to imagine that such can absolve them of their sin, who cannot keep out of it themselves, but are overcome by the temptations of satan, and by their own lusts and concupiscence, and must have another to absolve them, and another again for him, and so forth? Ah, where is the pure light of Christ in

the conscience all this while, that should guide and rule the conscience of the one and the other, to teach them how to keep their consciences void of offence towards God and man? Oh that men would hearken to this, and let it have its proper office in their consciences, unto which God hath appointed it. This would nourish and strengthen every good thing that hath been planted by good education, and bring that good which is held in notion to flourish in virtue; this would work out any evil thing that hath been sown by bad education, and make it die and wither; this would teach you to lay by all worldly interest, and dedicate yourselves to the Lord, henceforth to be taught and guided by him; and Christ Jesus, by his light and spirit, would so open your understandings, that he would make you wiser than your teachers, in the great mystery of regeneration, without which all worships, religions, confessions, absolutions, yea, alms and prayers, will stand a man in no stead; for except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Now, Friends, you that are in sufferings, and are scattered to and fro in many nations upon the account of religion which you believe to be idolatrous; what can be a more proper exercise for your minds, than to examine your own souls to see what it is that hath been your leader and guide in this your refusing to conform? Whether it were your education, or any worldly interest or dependencies upon any; or whether it were some over-much sway and prevalency, that any man or men have had upon your consciences; or, lastly, whether it hath been the light of the word and spirit of Christ, shining in your hearts, and illuminating your understanding to see the error and idolatry of the nations, and that in tenderness of conscience towards God, and in obedience to his Grace and Truth, you chose rather to forsake your native country, and your worldly enjoyments, than to defile your consciences, and sin against that light and grace that the Father of Lights had bestowed upon you? Now those of you that find it thus with you, what a comfort

will it be in all your adversities, when you feel the evidence of God's witness in your consciences, testifying your sufferings to be upon this account? And how good will it be for you all to follow the leadings and guidings of it in all things, and see if there be not yet many things remaining in and among you, that are as contrary to that light and grace in your hearts, and as burdensome to your souls, and that keep you from reconciliation with God? And the more you exercise yourselves in trying and proving your words and actions by this light in your own souls, the more clearly you will see a necessity of reforming your ways in the sight of God, and not to rest satisfied that you have obeyed it in one thing, but to labour and travail in the daily cross, till all things that stand in opposition to the holy will of God be subdued in you, that so you may not lose the reward of what you have done, for it is not faithfulness in one particular will serve our turns; but as Moses said, when he prophesied of Christ, it shall come to pass, saith he, that that soul which will not hear him in all things shall be cut off. Therefore the way to make peace with God, and reconciliation, is to follow the Lord fully, as did Joshua, that is, to leave off and forsake every thing that is evil in yourselves, as well as the idolatry that is in others, which they would have brought you to join with them in.

In the next place, I would put you upon a serious consideration, what effect your present suffering condition hath wrought in you towards your sanctification; for it is the work and business of a true Christian soul to be improved by every condition, and most of all by sufferings, which are permitted of God for the slaying and crucifying all that in his people that is contrary unto him, that they may be as gold purified in the furnace of tribulation. Now it will be of great profit to you to come to a search in yourselves, how this work of mortification is carried on, and to inquire whether that vain and airy mind that too much prevailed upon you in your own country, which led you out to fashions and customs, be

not yet alive in you, which puts you upon such great haste to fashion yourselves to the fashions of the nations where you are scattered, and conforming to their ways and manners. Oh! my Friends, if a true sense of your states did remain upon your spirits, how would it make you grave and weighty, and bring you into sobriety in words and actions, by which the nations where you live might see that it was from a sound principle of religion and godliness, that you had denied the superstition of your own country; and not barely for a differing form of religion, which makes men no better in one form than another: for you may remember that the apostles and primitive Christians had not fellowship with those that held the same form with themselves, if they denied to be subject to the power of godliness. And indeed, that is the life of religion, and the crown of all sufferings upon the account of religion, when the sufferers in the time of their sufferings, feel in their souls the virtue and life of him for whose name they suffer, supporting them in their afflictions, and also preserving them from the pollutions and defilements of the world. Thus it was with the disciples of old, who in a time of persecution were scattered over Asia, Capadocia, and Bithynia, they carried along with them the sweet savour of life, and it is said, that the word of God grew or increased mightily; for alas, what advantage hath a protestant over a papist, if both remain subject to the prince of the power of the air, who hath his rule in the hearts of the children of disobedience, of what sort or profession soever they are. Therefore, let me persuade and beseech you in the tender love of God, not too much to look upon that little reformation which you have; but look at and consider how much is yet to be reformed before you can come to be, as you know you ought to be, answerable to the holy, pure mind of the holy, pure God, with whom, and in whose eternal pure presence you desire to have your eternal portion and inheritance. And although this be not obtained by works, but through grace, yet all that are truly subjected to the grace of God, are led by it to deny all ungodliness and

worldly lusts, and to live righteously, and soberly, and godly, in this present evil world, Tit. ii. 11. So examine yourselves, and see how your lives and conversations answer the grace and light of Truth, which through Christ Jesus, the fountain of light and Truth, is communicated to you, and accordingly you may find a true judgment arise in your own souls, how it stands with every one of you in the sight of God.

There is one thing more that lies upon me to put you in mind of, and that is, to move you to an humble thankful mind to the Lord, that he hath in this the time of your afflictions, opened the hearts of so many kings and princes to receive and succour you, and of so many people to relieve your necessities, which indeed is a great mercy. The consideration whereof, may be a great motive upon your spirits to trust the Lord, and to serve him in your places where you are cast, and to endeavour yourselves to answer his love and kindness towards you; that his mercies and goodness may oblige your hearts to love the Lord more than all, and this will more and more open the hearts of all that love the Lord, to minister to you in such things as you need, both temporal and spiritual; and truly, Friends, I have with grief, many a time, beheld you as a people under great trials, and had wished your trials had wrought a better effect upon you than they have yet had; and there came a necessity upon my spirit to visit you with these few considerations, in the pure love of God, hoping they will meet with many among you that will receive this visitation in the same love in which it is sent unto you; and I pray God it may do you good, and have an effect upon your hearts for your spiritual advantage. But if any among you should despise it, and cast good counsel behind their backs, and cavil either at the matter or style, such will but hurt their own souls, and not me; neither shall I, (that I know of,) be concerned thereat, but with grief for their sakes, having faithfully discharged that which lay upon me to you-ward, and my reward is with the Lord, and his spirit teacheth me to love all men, and to labour

for the good of all men, as knowing it is not the will of God that any should perish ; but that all men every where should repent and come to the knowledge of the Truth, and be saved.

STEPHEN CRISP.

Colchester, the 17th 11th Month, 1688.

AN
EPISTLE
OF
TENDER LOVE AND BROTHERLY ADVICE,
TO ALL
THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST
THROUGHOUT
THE WORLD,

Who are gathered into the one Living Faith, and walk in the Light,
and therein have their fellowship one with another.

From a Friend and brother in the same fellowship, who hath long
Travailed, and still Travails for Sion's Prosperity, and for the
gathering of Sion's Children out of Egypt and Darkness, that they
may walk and dwell in the Light of Sion's Saviour, which is
Christ the Lord. Whose outward Name is STEPHEN CRISP.

DEARLY beloved Friends and brethren, gathered
out of the world by the eternal arm and power of the
mighty God, to bear his holy name in your generation;
my love and life in the fellowship of the universal spirit,
salutes you all; and my prayer to God is, that you may
be kept steadfast and unmoveable in the grace of God,
and in the communion of his Holy Spirit, that ye may
bring forth fruit in abundance, according to the abundant
mercy and grace bestowed upon you, to the glory of God,
and to your mutual joy, comfort and edification.

And that you may so do, let your eye be kept daily to the Lord, and behold, and take notice of the wondrous works that he hath wrought in you, and for you, since the day ye were first quickened by his immortal word, and stirred up to seek after him, and to wait upon him; how good and gracious he hath been to you, in bringing you from the barren mountains, where your souls languished for the heavenly nourishment, where you knew not the Lord, nor one another, but were without a comforter, or any to sympathize with you in your mournings. Oh, how hath he pitied your groanings, and had compassion on your sighings; and brought you into acquaintance with those that were in the like exercises; and then he taught you to believe on him that was able to help you. And those that were thus taught of the Father, and felt his drawing cords of love prevailing upon them; these came to Christ their Saviour, and in him began to feel a unity one with another, in the faith you had received in him; whereby you believed he would give you of his spirit, to teach and guide you in the way of Truth, righteousness and peace; and thus was the foundation of your holy communion laid, and a lively hope raised in each particular soul, that he that had begun this blessed work would carry it on; and this hope made you that ye were not ashamed to make a public profession of his name before the world, but cheerfully to take up his cross, and deny yourselves of your former pleasures, friendships and delights of this world. This hope hath been your support in many sharp trials and bitter combats you have had with the enemy of your souls' peace within, and with the enemies of God's holy way and Truth without; and in all your conflicts, you have found him nigh at hand, to put forth his power on your behalf, as you have depended upon him for his assistance; and by these experiences of his goodness, your faith hath been strengthened; and by the same word of life that quickened you, many more have been reached unto; so that you have seen a daily addition of strength in the particular, and also an addition to your number, to your great comfort and encouragement. And many have come

to wait upon the Lord among you, and many are daily inquiring after the way to Sion, with their faces thitherward. These things are worth your remembrance, and serious consideration, that you may look upon these great mercies, as obligations upon your souls, to walk humbly before the Lord, and to be devout and fervent in your testimony, for that God that hath done thus great things for you.

And, Friends, consider of the great works that this mighty arm of the Lord hath brought to pass in the general, as well as in the particular; how many contrivances have been framed, and laws and decrees made to lay you waste, and to make you cease to be a people, and how have the wicked rejoiced thereat, for a season, crying, ah, ha, thus would we have it; they are all now given up to banishment, to imprisonment, to spoil, and ruin. Now let us see if that invisible arm they trust in, can deliver them. Oh Friends! how hath your God been your support in the midst of all these exercises? and when he hath pleased, how hath he quieted the sharpest storms, and turned back the greatest floods and torrents of persecution that ever you met with? And how hath he confounded his and your enemies, and brought confusion upon the heads of them that sought your hurt? were not these things wrought by the power of God? Did your number, your policy, your interest, or any thing that might be called your own, contribute any thing to these your great preservations and deliverances? If not, then let God have the glory, and acknowledge to his praise, these have been the Lord's doings, and are marvellous in our eyes.

Again, dear Friends, consider how the wicked one hath wrought in a mystery among yourselves, to scatter you, and to lay you waste from being a people, as at this day! how many several ways hath he tried, raising up men of perverse minds, to subvert, and to turn you from the faith, and from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and to separate you from that invisible power that hath been your strength, and to separate you one from another; and by subtle wiles, to lead you into a

false liberty above the cross of Christ ; and sometimes by sowing seeds of heresy and seditions, endeavouring to corrupt the minds of whom they could, with pernicious principles : but oh ! how have their designs been frustrated, and the authors thereof confounded and brought to nought ; and how have you been preserved, as a flock under the hand of a careful shepherd, even unto this day ; which ministers great cause of thanksgiving unto all the faithful, who have witnessed the working of this preserving power in their own particulars.

Also, my Friends, it is worth your consideration, to behold, how that by this invisible power, so many faithful watchmen are raised up upon the walls of your Sion, that in most of your meetings, there be men and women upon whom God hath laid a concern, to be taking care for the good of the whole, and to take the oversight upon them, to see all things kept in good and decent order ; and to make due provision for the comforting and relieving the necessities of the needy and distressed, that nothing be lacking to make your way comfortable ; and these have not been, nor are brought under this charge, by any act of yours ; but God hath raised up pastors and teachers, elders and deacons, of his own election and choice, and bowed their spirits to take upon them the work and service to which they are appointed for the Lord's sake, and for the bodies sake, which is the church ; to whom it may truly be said, as in the 20th chapter of Acts, ver. xxviii. take ye heed to the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, &c. And such ought to be hearkened to in the discharge of their trust, as those that must give an account to him that called them, and gifted them for their several works and services in the church.

And by these ways and means hath the Lord established among you a heavenly government, and built as it were a hedge about you, that ye may be preserved from generation to generation ; a people fitted for the glory that is, and shall daily more and more be revealed among and upon the faithful, who delight in that power that called them to be saints, and to bear a profession for

the holy name of God, against the many names and ways that men in their changeable minds have set up, that the name of the Lord alone may be exalted.

And, dear Friends and brethren, I entreat you, that the consideration of these great and weighty things which God hath wrought for you, and among you, may have that deep and weighty influence upon your souls, that ye may find yourselves engaged to answer the love and mercy of God in your lives and conversation, and in all you have to do in this world, that ye may show forth the honour of God in all things: that the light which has shined in you, may shine forth through you unto others, who yet sit in darkness, that all men may know by your innocent and harmless conversation, and by your close keeping to the Lord, that ye are a people who are assisted and helped by a supernatural power, which governs your wills, and subjects them to his blessed will, and that guides and orders your affections, and sets them upon heavenly and divine objects, and that gives you power to deny your own private interests, where they happen to stand in competition with the interest of Truth; for these, and these only, will be found the true disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, who can deny themselves, take up a cross daily, and follow him in the guidance of his regenerating power, which brings death upon self, and crucifies the old nature, with its affections and lusts; and raiseth up a birth in you, that hath a holy will and desire to serve the Lord, and do his will on the earth; and such as these are instruments in the hand of God for him to work by, and to do works of righteousness, of justice, of charity, and all other the virtues belonging to a Christian life, to the honour of God, and for the comfort and benefit of his church and people.

And all you, dear Friends, upon whom the Lord hath laid a care for his honour, and for the prosperity of the Truth, and gathered you into the good order of the gospel, to meet together to manage the affairs thereof; take heed that ye have a single eye to the Lord; to do the Lord's business in the leadings of his spirit, which is but one, and brings all that are given up to be governed

by it, to be of one mind and heart, at least, in the general purpose and service of those meetings ; although through the diversity of exercises, and the several degrees of growth among the brethren, every one may not see or understand alike in every matter, at the first propounding of it : yet this makes no breach of the unity, nor hinders the brotherly kindness, but puts you often upon an exercise, and an inward travailing, to feel the pure, peaceable wisdom that is from above, to open among you, and every one's ear is open to it, in whomsoever it speaks ; and thereby a sense of life is given in the meeting, to which all that are of a simple and tender mind, join and agree : but if any among you should be contrary minded in the management of some outward affair, relating to the Truth, this doth not presently break the unity that ye have in Christ, nor should weaken the brotherly love, so long as he keeps waiting for an understanding from God, to be gathered into the same sense with you, and walks with you according to the law of charity ; such a one ought to be borne with, and cherished, and the supplications of your souls will go up to God for him, that God may reveal it to him, if it be his will, that so no difference may be in understanding, so far as is necessary for the good of the church, no more than there is in matters of faith and obedience to God. For, my Friends, it is not of absolute necessity that every member of the church should have the same measure of understanding in all things ; for then where were the duty of the strong bearing with the weak ? then where were the brother of low degree ? where would be any submitting to them that are set over others in the Lord ? which all tend to the preserving unity in the church, notwithstanding the different measures, and different growths of the members thereof. For as the spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets, so are the spirits of all that are kept in a true subjection to the spirit of life in themselves, kept in the same subjection to the sense of life given by the same spirit in the church : and by this means we come to know the one master, even Christ, and have no room for other masters, in the matter of our obedience to God. And

while every one keeps in this true subjection, the sweet concord is known, and the oil is not only upon Aaron's head, but it reacheth the skirts of his garment also ; and things are kept sweet and savoury, and ye love one another, from the greatest to the least in sincerity, and, (as the apostle saith,) without dissimulation ; and this love excludes all whisperings of evil things ; all backbiting, tale-bearing, grudgings and murmurings, and keeps Friends' minds clean one toward another, waiting for every opportunity to do each other good, and to preserve each others reputation ; and their hearts are comforted at the sight of one another. And in all their affairs, both relating to the church and to the world, they will be watchful over their own spirits, and keep in the Lord's power, over that nature and ground in themselves, that would be apt to take an offence, or construe any word or action to a worse sense than the simplicity thereof, or the intention of the other concerned will allow of.

And whereas it may often fall out, that among a great many, some may have a different apprehension of a matter from the rest of their brethren, especially in outward or temporal things, there ought to be a Christian liberty maintained for such to express their sense, with freedom of mind, or else they will go away burdened ; whereas if they speak their minds freely, and a friendly and Christian conference be admitted thereupon, they may be eased, and oftentimes the different apprehension of such a one comes to be wholly removed, and his understanding opened, to see as the rest see ; for the danger in society, doth not lie so much in this, that some few may have a differing apprehension in some things from the general sense, as it doth in this ; namely, when such that so differ, do suffer themselves to be led out of the bond of charity, and labour to impose their private sense upon the rest of their brethren, and to be offended and angry, if it be not received ; this is the seed of sedition and strife that hath grown up in too many to their own hurt.

And, therefore, my dear Friends, beware of it, and seek not to drive a matter on in fierceness or in anger,

nor to take offence into your minds at any time, because what seems to be clear to you, is not presently received; but let all things in the church be propounded with an awful reverence of him that is the head and life of it; who hath said, where two or three are met in my name, I will be in the midst of them: and so he is, and may be felt by all who keep in his spirit. But he that follows his own spirit, sees nothing as he ought to see it. Therefore, let all beware of their own spirits and natural tempers, (as they are sometimes called,) but let all keep in a gracious temper, then are ye fit for the service of the house of God, whose house ye are, as ye keep upon the foundation that God hath laid; and he will build you up, and teach you how to build up one another in him; and as every member must feel life in themselves, and all from one head, this life will not hurt itself in any, but be tender of the life in all; for by this one life of the Word, ye were begotten, and by it ye are nourished, and made to grow into your several services in the church of God; it is no man's learning, or artificial acquirements; it is no man's riches, or greatness in this world; it is no man's eloquence and natural wisdom, that makes him fit for government in the church of Christ; unless he, with all his endowments, be seasoned with the heavenly salt, and his spirit subjected, and his gifts pass through the fire of God's altar, a sacrifice to his praise and honour, that so self be crucified and baptized in death, and the gifts made use of in the power of the resurrection of the life of Jesus in him: and when this great work is wrought in a man, then all his gifts and qualifications are sanctified, and they are made use of for the good of the body, which is the church, and are as ornaments and jewels, which serve for the joy and comfort of all who are partakers of the same divine fellowship of life, in Christ Jesus our Lord; and thus come many to be fitted and furnished to good works, which are brought forth in their due seasons, for edification, and building up the weak, and for repairing the decayed places, and also for defence of them that are feeble, that hurtful things may not come near them.

Oh! Friends, great is the work the Lord hath called you to, and is fitting you for; who innocently wait upon him; and the Lord hath opened my heart unto you, and laid it upon me, to exhort and beseech you to have a care that ye quit yourselves as ye ought, in what God requires of you. And for the more particular expressing what lies before me in the matter, I shall set down a few particular observations, for your benefit and advantage; and my soul's desire is, that my labour of love may have a good effect in all your bosoms, that God may be honoured thereby. And, Friends, ye know the chief business to which ye are called in your particular men's and women's meetings, is under these two heads, justice and charity; the first, to see that every one hath right done him, and the other to take care there be nothing lacking to the comfort of the poor, that are made partakers of the same faith with you.

And when ye meet about these things, keep the Lord in your eye, and wait to feel his power to guide and direct you, to speak and behave yourselves in the church of God, as becomes the peaceable gospel. And beware of all brittleness of spirit, and sharp reflection upon each others words; for that will kindle up heats, and create a false fire; and when one takes a liberty of a sharp word spoken out of the true fear and tenderness, it oftentimes becomes a temptation to another; and if he hath not a great care, it will draw him out also, and then the first is guilty of two evils: First, being led into a temptation, and then, secondly, he becomes a tempter to others: therefore, all had need to be upon their watch, neither to tempt, nor be tempted; and let none think it a sufficient excuse for them, that they were provoked; for we are as answerable to God for evil words spoken upon provocation, as without provocation; for, for this end hath the Lord revealed his power to us, to keep and preserve us in his fear and counsel, in the time of our provocations. And, therefore, if any man, through want of watchfulness, should be overtaken with heat or passion, a soft answer appeaseth wrath, saith the wise man; and, therefore, such a time is fittest for a soft answer.

lest the enemy prevail on any to their hurt, and to the grief and trouble of their brethren; for it is the proper duty of watchmen and overseers, to spare the flock, that is, let nothing come nigh them that will hurt them, and wound and grieve them; nay, the good apostle was so careful over the flock of believers, that if there were any doubtful matters to be disputed of, he would not have them that were weak in the faith at such disputes, much less ought they that are weak to see those that are strong, descend from their strength, and go into the weakness, where they are not able to bear, for that is certainly weak that cannot bear. Those that really live in the strength and power, they can bear even burdens for them that cannot bear their own. The apostle, in the place before mentioned, when he sent for the elders of Ephesus to Miletus, and left a charge with them, before he said, take heed to the flock of God, he said, take ye heed to yourselves: and, indeed, we are none of us like to discharge ourselves well toward others, but by taking heed to ourselves, to be kept in that sober, innocent frame of spirit which the Truth calls for.

In the next place, my dear Friends, when ye are called upon in point of justice, to give a sentence of right between Friend and Friend, take heed that neither party get possession of your spirits aforehand, by any way or means whatsoever, or obtain any word or sentence from you in the absence of the other party, he not being yet heard. There is nothing more comely among men, than impartial judgment; judgment is a seat where neither interest nor affection, nor former kindnesses may come; we may make no difference of the worthiness or unworthiness of persons in judgment, as we may in charity; but in judgment, if a good man, being mistaken, hath a bad case, or a bad man a good case, according to his case must he have sentence. It was a good saying, he that judgeth among men, judgeth for the Lord, and he will repay it. Therefore, let all be done as unto the Lord, and as ye are willing to answer it in his presence; and although some may for a time be discontent thereat, yet in time, God shall clear up your innocency as the sun at

noon-day ; and they that kick at sound judgment, will find but hard work of it, they do but kick against that which will prick them ; and, however, such through their wilfulness, and their abounding in their own sense, may hurt themselves, yet you will be preserved, and enjoy your peace and satisfaction in the discharge of your consciences in the sight of God.

And, as concerning practical charity, ye know it is supported by liberality ; and where liberality ceaseth, charity waxeth cold, yea, so far ceaseth ; where there is no contribution, there is no distribution ; where the one is sparing, the other is sparing ; and, therefore, let every one nourish charity in the root, that is, keep a liberal mind, a heart that looks upon the substance that is given him, as really bestowed upon him as much for the support of charity, as for the support of his own body. And where people are of this mind, they will have a care of keeping back any of God's part, for he hath in all ages, in a most singular manner, espoused the cause of the poor, the widow and fatherless, and hath often signified by his prophets and ministers, a special charge upon rich men, that had this world's goods, that they should look to it that they were faithful stewards of what they possessed, and that they might be found in good works, and might not suffer their hearts so to cleave to uncertain riches, as to neglect the service God had given them the things of this life for, either to give them up when called for, in a testimony for his worthy name, or to communicate of them to those that were in necessity.

Now, as concerning the necessities of the poor, there is great need of wisdom when ye meet together about that affair ; for as I said before, though the worthiness or unworthiness of persons, is not to be considered in judgment, yet in this it is ; and you will find some that God hath made poor, and some that have made themselves poor, and some that others have made poor, which must all have their several considerations, in which you ought to labour to be unanimous, and not one to be taken up with an affection to one person more than another ; but every one to love every one in the universal spirit,

and then to deal out that love in the outward manifestations thereof, according to the measure that the Lord in his wisdom working in you, shall measure forth to them.

And as to those who by sickness, lameness, age, or other impotency, are brought into poverty by the hand of providence, these are your peculiar care and objects pointed out to you, to bestow your charity upon, for by them the Lord calls for it; for as the earth is the Lord's and the fullness of it, he hath by his sovereign power, commanded in every dispensation, that a part of what we enjoy from him, should be thus employed. The Israelites were not to reap the corners of their fields, nor to gather the gleanings of the corn nor vintage, it was for the poor; and in the time of the gospel, they were to lay by on the first day of the week, a part of what God had blessed them with, for the relief of those that were in necessity; nay, they did not confine themselves in their charity to their own meetings, but had an universal eye through the whole church of Christ, and upon extraordinary occasions, sent their benevolence to relieve the saints at Jerusalem, in a time of need: and all that keep in the guidance of the same universal spirit, will make it their business to be found in the same practice of charity and good works: to do good, and to communicate, forget not, saith the apostle; so they that forget not this Christian duty, will find out the poor's part in the corners and gleanings of the profits of their trades and merchandizings, as well as the old Israelite did the corners and gleanings of his field; and in the distribution of it, will have a regard to comfort the bowels of such who are by the divine providence of God, put out of a capacity of enjoying those outward comforts of health, and strength and plenty, which others do enjoy; for while they are partakers of the same faith, and walk in the way of righteousness with you, submitting themselves patiently to the dispensation of God's providence towards them; they are of your household, and under your care, both to visit, and to relieve as members of the one body, of

which Christ Jesus is head ; and he that giveth to such poor, lendeth to the Lord, and he will repay it.

But there is another sort of poor, who make themselves poor through their sloth and carelessness, and sometimes by their wilfulness ; being heady and high-minded, and taking things in hand that are more than they can manage, and make a flourish for a season, and then through their own neglect, are plunged down into great poverty ; these are a sort which the primitive churches began to be troubled with in the early days of the gospel ; for the apostle took notice of some that would not work at all, and sharply reprov'd them, and said, they that would not work should not eat ; and these are commonly a sort of busy-bodies, and medlers with others' matters, while they neglect their own, and run into a worse way than the unbelievers, while they profess to be believers, yet do not take a due care for those of their own household.

The charity that is proper to such, is to give them admonition and reproof, and to convince them of their sloth and negligence ; and if they submit to your reproof, and are willing to amend, then care ought to be taken to help them into a way and means to support themselves : and sometimes by a little help in this kind, some have been reclaimed from the snares of their souls' enemy ; but if they will not receive your wholesome counsel and admonition, but kick against it, either in their words or actions, Friends will be clear of such in the sight of God ; for it is unreasonable in them to expect you should feed them that will not be advised by you, because they break the obligation of society, by their disorderly walking ; for our communion doth not stand only in frequenting meetings, and hearing Truth preached ; but in answering the blessed principle of Truth, in life and conversation, and therein both the rich and the poor have fellowship one with another.

There is another sort that are made poor by the oppressions and cruelties of others. These oppressed poor, cry loudly in the ears of the Almighty, and he will in his own time, avenge their case : but in the mean time there

is a tenderness to be extended to them, not knowing how soon it may be our turn; and if there be need of counsel and advice, or if any application can be made to any that are able to deliver them from the oppressors in such cases, let all that are capable, be ready and willing to advise, relieve and help the distressed; and this is an acceptable work of charity, and a great comfort to such in sharp afflictions, and their souls will bless the instruments of their ease and comfort.

And, my dear Friends, as God hath honoured you with so high and holy a calling, to be his servants and workmen in this his great and notable day, and to work together in his power, in setting forth his praise and glory in the earth, and gathering together in one the scattered seed, in this and other nations; oh! let the dignity of your calling, provoke and encourage you to be diligent attenders upon his work and service you are called to, and let not your concerns in the world, draw you from observing the times and seasons appointed to meet together; but you that are elder, set a good example to the younger sort, by a due observation of the hour appointed, that they that come first one time, may not by their long staying for others, be discouraged, so as perhaps they may be last another time; but when the time is come, leave your business for the Lord's work, and he will take care your business shall not suffer, but will add a blessing upon it, which will do more for you, than the time can do that may be saved out of his service.

And when ye have to do with perverse, and froward or disorderly persons, whom ye have occasion to reprove and to rebuke for the Truth's sake, and you find them stout and high, and reflecting upon you, then is a time for the Lamb's meekness to shine forth, and for you to feel your authority in the name of Christ, to deal with such a one, and to wait for the pure and peaceable wisdom from above, to bring down and confound the earthly wisdom. And in this frame of mind you labour together, to pull the entangled sheep out of the thicket, and to restore that which is gone astray to the fold again, if you can; but if you cannot, yet ye save yourselves from the guilt of his

blood; and if such do perish, his blood will be on his own head. But, on the other hand, if ye suffer their perverse spirits to enter, and their provocations to have a place in you, so as to kindle your spirits into a heat and passion, then you get a hurt, and are incapable to do them any good; but words will break out that will need repentance, and the wicked will be stiffened and strengthened thereby, and you miss the service that you did really intend. Therefore, dearly beloved, keep upon your watch, keep on your spiritual armour, keep your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and the God of peace will be with you, and crown your endeavours with good success, to your joy and comfort, and will bring up his power over your adversaries and opposers, more and more, to which many shall bow and bend in your sight; and will bring shame and confusion upon the rebellious, who harden their hearts, and stiffen their necks, against the Lord, and his Christ, and kingdom, which he will exalt in the earth, notwithstanding all that satan and all his evil instruments can do, to hinder the growth and progress of his blessed Truth; for of the increase of the government and of the peace of the kingdom of Christ, there shall be no end.

And now, Friends, I having cleared my conscience of what lay upon me for some time, to write unto you by way of remembrance, and as the exhortation of my life unto you, I remain travailing in spirit for the welfare of Zion. And although the outward man decays, yet in the inward man I am comforted, in beholding daily, the great things that our God hath done, and is still doing for them that have their sole dependance upon him. So, committing you to the grace of God, for your director and preserver in these, and all your several services unto which God hath called you, that by the operations of his mighty power, ye may be kept blameless and unspotted of the world, to his honour and your comfort, and to the universal comfort and edification of the church, that so praises and thanksgiving may fill your hearts and mouths, your families and your meetings; for he is worthy, who is our tower, our support, the Lord of hosts, the King of

saints; to whom be glory, honour and renown, through this and all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

From your Friend and brother in the communion and fellowship of the gospel of peace and purity,

STEPHEN CRISP.

London, the 15th of the 7th Month, 1690.

AN

EPISTLE

WRITTEN FROM AMSTERDAM.

DEARLY beloved Friends, brethren and sisters in the everlasting covenant of life, which is made manifest through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom we have attained to the ancient fellowship and dominion of the saints, and holy brethren of old, in the eternal gospel of peace, and in the sense and feeling of an endless life, which is one in you and in me ; in which fellowship I am drawn forth in the most dear and precious love of our heavenly Father, to salute you with this salutation of love, as a measure of the daily overflowings of pure love, which I daily feel towards you, whose remembrance, doubtless, is sweet to me in a far remote country ; and especially when I behold how the Lord hath blessed you, and hath said unto his seed, multiply and prosper ; and it is so, beyond all the countries round about you. Well, this is the Lord's doing, and the glory shall be his for ever.

And now, my dearly beloved, seeing that your gathering, preservation, and growth, is of the Lord, how ought every one to behave himself as the servant of God, in faithfulness unto that holy gift of his grace, by which you are what you are, at this day ; and the more especially by how much you see the wiles and subtleties of the enemy, who desires to scatter you. Wherefore, in the everlasting Truth, this I say unto you all, watch and wait to feel your minds staid in that which is weighty, that is the wheat, the good seed, and who is in it winds doth not remove them ; but the chaff will be driven hither and thither, with winds of doctrine of men, and with tradition ; and this is the mind and spirit that hath not part in the ancient Truth, and is not satisfied with it ; that seeks out or chooseth to itself new and change-

able things; and against this all watch, and keep the dominion in the power of God, over it and all its ways. And forasmuch as ye know it was the love of God by which ye were gathered, dwell ye in love one with another, and let it abound in your hearts, that so you may bear the express image of him that hath begotten you, and thereby many may be yet gathered unto you.

And as concerning you, my dear brethren and sisters, who are grown up in the garden of God's delight, and walk as in the day-light of his presence, and in his strength and courage, with which he hath armed you; your joy is full in the Lord, and sorrow is fled from your hearts: yet hear me a little in this matter; O, forget not the travail of the night, and the footsteps of the former darkness; in which we mourned for our beloved, and sought him with tears and broken hearts; that so in the remembrance of those things, ye may always be ready to sympathize with the poor, and with the dejected in spirit, whose day of darkness, gloominess, and sorrows, is but now. O, my Friends, they are exceeding near me, and my heart is deeply affected with their condition. O, go down with them into the house of mourning, and bear with them in their bitter lamentation; help them in the day of their travail, in the same compassion whereby we are helped. Be ye tender to such whom God hath made tender, so shall their souls come up from the dead, and stand forth in the power of the Lord, and bless you. And, Friends, dwell in wisdom, and in the discerning and judgment of the spirit of God, that so you that are strong may be always instructed how to use your strength against such as are strong, but not in the Lord; for such, though never so stubborn, shall be humbled, and the power is with you that shall do it; but the simple and upright soul, though never so weak, bear up in your arms, and nourish with the milk of the word, which is your daily support.

Finally, brethren, this is the breathing of my life daily on your behalf; that in all things ye may approve yourselves the servants of God, and one of another, in the free spirit of righteousness and peace; that so the do-

minion which ye have obtained through faith and patience, ye may still keep and hold in the name and power of the Lord God, over all powers and spirits whatsoever, that are not of this holy and heavenly fellowship, in the free spirit of peace and brotherly love, whether they appear as open enemies, or pretended friends, to the Truth; that none of you may be moved with fear of the one, or be deceived, entangled, or defiled by the other; but may grow and prosper in the nobility of that holy, royal seed, which never bowed to deceit, nor to the unrighteousness that is in the world; but was, and is, and is to come, a judge, and condemner of it all. And, dear Friends, be diligent in every thing which the light hath showed you to be the work of God, and required of you in this your day; and let not lukewarmness enter upon any of you, for that is loathsome to the Lord; but with diligence meet together, and with diligence wait to feel the Lord God to arise, to scatter and expel all that which is the cause of leanness and barrenness upon any soul; for it is the Lord must do it, and he will be waited upon in sincerity and fervency of spirit; and such feel the Lord near at hand, while unto others he is as one afar off. And let charity and bowels of compassion abound among you, as becometh the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and let none be hasty to utter words, though manifest in the light, in which ye wait upon the Lord; but still wait in silence, to know the power working in you to bring forth the words, in the ministration of the eternal word of life, to answer the life in all; and if this be not known, retain in your vessels what is manifest unto you, and it shall be as bread in your own houses. He that hath an ear let him hear!

Dearly beloved, in that which is everlasting dwell and abide steadfast; so shall ye all grow and flourish as the blessed plants of the Lord, and men shall see that ye are fruitful, and glorify your Father which is in heaven; who hath been, and is, the husbandman, to whom my soul freely commits you all—by him to be taught and led to the finishing your course with joy, and to the glory

of his great and precious name, which he hath made known among you.

God Almighty preserve you, and keep you faithful, fresh, and living, in a sense of his continual waterings and blessings; that ye may delight in him, and he may yet delight to do you good.

This is the supplication of me, your dear friend and brother, in the covenant of an everlasting brotherhood; with all who know the generation of the righteous seed, which is but one, and hath one name, which none knows but he that hath it.

STEPHEN CRISP.

*Amsterdam, the 10th of the 2d }
Month, 1663, Old Style. }*

LETTER TO J. R.

Friend J. R.

I AM sorry I have the present occasion of writing to thee, and would have foreborne, if a necessity had not been upon me for the Truth's sake, and for thine ; for I have a deep sense of thy danger, and that thou art in the way to dishonour thy testimony ; for I am informed by several who love thee well, that they believe thou art run into about three hundred pounds debt, to set thyself up as a public shopkeeper. Whether they have dealt with thee about it or no, I know not ; but alas, John, what is the rise and spring of this, and what will the issue be ? Sink down into that which gives a discerning, and thou wilt find a secret mistrust, mixed with an earthly lust, and a crafty carrying it on, under a show of Truth ; that thereby some other things propounded, might the better proceed, or be carried on, to the making self somebody ; and this ground is cursed for ever, and so will the fruit be. O, consider, is this fitting thyself for thy testimony, and the keeping thyself from entanglements in thy warfare ? Or is it not rather, a making use of the name of the Lord, and of Truth, to plunder others by fair means, (or words,) to get a visible estate into thy hand ; and then thou may be plundered of it by foul means. It is an easy matter to preach and incur fines, when thou knowest others' goods must bear the loss ; thou art on the surest side, and then if it be taken away at last, a whining complaint of suffering for Truth's sake, must serve instead of paying thy debts, as it hath done too many already.

Dear John, I wish thou would yet take my counsel, and send every Friend their goods home, with the money for what thou hast sold of theirs, and take thee to thy employment, where God blessed thee, and in which thou grew up ; and stand ready at the Lord's call, that if he please to make any public use of thee in his church, thou mayst be free from worldly entanglements ; and if

not, be content with thy daily bread, both inwardly and outwardly; and seek to adorn the gospel thou hast preached, by a holy, simple, and righteous conversation; without which, preaching, believing, and profession, and all the highest terms men can imagine, are all in vain, and will end with an evil savour.

I have writ these things in love to thee and the precious Truth, in which my life stands, although it is often bowed down, to see so many abuse the profession of the holy Truth; serving themselves thereupon, and not caring to keep up the reputation of it; but venturing the glory of God, the reputation of his people, yea, and their own souls also, for the reaching after their earthly and corruptible ends and purposes, which they have propounded to themselves. I might enlarge, to show the many evil consequences attending this practice, but hope by what I have written thou wilt consider the rest, and still account me thy friend in the Truth.

STEPHEN CRISP.

The 25th of the 9th Month, 1678.

LETTER TO A FRIEND.

Dearlly beloved in the Lord,

MY soul salutes thee in the fellowship of that life that reigns over death and darkness, in which is the kingdom we seek ; and nothing enters this kingdom, but what is born of this life immortal ; and that we may be kept in it to the end of our days, is the humble prayer of thy true and real friend and brother, in this heavenly relation, in which thou may feel my integrity in a few words.

Dear William, I have had a great exercise of spirit concerning thee, which none knows but the Lord ; for my spirit hath been much bowed into thy concern, and difficulty of thy present circumstance ; and I have had a sense of the various spirits, and intricate cares, and multiplicity of affairs, and they of various kinds, which daily attend thee, enough to drink up thy spirit, and tire thy soul ; and which, if it is not kept to the inexhaustible fountain, may be dried up. And this I must tell thee, which thou also knows, that the highest capacity of natural wit and parts, will not, and cannot, perform what thou hast to do, viz. to propagate and advance the interest and profit of the government and plantation ; and at the same time to give the interest of Truth, and testimony of the holy name of God, its due preference in all things ; for to make the wilderness sing forth the praise of God, is a skill beyond the wisdom of this world. It is greatly in man's power to make a wilderness into fruitful fields, according to the common course of God's providence, who gives wisdom and strength to be industrious ; but then, how he who is the Creator, may have his due honour and service thereby, is only taught by his spirit, in them who singly wait upon him.

There is a wisdom in government that hath respect to its own preservation, by setting up what is profitable to it, and suppressing what may be a detriment ; and this is the image of the true wisdom ; but the substance is the

birth, that is heavenly, which reigns in the Father's kingdom till all is subdued, and then gives it up to him whose it is. There is a power on earth, that is of God, by which princes decree justice, this is the image; and there is a power which is heavenly, in which the Prince of Peace, the Lord of Lords, doth reign in an everlasting kingdom, and this is the substance. By this power is the spiritual wickedness in high places brought down; he that is a true delegate in this power, can do great things for God's glory, and shall have his reward, and shall be a judge of the tribes; and whosoever else pretend to judgment will seek themselves; beware of them; the times are perilous. All men pretending to be believers, have not faith in the Lord Jesus; thou hast a good comprehension of things, wait also to receive a sound judgment of men.

I hope thou will bear this my style of writing to thee; my spirit is under great weight at the writing hereof, and much I have in my heart, because I love thee much. I cannot write much at present, but to let thee know I very kindly received thy letter, and was glad to hear from thee, and always shall; and my prayer to God is for thee, and you all, that you may be kept in the Lord's pure and holy way; and above all, for thee, dear W. P. whose feet are upon a mountain, by which the eyes of many are upon thee; the Lord furnish thee with wisdom, courage, and a sound judgment; prefer the Lord's interest, and he will make thy way prosperous.

For my part, I have not been at London since the last Yearly Meeting, till now. I was last year at the Yearly Meeting at Amsterdam, and there taken with a fit of the stone, it lasted three weeks; and in the winter following, it pleased the Lord to call from me my dear wife. As to my body, I grow very crazy and weakly; can neither ride, nor very well go on foot. A mile is a great journey for me; but am in good courage and confidence concerning the main business I am continued for, namely, for the service of my God and his dear people. Our country, at and about Colchester, is very quiet; while other meetings are laid by for fear, ours is continued by faithfulness, and

is exceeding large, and pretty many lately convinced, to my great comfort. Our dear Friend Gertrude continues at my house yet, and is a careful nurse to me. I know her dear love is to thee; and many times have I heard breathing desires go forth of her to the Lord on thy behalf, from a weighty sense of the concern that is upon thee. She is at Colchester, but intends to come up to the Yearly Meeting.

Well, dear William, I might write long ere all were written that lives in my heart towards thee; but in *summa*, I love thee well, and salute thee dearly in that which is unchangeable, in which I remain thy true friend,

STEPHEN CRISP.

London, the 4th of the 3d Month, 1684.

LETTER TO J. T.

Dear Friend, J. T.

IT hath been some time in my heart to visit thee with a few lines, to express that true love that I have had to thee ever since I knew thee; which love hath been the cause of my dealing so truly and plainly with thee from time to time: for I have always had an eye and desire to thy preservation in that Truth of which thou wert convinced; and I have always taken notice, that thy progress in the Truth hath been made harder and more difficult to thee than it is to many, by reason of thy natural temper, which is forward and unstable, and hath been mixed with a zeal to get forward, and to attain to high things; whereby the enemy, sometimes, hath taken advantage upon thee to thy hurt: and then the tender love of God hath again visited thee, and showed thee thy hurt, and thou hast been sensible that the Lord's hand hath been over thee for good; and this hath broken and melted for a season: but the enemy, who is always upon his watch, hath sought, even out of that tenderness, to lift up thy mind into the conceit of some great attainments again; and then the former tenderness hath been, as it were, shut up and closed: so that neither the true working of that power, nor the love and tender counsel of thy friends and brethren, could be discerned for a time; which hath been a grief and exercise to us, the Lord knoweth. Yet, notwithstanding, the love we have borne to thee hath not ceased; but for my part, I can truly say, that from time to time I have had an inward travail upon my spirit how to do thee good, and I thank God my labour of love hath not been in vain to thee ward.

Dear Jacob, I was exceedingly refreshed in the account I received from dear G. D. that thou wert open-hearted to Friends, and that a tender love was in thy heart, working thee into more unity than formerly. Well, dear Friend, nothing saves us but love, for God is love; and nothing redeems us but righteous judgment adminis-

tered in that love ; and where this love is retained in the heart, and this pure judgment dwelt in, such must needs have fellowship one with another ; for there all are kept meek and humble, and they have nothing and nobody to exalt, but only by the name in which they find the salvation.

Now, dear Jacob, let me tell thee, I do not believe that all thy temptations are overpassed, or that thy enemy hath given over his seeking to winnow thee ; and, therefore, there is a great necessity for thee to keep upon thy watch ; and when thou feels most of the inflowings of joy, then to be most low, and careful to keep thy heart open to the Lord and to his people ; and so shalt thou retain that which is given thee : whereas, if thou give way to that which leads into exaltation and much talking, thou may talk it away, and then be dry and empty in thyself. The nature of the true seed is, first to take a deep root downward, and then to bring forth its fruit upward. Therefore, let thy soul affect the inward, invisible rooting and growth of Truth, more than the outward appearing ; for where there is an inward growth to Godward, it is seen and discerned by the spiritual eye that God hath opened in his children ; by which we do appear lovely, amiable, and comfortable to each other ; and in this it is that the lasting fellowship stands. For if I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and want this, the life of the seed will be burdened and oppressed in them where it is risen ; though others, whose life stands in the affection, may be greatly joyed and lifted up thereby ; but this will never bring to God, nor add any to the body of Christ, nor edify his Church. Therefore, I have always found it safe, to keep something in the storehouse for my own food ; and to break only that bread to others that was given me for that purpose ; and the same that I have learned by experience declare I unto thee, because I love thee ; and I hope thou wilt be sensible of my love, and receive these lines as a token of it ; and remember my very dear love to thy wife and daughter. Tell her, I am glad to hear good news of her, and, if thou writes to me, let me hear how it goes with her : she is now

come to years of understanding, and knows the leadings of the light in her own conscience, what she may do and speak, and what not; and as she is obedient thereunto, she will find peace in her own bosom, be a comfort to you, and will appear lovely to all her friends.

So no more, but my true and unfeigned love to you all: I rest thy friend in Truth,

STEPHEN CRISP.

LETTER TO A FRIEND.

Dear Friend,

THINE I have received, desiring me to deal faithfully with thee as to thy state, which, indeed, I am willing to do ; for the Lord gives me to distinguish the work of his spirit, (which is, indeed, to convince of sin, because of unbelief,) from the work of the enemy, who also, sometimes, being the author of unbelief, yet accuseth for the same ; but it is not his voice that cries, Lord ! help my unbelief. And, dear lamb, my soul is affected with thy state even daily, and I may often say hourly ; and a travail is in my spirit concerning thee before the Lord ; and upon my most near search before the Lord, I have nothing but good to prophecy concerning thee ; for the Lord hath beheld the uprightness of thy heart, which is his own work, and delights therein ; and as to all those murmurings, repinings, and rebellions thou writes of, the Lord knows how little consent they have in thee ; but brings anguish upon thy poor soul, that thou may feel the need of his salvation : and hitherto he hath never failed thee, but though thou waited sometimes long and sought him, yet he answered at last : and though now the coming of thy soul's beloved, be but as the lightning that shines from the east and passeth into the west, and is not as the glory of a perfect day ; yet, my dear heart, bless the Lord for what he doth bestow, and that he hath given thee a heart to wait for more ; and that this world cannot satisfy thee ; for such will the Lord assuredly satisfy in his own time. Dear lamb, trust in the Lord, and so farewell.

STEPHEN CRISP.

LETTER TO A FRIEND.

Dearly Beloved,

IN the Lord my soul salutes thee, as one who is brought into my remembrance, by that Spirit that doth often bow me to thy burdens, which, I know, are not a few.

Dear heart, it is nothing but the day that expels the night, and the day-star brings the hope thereof; therefore, my dear friend, forasmuch as it hath pleased God to cause this star to appear, and that thou knowest thine eye has seen it, be not discouraged because of clouds, but know that the day is at hand. And as concerning all satan's buffetings, know and consider, that though they are never so many and strong, yet they are but like the waves of the sea, and they are limited: feel thou an habitation in that which limits them, and rest in patience, and possess thy soul in that, and it will be well in the end: if there were no trials, there would not be so much need of patience. Dear heart, feel my love, which is beyond words.

So, with my dear love to thy husband, M. and Anna, &c. I rest thy true friend,

STEPHEN CRISP.

[It is thought proper to insert in this volume, the following Brief and Serious Warning, by Ambrose Rigge, together with several Minutes of Advice of the Yearly Meeting of London, preceded by an Introductory Minute of their Meeting for Sufferings.]

A BRIEF
AND
SERIOUS WARNING

TO SUCH
AS ARE CONCERNED IN
COMMERCE AND TRADING,

WHO GO UNDER THE PROFESSION OF TRUTH, TO KEEP WITHIN THE
BOUNDS THEREOF, IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE, AND
HONESTY TOWARDS ALL MEN.

WRITTEN BY AMBROSE RIGGE,

IN THE YEAR 1678.

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS,

The 15th of the Eleventh Month, 1771.

UNDER a sorrowful consideration of the reproach brought on Truth and our religious profession, by some late instances of persons under our name, who have shamefully deviated from our principles, as well as from common honesty and justice amongst men, in failing of paying their just debts, and thereby involving themselves and others in misery and ruin, the last Yearly Meeting in London did direct this meeting to reprint a treatise of our ancient Friend Ambrose Rigge, long since deceased; being a warning to Friends against entering too deeply into trading, and the spirit of this world, together with such Yearly Meeting Advices on that head as might be thought proper.

This meeting therefore hath selected, and added to the said treatise, divers earnest and pathetic advices of several of our Yearly Meetings, against a too eager pursuit of the perishing things of this life, omitting many others of like import for brevity's sake. But such as are here retained evidently show, how early a declension from the primitive simplicity and uprightness of our ancestors began to prevail among divers in profession with us; and at the same time the constant and unremitting care and concern, that rested on the minds of our faithful predecessors, and is still continued amongst us, to warn and advise all Friends against pride, ambition, and luxury, and launching out into unwarrantable trade to support them.

A

BRIEF AND SERIOUS WARNING

TO

SUCH AS ARE CONCERNED IN

COMMERCE, &c.

MANY days and months, yea, some years, hath my life been oppressed, and my spirit grieved, to see and hear of the uneven walking of many, who have a name to live, and profess the knowledge of God in words; yea, and also of some who have tasted the good word of God, and have been made partakers of the power of the world to come, and have received the heavenly gift and grace of God, which teacheth all who walk in it, to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, honestly and righteously in this present world; whose faithfulness, with great reason, hath been expected to God, in things of the highest concern, and to have walked as lights in the world, and in all faithfulness both to God and man, to have stood as living monuments of the mercies of the Lord, letting their lights so shine before men, that they might see their good works, both in spiritual and temporal concerns; and so might have honoured and glorified God in their day and generation, and have convinced, or confounded gainsayers, putting to silence the ignorance of foolish men, whereby the worthy name of the Lord, by which they have been called, might have been renowned through the earth, and his precious truth and glory spread to the ends of it; that many, through the beholding their good and exemplary conversation in Christ, coupled with the holy fear of God, might have desired to lay hold of the skirt of a Christian indeed, whose praise is not of men, but of God.

These are the fruits which we have laboured and travelled for through many and great tribulations, that many might be turned to righteousness, and that the knowledge of the power and glory of the Lord might cover the earth, even as the waters do the sea. This was, and is, our only end and design, which, blessed be the Lord, many are witnesses of, and established in, to our abundant joy and comfort: but there are some amongst us who have not walked humbly with the Lord, as he hath required, nor kept in that low estate, neither inwardly nor outwardly, which becometh such, who are travelling up to Zion, with their faces thitherward, but have gone from that rock, which is firm and sure, into the great sea of troubles and uncertainty, where some have been drowned, others hardly escaping, and many yet labouring for the shore, with little hope of coming at it; who have not only brought themselves in danger of suffering shipwreck, but have drawn in others, and have endangered them also; which hath opened the mouth of the enemies of Zion's welfare, to blaspheme his great and glorious name, and hath eclipsed the lustre of the glorious Sun of Righteousness, both in city and in country; this is a crying evil, and ought not to go unreprieved, and that with a severe countenance, for God is angry with it, and will assuredly punish it.

Many have got credit upon the account of Truth, because at the beginning it did, and doth still lead all who were and are faithful to it, to faithfulness and truth even in the unrighteous Mammon, and to let their yea be yea, and their nay be nay, even between man and man in outward things; so that many would have credited one that was called a Quaker with much, and many I believe did, merely on that account, some whereof, I doubt not, have just cause to repent of it already: but if truth and righteousness had been lived in by all who profess it, there had been no such occasion given; for they who still retain their integrity to the truth and life of righteousness manifested, can live with a cup of water, and a morsel of bread in a cottage, before they can hazard other mens' estates to advance their own; such are not forward to borrow,

nor to complain for want, for their eye and trust is to the Lord, their preserver and upholder; and he hath continued the little meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruise hath not failed to such, till God hath sent further help: this is certainly known to a remnant at this day, who have coveted no man's silver, gold nor apparel, but have and do labour with their hands night and day, that the gospel may be without charge.

It is so far below the nobility of Christianity, that it is short of common civility and honest society amongst men, to twist into mens' estates, and borrow upon the Truth's credit, gained by the just and upright dealings of the faithful, more than they certainly know their own estates are likely to pay; and with what they borrow reach after great things in the world, appearing to men to be what in the sight of God and Truth they are not, seeking to compass great gain to themselves, whereby to make themselves or children rich or great in the world: this I testify for the Lord God, is deceit and hypocrisy, and will be blasted with the breath of his mouth, and we have seen it blasted already.

And that estate that is got either with the rending, or with the hazard of rending, another man's, is neither honestly got, nor can be blessed in the possession; for he that borrows money of another, if the money lent be either the lender's proper estate, or part of it, or orphans' money that he is entrusted withal, or widow's, or some such, who would not let it go but upon certain good security, and to have the valuable consideration of its improvement; and the borrower, though he hath little or no real or personal estate of his own, but hath got some credit, either as he is a professor of the Truth, or otherwise; and hath, it may be, a little house, and a small trade, it may be enough to a low and contented mind; but then the enemy gets in, and works in his mind, and he begins to think of an higher trade, and a finer house, and to live more at ease and pleasure in the world, and then contrives how he may borrow of this and the other; and when accomplished according to his desire, then he begins to undertake great things, and gets into a fine house, and

gathers rich furniture and goods together, launching presently into the strong torrent of a great trade, and then makes a great show beyond what really he is, which is dishonesty, and if he accomplishes his intended purpose, to raise himself in the world, it is with the hazard, at least, of other mens' ruin, which is unjust. But if he falls short of his expectation, as commonly such do, then he doth not only ruin others, but himself also, and brings a great reproach upon the blessed Truth he professeth, which is worse than all; and this hath already been manifested in a great measure, and by sad experience witnessed. But the honest upright heart and mind knows how to want, as well as how to abound, having learned content in all states and conditions; a small cottage and a little trade is sufficient to that mind, and it never wants what is sufficient; for he that clothes the lilies and feeds the ravens, cares for all who trust in him, as it is at this day witnessed, praises to God on high: and that man hath no glory in, nor mind out after, superfluous or needless rich hangings, costly furniture, fine tables, great treats, curious beds, vessels of silver, or vessels of gold, the very possession of which creates envy, as saith the ancient Christian Clement Alexandrinus, *Pædag. Lib. 2. Cap. 3. Pag. 160, 161.*

The way to be rich and happy in this world, is first to learn righteousness; for such were never forsaken in any age, nor their seed begging bread: and charge all parents of children, that they keep their children low and plain in meat, drink, apparel, and every thing else, and in due subjection to all just and reasonable commands, and let them not appear above the real estates of their parents, nor get up in pride and high things, though their parents have plentiful estates, for that is of dangerous consequence to their future happiness. And let all who profess the Truth, both young and old, rich and poor, see that they walk according to the rule and discipline of the gospel, in all godly conversation and honesty, that none may suffer wrong by them in any matter or thing whatever; that, as the apostle exhorted, they may owe nothing to any man, but to love one another; for

love, out of a pure heart, is the fulfilling of the law ; which law commands to do justly to all men. And he that hath but little, let him live according to that little, and appear to be what in truth he is ; for above all God abhors the hypocrite ; and he that makes haste to be rich falls into snares, temptations, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown many in perdition ; for the love of money is the root of all evil, which, while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

For preventing this growing evil for the time to come, let such by faithful Friends be exhorted, who either live without due care, spending above what they are able to pay for, or run into great trades, beyond what they can in honesty and truth manage ; and let them be tenderly admonished of such their undertakings. This will not offend the lowly upright mind ; neither will the honest-minded, who through a temptation may be drawn into such a snare and danger, take occasion to stumble, because his deeds are brought to light. And if after mature deliberation, any are manifested to be run into any danger of falling, or pulling others down with them, let them be faithfully dealt withal in time, before hope of recovery be lost, by honest, faithful Friends, who are clear of such things themselves, and be admonished to pay what they have borrowed faithfully, and in due time, and be content with their own, and to labour with their own hands in the thing that is honest, that they may have wherewith to give to him that needeth, knowing that it is more blessed to give than to receive. And if they hear, and are thereby recovered, you will not count your labour lost ; but if they be high, and refuse admonition, it is a manifest sign all is not well. Let such be admonished again by more Friends, and warned of the danger before them ; and if they still refuse and reject counsel and admonition, then lay it before the meeting concerned about Truth's affairs, to which they do belong ; and if they refuse to hear them, then let a testimony go forth against such their proceedings and undertakings, as not being agreeable to the Truth, nor the testimony of a good con-

science, neither in the sight of God nor man. This will be a terror to evil doers of this kind, and a praise, encouragement, and refreshment to them who do well, and nothing will be lost that is worth saving by this care; for he that doeth truth, whether in spiritual or temporal matters, will willingly bring his deeds to the light, that they may be made manifest to all, that they are wrought in God.

These things lay weightily upon me, and I may truly say, in the sight of God, I wrote them in a great cross to my own will, for I delight not, nay, my soul is bowed down at the occasion of writing such things; but there is no remedy, the name of the Lord has been, and is likely to be greatly dishonoured, if things of this nature be not stopped, or prevented for time to come. Therefore I beseech you all, who have the weight and sense of these things upon you, let some speedy and effectual course be taken to prevent, what possibly we may, both in this and all other things, that may any way cloud the glory of that Sun which is risen among us. And make this public, and send it abroad to be read in true fear and reverence; and let all concerned be faithfully and plainly warned, without respect of persons, by faithful Friends, who have a concern for God's glory, and his church's peace and prosperity upon them. So will the majesty and glory of God shine upon your heads; and you shall be a good savour of life, both in them that are saved, and in them that are lost.

Written by one who longs to see righteousness exalted, and all deceit confounded.

AMBROSE RIGGE.

*Catton place, in Surry, the 16th }
of the 11th Month, 1678.*

EXTRACTS

FROM THE

YEARLY MEETING EPISTLES,

AND MINUTES.

1675.

ADVISED, that none trade beyond their abilities, nor stretch beyond their compass; and that they use few words in dealing, and keep their words in all things, lest they bring, through their forwardness, dishonour on the precious truth of God.

1688.

Dear Friends, as it hath pleased God to bring forth a day of liberty and freedom to serve him, in which he hath stopped the mouths of the devourers, in a great measure, for his name's sake; O! therefore let every one have a care to use this liberty, as the name of God may be honoured by it; and not an occasion taken by any, because of the present freedom, to launch forth into trading and worldly business, beyond what they can manage honourably, and with reputation, among the sons of men, and so that they may keep their word with all men; and that their yea may prove yea, and their nay may be nay indeed; for whatever is otherwise, cometh of the evil one. And such who make themselves guilty by thus dishonouring God, and the holy profession of his name and Truth, such are for judgment by the Truth; and the judgment of Truth ought to be set over them; that the Truth, and those that abide and walk in it, may be clear of their iniquities.

1692.

It is advised and earnestly desired, that the payment of just debts be not delayed by any professing Truth, beyond the time promised and agreed upon ; nor occasion given of complaint to those they deal with, by their backwardness of payment where no time is limited ; nor any to overcharge themselves with too much trading and commerce, beyond their capacities to discharge a good conscience towards all men. And that all Friends concerned, be very careful not to contract extravagant debts, to the endangering, the wronging others and their families, which some have done to the grieving the hearts of the upright ; nor to break their promises, contracts, or agreements, in their buying and selling, or in any other lawful affairs, to the injuring themselves and others, occasioning strife, contention, and reproach to Truth and Friends. And it is advised that all Friends that are entering into trade, or that are in trade, and have not stocks sufficient of their own to answer the trade they aim at, be very cautious of running themselves into debt, without advising with some of their ancient and experienced Friends among whom they live ; and more especially such trading as hath its dependance upon sea adventures.

1724.

Whereas in this time of general ease and liberty, too many under our profession have launched forth into the things of this world, beyond their substance and capacities, to discharge a good conscience in the performance of their promises and contracts, as well as their just debts, to the great scandal of our holy profession, and involving of themselves, their families and others, in great sorrow and inconveniences : it is therefore our earnest desire, that all Friends every where, be very careful to avoid all inordinate pursuit after the things of this world, by such ways and means as depend too much upon the uncertain probabilities of hazardous enterprizes ; but rather labour to content themselves with such a plain way and manner of living, as is most agreeable to the self-denying prin-

ciple of Truth which we profess, and which is most conducive to that tranquillity of mind, that is requisite to a religious conduct through this troublesome world.

1727.

Dear Friends, it hath long been the great concern of this meeting, that all Friends carefully walk in the Divine Light; that they may be preserved from the two extremes of covetousness on the one hand, and extravagancy on the other; the latter of which, has been the occasion of the failings of some among us, in the non-payment of their just debts; by which great reproach hath too often been brought upon our holy profession. Wherefore we earnestly desire all Friends to be very careful not to run into larger trading and business than their capacities and abilities can well answer; and that they frequently inspect their circumstances, and do not live at an expense beyond them. And if, through adverse accidents, any should fail in paying their just debts, and should, after his or her composition, with his, or her creditors, be so far blessed and prospered in their affairs, as to be capable of paying their deficiencies; it is the earnest desire and advice of this meeting, that they do not omit the same, it being agreeable to the command of the gospel, and common justice among men.

1731.

Let your lights so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. Let us walk wisely towards those that are without, as well as those within. Let our moderation and prudence, as well as truth and justice, appear unto all men, and in all things; in trading and commerce, in speech and communication, in eating and drinking, in habit and furniture; and, through all in a meek, lowly, quiet spirit; that as we profess to be a spiritually-minded people, we may appear to be such, as being bounded by the cross of Christ, show forth the power of that divine principle we make profession of, by a conversation every way agreeable thereunto.

1732.

We find it our duty to remind our respective members of the remarkable uprightness and honesty of our Friends in the beginning, in their commerce and converse. How exact were they in performing their words, and promises, without evasive excuses, and insincere dealings! How careful not to involve themselves in business which they understood not, nor had stock of their own to manage! How circumspect not to contract greater debts than they were able to pay in due time! Which brought great credit and reputation to our religious society. But with sorrow we observe, that, contrary to their example, and the repeated advices formerly given by this meeting, particularly in the years 1729 and 1731, against an inordinate pursuit after riches, too many have launched into trades and business above their stocks and capacities; by which unjustifiable proceedings and high living, they have involved themselves and families in trouble and ruin, and brought considerable loss upon others, to the great reproach of our holy profession.

1735.

Again, dear Friends, we esteem it our duty to renew our former advices, that Friends every where take diligent care to prevent, as much as possible, persons professing with us defrauding their creditors of their just dues, to the great scandal and reproach of our holy profession, by timely admonishing and cautioning all those of our society, who, by delays in payment, and breaking their words and promises, give reasonable cause of suspicion that their circumstances are desperate; advising all such to inspect their accounts, and give up their effects in time, in order to make the best they can to their creditors, which will most conduce to their own peace, and the credit and reputation of our Christian society. But if any, through ambition, or desire of grandeur in the world, shall reduce themselves to insolvency, after having been thus plainly cautioned, and dealt with according to the nature of the offence, and pursuant to the

advices of this meeting in the years 1728 and 1732, to which we refer you, then the society will justly be clear of reproach arising from the misconduct of such. A care of this nature we earnestly recommend, not only to monthly and quarterly meetings, but also that Friends, in their private capacity, watch over, advise, and caution one another, whenever they observe any real occasion for it.

1737.

Dear Friends, it is with much sorrow and grief of heart, we have still occasion to remind you of the advices so lately delivered in our *Yearly Epistles*, namely, to keep out of the extravagant fashions and customs of the world, and not to launch further into trade and business, than you are capable of managing and carrying on with reputation and credit among men, and without prejudice, loss or detriment to any. We are fully persuaded, that if Friends every where had a due respect and regard to this one precept of Christ, viz. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; which is the indispensable duty of all his followers to observe, we should have little or no occasion for the repetition of such advices. Let, therefore, we earnestly beseech you, that precept of our blessed Lord and Master and holy Head be duly considered and put in practice; that by ordering our conversations agreeable to our profession, we may show forth the praise of him who hath called us; so shall we witness the promise to be fulfilled, them that honour me, saith the Lord, I will honour.

1754.

We beseech you brethren, stand upon your guard against the love of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches; the nature of which is to choak the good seed, and to render men unfruitful. An eager pursuit after the grandeur of this world, is a certain token of earthly-mindedness; and those who mind earthly things, are represented by the apostle Paul, as enemies of the cross of Christ. The beloved disciple of our Lord also expressly assures us, that if any man love the world, the

love of the Father is not in him. A resolution to be rich hath destroyed many. They that will be rich, saith the apostle, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition : for the love of money is the root of all evil ; which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.—This hath been verified in the ruinous consequences of an earthly ambitious spirit, pushing men forward in the pursuit of greatness, upon hazardous attempts, which have too often issued in the fall and ruin of themselves and families, the reproach of the society, and great loss to others. Some of whom, probably, have placed the more confidence in them for the sake of their profession of self-denial, which, had they really practised, would have prevented the fatal effects of their covetous and ambitious undertakings. Wherefore, we entreat Friends, in their Monthly Meetings every where, to be properly watchful one over another, and early to caution all against running beyond their depth, and entangling themselves in a greater multiplicity of business than they can extricate themselves from with honour and reputation. And where any shall proceed in opposition to such advice and counsel of their brethren, let them in due time be dealt with according to former advices of this meeting.

1759.

This meeting being sorrowfully affected with the consideration of a great defection in some among us from the practice of justice and morality, divers of whom, from negligence, inattention, or ill-grounded hopes, and others from motives of ambition, and an eager pursuit after the world, have launched out of their depth, and entered into various schemes and branches of commerce, beyond their abilities to manage ; and some of them into scandalous practices, to uphold a temporary credit, greatly to the reproach of our society, and in open contradiction to that principle of universal righteousness we profess ; which taught our ancestors such conduct, as to extort a confession from our enemies, that, respecting many of them,

they could not find any occasion, unless concerning the law of their God.

And it is the sense and judgment of this meeting, that if any fall short of paying their just debts, and a composition is made with their creditors, to accept of a part, instead of the whole, notwithstanding the parties may look upon themselves legally discharged of any obligation to pay the remainder, yet the principle we profess enjoins full satisfaction to be made, if ever the debtors are of ability. And in order that such may the better retrieve their circumstances, we exhort them to submit to a manner of living in every respect the most conducive to this purpose, and correspondent to the state they are reduced to: it being exceedingly dishonorable for any to live in ostentation and greatness at the expense of others; which is certainly the case, where any part of the debts due by the law of equity and strict justice remains unpaid. And that Friends in their Monthly Meetings be cautious how they admit such, whose debts are unsatisfied, into full unity, or receive their collections, which cannot properly be deemed of their own.

1767.

Dear Friends, we find it necessary to remind you, that our worthy ancestors, having their eye directed towards an enduring inheritance, and their affections established upon things above, sought not after greatness in this world, but passed the time of their sojourning here in great simplicity of heart, as well as of outward demeanor, endeavouring thereby to reach the divine witness in every mind, and promote the love of truth and righteousness amongst mankind. In minds thus bent upon seeking a more glorious inheritance than temporals can afford, the love of this world had little influence. They were shining examples of temperance, justice and truth. A defection from this simplicity of heart, and heavenly-mindedness, into the love and pursuit of this fading world, hath obviously prevailed with too many amongst us, and produced the fruits of pride and ambition: these have brought in many wants, which the simplicity and integrity of our ancestors preserved them from. To satisfy

these wants, divers have been excited to enter into a larger extension of trade and commerce, than they had stock and ability to conduct. Vain ambition, and evil emulation have led into higher living, and greater expenses than their income would admit. Reduced by these means in their circumstances, yet unwilling to lessen their appearance in the world, they have made use of indirect methods to procure a temporary support, which have ended in failures and bankruptcies, unknown among us in the days of our temperate, and lowly-minded predecessors.

This lamentable defection in some under our name, hath occasioned great reproach, and grievous suffering in the properties of many, almost to the ruin of particulars, who placed more confidence in those on account of the self-denying profession they made to the world.

These causes of affliction have been lately renewed, notwithstanding the many repeated advices, and brotherly exhortations, which have been heretofore affectionately communicated. We therefore earnestly beseech, and intreat, that a godly care may more and more spread amongst us, early and tenderly to watch over such as may appear to be in danger of miscarriage in their temporal concerns; admonishing the high-minded of the danger of a fall, and using every endeavour to prevent these scandalous and pernicious occasions of sorrow and suffering; and where they break out, that Monthly Meetings fail not to clear our holy profession of the reproach cast upon it, by publicly testifying against such, from whose iniquitous conduct the offence comes.

1771.

Notwithstanding the many weighty cautions and wholesome advices given forth against all injurious and disreputable conduct in trade and business, divers instances of scandalous failures have of late appeared amongst some in profession with us; the consideration of which, hath brought a fresh concern upon the minds of Friends, to warn all against a most pernicious practice, too much prevailing amongst the trading part of mankind, which hath often issued in the utter ruin of those concerned

therein, viz. That of raising and circulating a fictitious kind of paper credit, with endorsements and acceptances, to give it an appearance of value, without an intrinsic reality. A practice highly unbecoming that uprightness which ought to appear in every member of our religious society, and of which, therefore, we think it our incumbent duty to declare our disapprobation, and disunity therewith, as absolutely inconsistent with that Truth we make profession of. We are also engaged to caution every individual, against imprudently entering into joint securities with others. For by these practices, many innocent wives and children have been inevitably and unexpectedly involved in ruinous and deplorable circumstances. We therefore earnestly desire Friends to keep strictly on their guard, that none, through any specious pretences of rendering acts of friendship to others with safety to themselves, may risk their own peace and reputation, and the security of their families. In order hereunto, we recommend this salutary advice of the wise man to their especial notice, and regard: Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts; if thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?

To the foregoing weighty advices of the Yearly Meeting we would add the following caution: That young people of little or no capital of their own, beware of being anxious to get speedily into business for themselves as masters; but rather content themselves with the condition of servants, until by their industry and pains they have added something to their stock, and attained a sufficient degree of knowledge and experience to manage a trade with safety. By this means they will be accustomed to frugality and economy, and a good foundation will be laid for their conducting themselves properly in a higher station, if Providence should see meet for them to fill it.

We are your Friends and Brethren.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting for Sufferings,

By WILLIAM WESTON,

Clerk of the Meeting.

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