

SACRED REMAINS,
OR, A
DIVINE APPENDIX;
BEING A
Collection
OF
FIVE SPIRITUAL EPISTLES,
ORIGINALLY WRITTEN ABOUT THE YEAR 1654:
ALSO
WILLIAM SEDGWICK'S
REPLIES TO SEVERAL QUERIES SENT TO HIM,
BY THE LORD'S LAST IMMEDIATE MESSENGER
JOHN REEVE,
THEN RESIDING IN LONDON.

~~~~~  
THIRD EDITION.  
~~~~~

AND NOW, AFTER CAREFUL EXAMINATION BY THE MOST CORRECT
COPIES, COMMUNICATED FOR THE CONSOLATION AND
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BY
THEIR BRETHREN, WHOSE FAITH IN THESE
AND ALL OTHER HIS IRREMANDABLE
DECLARATIONS,
DOTH (AND BY DIVINE PROTECTION WILL) REMAIN UNSHAKEN
TO ETERNITY.

London:--
REPRINTED FOR JOSEPH FROST, 17, HALF MOON STREET,
BISHOPSGATE STREET;
By ANDREW T. ROBERTS, 2, HACKNEY ROAD, OPPOSITE SHOREDITCH CHURCH.

1856.

The Sacred Remains,

CONTAIN ONLY FIVE LETTERS AND WILLIAM SEDGWICK'S REPLIES,
SINCE THE TREATISE ON THE THREE RECORDS;
ON WHAT WAS FROM ETERNITY, OR,
A ONE PERSONAL GLORY;
WITH THE SCRIPTURES PROVING CHRIST TO BE THE ONLY GOD:
THESE TREATISES BEING GENERAL, THEY HAVE BEEN
PUT INTO CHAPTER AND VERSE, AND WERE ADDED TO
THE GENERAL EPISTLE TO MINISTERS, IN THE YEAR 1854.

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This Third Edition of Letters have been reprinted with great care from the Second Edition of the above, and uniform with the following books:—

	REPRINTED.
2nd Edition of the Book of 168 Letters	1820
3rd " " Sacred Remains, 5 Letters	1856
	FIRST PRINTED.
1st " " Stream from the Tree of Life, 17 Letters .	1758
1st " " Supplement and Conclusion of the Book of Letters,—23 Letters	1831

And are intended to form the Third Volume of the

THIRD TESTAMENT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Hoping at the next reprint they will be arranged into the same order of
Chapter and Verse as the Bible and Testament.

JOSEPH FROST.

THE
THIRD AND LAST TESTAMENT
OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST,
BEING THE
COMMISSION OF THE SPIRIT,
AGREEING WITH AND EXPLAINING THE TWO FORMER COMMISSIONS
OF THE
Law and Gospel.

THIS THIRD VOLUME
OF
SPIRITUAL EPISTLES
CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING BOOKS
BY
JOHN REEVE AND LODOWICK MUGGLETON,
The Chosen Witnesses spoken of Rev. xi.

THE FOLLOWING LETTERS, BEING
PRINCIPALLY ADDRESSED TO PRIVATE PERSONS, ARE SEPARATED FROM THEIR
BOOKS OF THE GENERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES,
AS MAY BE SEEN BY VOLUMES I. AND II. ON THE BACK
OF THIS LEAF.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME III.

	FIRST PRINTED.		FIRST PRINTED.
I. A Book of 168 Letters	1755	IV. A Supplement to the Book of Letters containing 23 Letters.....	1831
II. Sacred Remains, 5 Letters.....	1755	Being the conclusion of all the writings of Reeve and Muggleton the Church is in possession of.	
III. A Stream from the Tree of Life, 17 Letters	1758		

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Q U E R I E S

SENT TO

WILLIAM SEDGWICK,

BY THE

PROPHET JOHN REEVE.

JUNE the 11th, 1654.

See Acts of the Witnesses, 3rd part, Chap. IV.

COURTEOUS FRIEND,

I SUPPOSE my temporal condition in some measure to you hath been made known and manifest, through which the Most High already hath moved you these five years past, to supply my quarterly necessity: and though you want no objects of mercy, yet I shall be constrained to visit you upon this account, until the Creator hath opened some other way. Therefore if our God see it good, my desire is, that your spirit may freely and cheerfully act your charity towards me, that you may have consolation in the deed, and I joy in the Lord Jesus from whom alone all good proceeds. But passing by the perishing comforts, suffer me to write unto you about things of more concernment, which I am moved to in a querying way.

Dear Friend, Countryman, and Brother in the flesh, O that I could knowingly say so in the deep things of the Spirit also; then should I be fully assured, that these following queries by Divine operation, would rather satisfy you, and move you silently to sit down in peace, than offend you in the least.

1. My first query is this, whether you do knowingly believe Jesus Christ alone to be both Father, Son, and Spirit, in only one distinct person glorified?

2. Whether any man can truly demonstrate who or what the living God is against all gain-sayers, without an immediate commission from his eternal Spirit?

3. Whether it be not spiritual treason against our Lord Jesus Christ, for a man to execute the office of a prophet or a minister of the gospel, without an immediate command from His own Majesty?

4. Whether any man that prophesieth or preacheth can have any real knowledge of his own salvation abiding in him, without an unquestionable assurance of his own soul, that the Most High hath anointed him?

5. Whether the Lord's former ambassadors were not all empowered to pronounce a temporal or eternal glory or misery to come, according to the obedience or disobedience of those they were sent unto?

6. Whether any man in this age can be an experimental speaker of the counsels of God, without an infallible knowledge of divine mysteries above all other men in the world?

7. Whether a non-commissionated or unsent ambassador, or speaker to the people upon a spiritual

account, may not be in as much danger of an eternal vengeance as a counterfeit ambassador upon a natural account is of a temporal vengeance?

8. Whether you are fully satisfied against all gain-sayings, that it was the Spirit of Christ alone that formerly, or at this time, moved you to preach or speak in a ministerial way to the people?

9. Whether, as your own faith or judgment you do not hold forth to the people, that God alone is the teacher of his chosen ones, by the inspiration of His most Holy and Blessed Spirit?

10. And lastly, if the Lord Jesus Christ alone be the only teacher of His beloved ones, by the continual incomings or enlightenings of His most glorious Spirit; what then are those that acknowledge God alone to be the teacher of His saints, and yet in a ministerial way gather the people together under pretence of preaching Christ, or speaking the experimental movings of His Spirit to them, but mockers of God, deceivers of the people, and deadly enemies to their own true peace; unless from on high, God bears witness by infallible testimonies in the spirits of His new-born ones, that He hath sent them by an immediate speaking to them from His glorious throne, as abundantly before said?

Now, in obedience to that commission which I once received by voice of words from *The One Personal Glory* itself, even to the hearing of the outward ear as well as the inward soul, never having had the least sound of the truth of it, in all love, meekness, and humility of soul, present I these few queries to your private meditations, and shall, I trust, with

patience wait the Lord's leisure for His loving answer
in you to these things.

Yours in the Lord's

Eternal Majesty,

JOHN REEVE.

June the 11th, 1654.

William Sedgwick's Replies to John Reeve.

MR. REEVE,

I AM not wholly against Queries; they are much used by that cavilling and disputing spirit that is in all sects, and may be better used by humble minds who are inquiring after truth; but I think they least of all agree with that infallible Spirit which you profess to have.

1. To the first query I answer, I may say I do believe what you there express, but it may be not in your sense; but I choose rather to say, I desire my faith may not stand in a form of words, but in the power of God.

2. To the second I answer, I know none that do demonstrate who or what God is perfectly or with power: in weakness and in part many do show

who and what He is. Secondly, if you mean by "against all gain-sayers" a confident cleaving to what they affirm without being removed, that is very common: if you mean a silencing or convincing gain-sayers, it is not yet done by you nor any man that I know. Thirdly, the commission of the Spirit which you would seem to appropriate is larger than you imagine; for "no man can say Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Spirit," and "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit," 1 Cor. xii., 3, 4.

3. To the third I answer, In the general it is true, it is treason only I except against the word "immediate" used in this and the second query, being jealous that you do, in it and in your ministry, either deny or veil the mediator betwixt God and man, for immediate is without a mediator; for by virtue of Christ, who is mediator betwixt God and man, and who is the light of the world, and enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, "every man may minister according to the gift that is given him," Rom. xii. "If he have faith he may speak according to the measure of his faith," Psalm cxvi. 10. "I have believed, therefore have I spoken;" or if he have experience he may speak according to his experience, Acts iv. 20: "For we cannot but speak the things we have heard and seen." Nay, they not only may, but ought, 1 Cor. xii. 7: "For every gift is given to profit with, of what kind soever it be;" and I fear it is the enemy in you that denies it.

4. To the fourth I answer, First, a man may have salvation abiding in him, and yet he not know it. Secondly a man may have a real knowledge of salvation abiding in him, and yet come to lose it.

Thirdly, a man may think himself saved when he is lost, and lost when he is saved. There are that have their lives but shall lose them, and there are that lose their lives and yet save them. Fourthly, he is not sure that knows, but he is sure that God knows that he shall be saved. Fifthly, that is not the best assurance which you call unquestionable, but that which is joined with fear and trembling, especially at this time. Sixthly, a man may be anointed to the work of prophesying, and yet not have salvation abiding in him. The Spirit of God came upon Saul and upon Balaam, and they did prophesy by it.

5. To the fifth I answer, I do suppose they were so empowered, and that every man, according to the proportion of faith in him hath the same power; First, If he speak truth temporally, a temporal punishment or reward attends that truth as men obey or disobey it. And if any man speak truth eternal, the punishment or reward is eternal according as it is obeyed or disobeyed, there is matter of eternal condemnation in it; but the absolute eternal condemnation which you declare is not justified in my heart, neither do I see it at all justified of any.

6. To the sixth I answer, I do own myself an experimental preacher, though in very great weakness and manifold infirmities. What I do feel or have felt evil, I warn others of; but cannot own an infallible knowledge of divine mysteries above all other men in the world. If I should it would be great pride of spirit in me; and I judge it so in any that assume such things to themselves. And let me speak my experience, and desire you to reflect, if you can upon your own words and see what a narrow lofty spirit runneth in

them. High swelling words none must speak but he that hath an infallible knowledge of divine mysteries above all other men in the world: and who hath this infallible knowledge but yourself and your companion? I can experimentally warn you of that which saith, "I am, and there is none else beside me: I shall not sit as a widow," Isai. xlvii. 8. Another experience I have observed, that you and your friend have allowed preaching by experience without any such lofty qualification which you now express, and therefore you yourselves are not true to what you declare.

7. To the seventh I answer, Every one that goes without a commission, or that goes beyond his commission, is in danger of eternal vengeance: therefore it concerns you and me very much to stand in awe, to tremble at the word, lest we fall under the curse for adding to and taking from His word. I believe some will suffer for running before they are sent, and some for running beyond what they are sent about. But concerning speaking, I desire you to consider how large a commission the Scriptures give: "The heavens declare day unto day, and night unto night uttereth speech; their sound is gone through the earth, and their words to the end of the world," Psalm xix., cxlviii.; and cl. 6: "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord." All believers seem to be commissioned. Rom. xix. 9 and 10: "The word is nigh thee, even in thy heart and in thy mouth; that is, the word of faith which we preach." Ver. 10: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the tongue confession is made unto salvation." Therefore the apostolical ministry is to continue in the church in all ages, and Christ

promiseth His presence with them and that ministry to the end of the world, Matthew xxviii. 20. And there will be found in the midst of the great apostacy, when the church comes out of captivity, "apostles and prophets," Rev. xviii. 20.

8. To the eighth I answer, that when I did speak formerly, I was as fully satisfied, as you are now satisfied in your ministry; neither do I now wholly condemn my former speaking, but have seen an evil spirit which got into it; and it was not, the least evil of that spirit that I did undertake to judge all others.

9 and 10. To the two last queries I answer, I am of this faith, that God alone doth teach His chosen ones; yet Christ himself taught, and the apostles taught, and the prophets taught. You likewise hold the same faith, and yet you teach. God teacheth by His Son, by His servants, by His word, by afflictions, and in all by His Spirit. For that charge of mockers, deceivers, &c., I shall bear it from you and others, till the Lord plead my cause. For your commission received by voice of words, I judge it not, but leave it to the Lord. I am exceeding weak, I fear and tremble every time I preach; I rather think that my mouth may be stopped, than that I should hold out preaching: my ears and my heart are open to rebukes. But this I may say, I charge my ministry more strongly and deeply than you do, and yet it stands staggering for aught I know; if you can knock it down, you will do me a kindness.

WILLIAM SEDGWICK.

*The Prophet John Reeve's Answer to William
Sedgwick's Replies.*

July 30th, 1654.

SIR,

It is confessed that subtle serpents accustom themselves to propound carnal curious queries, to ensnare the innocent: but it doth not therefore follow, that sober queries of the highest moment should offend that man which hath any true light in him. Why? Because all such queries are sent forth by the Spirit of Christ, either for the trial of men's faith and love to the truth, or for a witness against them, when the secrets of all hearts shall be opened, for their ministerial meddling with divine mysteries, without an infallible light of an immediate commission from the Lord.

1. In your first reply you write, you may say you do believe what I there express, but it may be not in my sense. To this I answer, What I there express is none of your faith, unless you believe it in my sense; for there is but one spiritual sense to every truth that is declared, and what I there exactly wrote in the letter is my very faith in the spirit, *to wit*: that there is no other spiritual God, Creator, or Father, but only within the blessed body of Christ Jesus glorified. "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the

Godhead bodily." His invisible Spirit is the everlasting Father; His visible glorious body residing in the heavens above the stars is the eternal Son; His heavenly enlightening in His new-born people is the Holy Ghost. If this be not your understanding concerning God, as yet my faith is not your faith, neither is my God your God. In the latter part of your reply, your words are these: But you choose rather to say, you desire your faith may not stand in a form of words, but in the power of God. To this I answer, It is the power of God only that enables a man to speak or write a form of wholesome words concerning Himself and the mysteries of His everlasting kingdom: but the reason of men's words being so full of confusion or formless contradiction about spiritual things, is because the true understanding of His divine power is hid from them. For that man who enjoys a real comprehension of the divine power, being moved to treat of salvation and condemnation to his brethren, is not guided by the fallibility of supposings or imagination, but by an infallible assurance of the truth of what he speaks or writes in his own soul; neither doth this man want a manifestation of the power of them in his life and conversation.

2. In your second reply, you say: you know none that do demonstrate who or what God is perfectly, and with power; but in weakness and in part, you say, many do show who and what He is. To this I answer, Though at present it be hid from your eyes, yet we truly and boldly affirm, without any doubt or fear of after shame, that God hath manifested Himself with as much perfection or power upon some spirits, by His truth spoken through our mouths,

as ever He did by any true prophet or apostle since the world began: but to name or present the particulars to you as witnesses to this truth, it will be of no value until you see it or feel it in your own soul. I mean, a glorious manifestation of salvation, through a powerful believing our declarations, and an unmoveable seal of everlasting damnation upon those who despise them, both in life and death. If you mean God doth manifest Himself in men's weak bodies through natural infirmities, that is common to all mortals: but if you mean He doth manifest Himself through the weakness or uncertainty of the mind, that is utterly denied by us. For we affirm, that such men were neither sent nor moved by the true Spirit to demonstrate who or what God is, neither in part nor perfection, in power nor in weakness. For no man is meet to speak or write concerning things which are eternal, without an infallible testimony of the truth of them dwelling in his own soul. Moreover you say, if I mean a silencing or convincing gain-sayers, it is not yet done by me, nor any other that you know. To this I answer, that ministry that neither silenceth nor convinceth gain-sayers, is not of God; but that gain-sayers have been both silenced and convinced by our ministry, not only God, but several spirits in other nations do bear witness to it at this day; wherefore if it neither silence nor convince you, the great day shall make it manifest. And further you say: the commission of the Spirit, which I would seem to appropriate, is larger than I imagine. To this I answer, I am so far from what you seem to accuse me concerning appropriating to myself, that God and His light in me are my witnesses, that when it

was put upon me I would have given the whole world, if I had it, to have been eased of its burthen: as for the largeness of the commission, it is only known to Him that gave it. But let me tell you without offence, the letter gives you not, nor no man else, one jot or tittle of right to the commission of the Spirit. Indeed, a spiritual commission gives a man a great measure of infallible knowledge of the truth of the letter; but a literal commission gives no man a certain understanding of the truth of the Spirit in the least. For if it should, then all literal acutants would be the only spiritual men in the world. Sir, I would gladly have you convinced of that general deceit of pleading a ministerial commission from the Scriptures to maintain your preaching.

3. In your third reply, you say: In the general you grant it to be treason, only you except against the word "immediate," being jealous, that in it and in our ministry, we do either deny or veil the mediator betwixt God and man; for immediate, you say, is without a mediator. To this I answer, In your excepting against the word "immediate" you except against the teachings of the Spirit; for God in all ages ever taught His chosen prophets and apostles by an immediate voice or invisible movings of His Holy Spirit. Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Spirit; and the Spirit moving in them was not mediate, but immediate: therefore their records have power over the conscience to the end of the world, because they were immediate words of truth. Indeed, the teachings of men are all mediate, but the teachings of God are all immediate, especially to His commissioned prophets and apostles; to wit,

that they might become the mediate true teachers of all salvation secrets to their elect brethren that heard them, and witnesses of condemnation in the consciences of all gain-saying and despising reprobates. If you mean we seem to deny or veil the mediator betwixt God and man, because we own no other God at all, but our Lord Jesus Christ only; in that sense we shall always seem to deny or veil the mediator, to all those that ignorantly worship a divided God: for we can own but only one undivided personal glorious God, and no more, even the man Christ Jesus, blessed for ever and ever as aforesaid. But if you own another God besides Him, before Him, or distinct from Him, it is you that seem to deny or veil the mediator, by giving that glory, which is only due to Him, to an idol of your own lying imagination. "He that honoureth the Son honoureth the Father;" but he that giveth the honour due unto the Son to any God, infinite Spirit, or Father, but what is wholly abiding in His person, that man through his ignorance denieth both the Father and Son. That man doth not truly understand who or what God is, who worships Him under the notion of two or three distinct persons or spirits. But he that truly understands that the Father and the Son are but one divine bosom, to wit, that from all eternity they were but only one spiritual person in form like a man; that man, indeed, in a good measure knows the Lord, as he is known of Him. In the latter part of this reply, you repeat the Scriptures which were spoken by the Lord's immediate commissioners; and from thence you seem to maintain your present ministry. But let me tell you, if I had not a more sure witness than the literal sayings

of my brethren, the holy prophets and apostles, I were the most miserable man that ever appeared in the name of the Lord. Moreover, though it be lawful for saints to converse one with another about their faith, or experience in spiritual things, for the provoking of each other to love and good works; it doth not therefore follow, that it is lawful for the most eminent saint in the world to gather the people together in a ministerial way, to exercise Scripture ordinances, without an immediate commission from the Spirit of Christ, or a mediate commission from an immediate commissioner, as the saints had that preached in the apostles' time. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God preached; and how shall they preach except they be sent?" Because there is not a man of you immediately or mediately sent by the Lord, how is it possible therefore that you should preach the true faith concerning God, or devil, heaven, or hell, or any of His counsels concerning the world to come? And though you seem to fear it is the enemy that would hinder you from exercising your ministerial gift; if my God make you obedient to it, you shall find it was the best friend that ever spake to you in all your life. "Obedience" as well as mercy, "is far more excellent than sacrifice;" therefore whether you hear or forbear, you shall one day know to your weal or woe, that it was the light of Christ in me, warning you not to embassy yourself about things of eternal concernment, without a commission from the glorious mouth of God Himself. The literal commission killeth, but the spiritual commission giveth life and peace.

4. In your fourth reply, you say, a man

may have salvation abiding in him, and he not know it. Further you say, a man may have a real knowledge of salvation abiding in him, and yet come to lose it. To this I answer, salvation in men is the grace of the Spirit, and the fruits of the Spirit are all light and life, and the nature of the light is to discover darkness, and it is given unto men for that very end: how then a man should have salvation abiding in him, and he not know it, to me seemeth ridiculous; it is all one as if you should say, a man may be abiding with me in my chamber, and yet I neither see it nor know it.

It is the abiding of the light of Christ, before the comprehension of the mind, that makes a man really to know his own salvation; and whilst that crystal light abides in the memory of that man, the nature of it is to present nothing else unto him, but life and salvation. It is true a man may be elected unto salvation and he not know it: but it is impossible for him to have the seal of salvation abiding in him, and he not know it. For when a man is ignorant of it, it cannot properly be said to be abiding in him, though it should be in him. Why? Because the abiding of it in him is that which makes the man sensibly to know it, as aforesaid. Therefore if salvation sensibly abides in man's memory, as long as he lives he can be no more ignorant of it than a man that lives all his life-time in one house can be ignorant of it, enjoying his right mind.

Moreover, if you mean a man may totally come to lose it after he hath had salvation knowingly abiding in him, that is utterly denied by us. Why? Because we certainly know that there was never any

reprobate possessed with the grace of salvation knowingly abiding in him. Therefore in the parable of the sower you shall find, though the seed of grace did seem to scatter itself in every ground, yet it rooted itself but in one only; which "good ground, where it took root, brought forth fruit unto everlasting life, in some thirty, in some sixty, and in some an hundred-fold." So that it is clear, where salvation makes its abode, that man is safe from an eternal vengeance. But if you mean, through the committing some gross evils, a man may come to lose the sensible enjoyment of salvation abiding in him as formerly; and in its room, be often subjected with fears of condemnation, even all his days; I consent to it. For I am persuaded this was the prophet David's very condition. For in such cases I am apt to believe, that either God takes back the assurance of salvation to Himself, or else suffers the creature's light almost continually to be veiled with the darkness of his guilt, that when He sees good, He may glorify Himself anew, with a ministration of salvation to His afflicted creature. Furthermore you say, he is not sure that knows, but he is sure that God knows that he shall be saved. Also you say, that is not the best assurance which I call unquestionable, but that which is joined with fear and trembling, especially at this time. To this I answer: The happiness of man's salvation in this life consists, not in God's knowing of it, but in his own assurance of it. For if I want the sensible knowledge of my own salvation, I may be full of fears of condemnation all my days, notwithstanding the Creator's knowing of it. Therefore till I am possessed with an assured seal of my own

salvation, what profit is it to me that God knows it? Wherefore whatever you mean by fear and trembling, there is no creaturely assurance comparable to that which is always unquestionable; for that is freed from all faithless fear, or sinful trembling. "If you believe and doubt not, all things shall be possible," saith Christ. "If our hearts condemn us not, then have we boldness to the throne of grace." Sir, I have some experience of this, besides a spiritual fear and trembling before the infinite Majesty. But a carnal fear and a trembling before men, O Lord, preserve me from, for ever! You say also, the Spirit of the Lord came upon *Saul*, and upon *Balaam*, and they did prophesy by it. To this I answer, *Moses*, *David*, *Samuel*, *Elijah*, and many others, were anointed with the grace of spiritual prophecy, through which they became penmen of divine secrets and ministrators of holy things, even all their days. Wherefore though Saul was once among the prophets, and Balaam was compelled to declare good things concerning Israel, it doth not therefore follow, that they were the Lord's anointed prophets, to declare His salvation secrets to His redeemed ones. No, that could not be for none can truly declare such things, unless they enjoy them in their own souls. The secrets of God are with those that are possessed with the love and fear of His Majesty, through which they are not only delivered from the language of high swelling words, but also from the power of every proud imagination, that would exalt itself against the Lord, and His heavenly light within them. But this grace and favour of God abides not in them, in whom wickedness reigns all their days, as it did in king Saul, and in Balaam.

Therefore salvation must needs be far from abiding in such men. But it appears to them only as a witness against them in the great day, for all their unrighteousness committed against the Lord and His anointed ones. Sir, if through inconsiderateness you imagine our condition of prophecy to be like Saul's or Balaam's, I hope you will bear with us for retorting them back again, among those that prophesy or preach without a spiritual commission from the Lord Jesus. Indeed, the Scriptures make mention of the fallacy and wickedness of divers prophets and priests that were rich: but you shall never find it charge any poor prophet with falsehood, or cruelty to his neighbour.

5. In your fifth reply you say you do suppose they were so empowered and that every man; according to the proportion of faith in him, hath the same power. To this I answer, If you do but suppose it, you occasion a doubt in me whether you do really believe it; all speaking by way of supposition, to me seems doubtful; therefore you have left me wholly unsatisfied, in your answer to this part of my query. So that I have no groundwork of replication. You say also, there is matter of eternal condemnation in all; but the absolute eternal condemnation which we declare is not justified in your heart, neither do you see it justified upon any. To this I answer, If you mean there is sinful darkness in all which will suffer eternal condemnation, but all souls shall be saved at the last; I am not of that mind. Why? Because I certainly know, there is no sin or evil capable of the least suffering, unless it hath its being in a sensible spirit. Nay, moreover, an evil spirit and

its darkness are essentially one: therefore they are undivided in their eternal sufferings. But if you mean, there is that in all that would naturally produce their eternal condemnation, if the elective love of God did not prevent it; I am of the same belief. For we certainly know, that the original cause of eternal salvation or condemnation lieth not in the power or will of the creature, but in the will and pleasure of the Creator only, whatever may be imagined to the contrary: for His is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." But if it lay in any excellence in the creature, it could not possibly then be avoided, but it would share with the Creator's power and glory in His everlasting kingdom. For as spiritual righteousness reigning in men to their death is not the primary cause of their eternal salvation, but the seal of it only; so spiritual wickedness reigning in men to their lives' end is not the absolute cause of their eternal vengeance, but the witness only. This truth is a stumbling-block to almost all men that own a Creator. Sir, the true prophets and apostles were absolute in their declarations, which they received from the Lord: so that, in your disowning the absolute pronouncement committed to our charge, you do through ignorance deny all that spiritual and temporal power that was committed to the former commissioners, both in the law and in the gospel; and though at present you neither see it justified in yourself nor in any other, it doth not therefore follow that it is not justified, nowhere at all. Yea, for God knows, and by His light we know, also some of His elect know with us, that in this great city, His ministry in us hath occasioned the seals of eternal life and death

to manifest themselves upon divers persons. If we had never seen any convincing effects in our ministry, because you have not seen it, truly we might have sunk long before now in the depth of despair. Yea, it would have been enough to have made us question the light of the sun, though it shone never so bright. If ever you come to see it, our God grant, if it be His good pleasure, that you may feel the eternal blessing of it in your own soul, and not the curse!

6. In your sixth reply you say, you do own yourself an experimental preacher, but cannot own an infallible knowledge of divine mysteries, above all other men in the world: if you should, it would be great pride of spirit; and you judge it so, in any that assume such things to themselves. To this I answer, It is granted, if you or I, or any man else, should assume such things to themselves, it savours of the greatest luciferian pride as possibly can be, and an extraordinary vengeance would undoubtedly attend such a presumption. But it doth not therefore follow that either you, or any other man in the world, can or ever shall prove us guilty of any such assumption. Sir, have you an infallible judgment concerning spirituals? If you have not, how can you be a competent judge in this thing? Is it possible, think you, for a man to be endued with the knowledge of divine mysteries above all other men in the world? I trow not; for I am apt to believe, it was the apostle Paul's very condition, from his own words concerning revelations above his brethren. But whether it was or no, it matters not: my business is to make my defence against your uncharitable or unadvised judgment concerning me in this particular. Sir, why are you

angry with our God? Do you not know He will do what He will? Hear, O my friend William Sedgwick, I beseech thee hearken to what I shall say without offence. God, even the Lord Jesus that made us all, did, in plain words from the throne of His eternal glory, say unto me, that He had given me understanding of His mind in the Scriptures above all the men in the world: even to the hearing of the visible ear, as well as the invisible soul, were these His words spoken. Who then, think you, can in the least cause me to question my commission, or my condition, whilst the presence of these glorious and gracious words remains in my memory? No, the light of life shines too clear in me, for darkness to predominate over it, or any man's words to daunt it. All praise and glory to Him alone that gave it me. Wherefore, Sir, though you seem experimentally to warn me of a narrow lofty spirit that runs in us, and of high swelling words; in answer to this, from an infallible judgment, we boldly yet humbly affirm, that this your experience concerning us neither proceeded from the Spirit nor light of Christ in you, but only from your own angry imagination. Because, by virtue of our commission, we declare that no man can truly preach Christ, without an infallible Spirit. The things of the Spirit are all infallible, and eternal: how then, think you, can they be declared by an uncertain, fallible, or imaginary light? O that our good God would once convince you of the danger of preaching from the letter, without a commission from the Spirit, by voice of words from above. And further you say, another experience you observe in me, that I and my friend have allowed preaching by experience, without any such lofty

qualification which we now express, and therefore we ourselves are not true to what we declare. To this I answer, We did never allow any of our own faith, in a ministerial way, to preach to the people; nay, knowing the danger, they durst not do it without a commission from the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, after we had declared the contrary, did we ever allow any man, under pretence of speaking his experience, to pray and preach, and then conclude praying, in the priestly way of the nation in their satanical synagogues or anywhere else, in their vain-glorious hypocritical forms? I trow not. For then you might truly charge us with folly in this particular. If men, therefore, have been convinced with the deceitfulness of the national ministry, to wit, that their preaching is by way of art and trade, and not by the immediate teachings of the Spirit, as I suppose you and divers others have been, and yet shall walk in the same form of preaching; how can such men but be full of fears and doubts concerning the truth or authority of their ministry, whatever they pretend of speaking their experience to the people?

7. In your seventh reply you say, "Every one that goes without a commission is in danger of eternal vengeance. Therefore it concerns you and me very much to stand in awe, to tremble at the word, lest we fall under the curse for adding to or taking from His word." Also you say, you believe some will suffer for running before they are sent, and some for running beyond that which they are sent about. But concerning speaking, you desire me to consider how large a commission the Scriptures give. To this I answer, It is a work of the highest concernment

that possibly can be, for a man to execute the office of a prophet or minister of Christ. Wherefore we unquestionably affirm, that all those that go into the ministry of the letter, without a spiritual commission, they are not only in danger of an eternal vengeance, but very few of them will escape it, that have been warned of it by commissioned messengers of the Lord's own sending. Therefore know, that neither your experience, nor the effects of your ministry, no, nor the Scriptures themselves, will bear you out in the day of trial, for want of that sure word abiding in you: "I the Lord have chosen thee to be a minister to my people." But as concerning a spiritual commissioner being in danger of eternal vengeance for falling short or going beyond his commission, that is denied by us. A temporal vengeance, indeed, attends them in such a case, as namely, a whale's belly, or slaying by a lion, as Jonas and another prophet were. But if you mean he may have some secret fears of eternal vengeance in him for rebelling against the commission, that is not denied by us; but that he shall be in danger of it in reference to God's purpose, that we utterly deny. Why? Because we know that God anoints none with the spirit of heavenly prophecy but those that were elected to salvation before the foundation of the world was laid. For as men formerly, that were anointed with oil, had a cheerful countenance, so likewise all those that are anointed with the grace of spiritual prophesying or preaching, enjoy a cheerful and settled mind. Kings commit their secrets to none but favourites only; so likewise the God or King of Glory commits His secret counsel, by way of dispensation, to none but His beloved

commissioners only. It is granted that all those that believe in the true Jesus are acquainted with a measure of God's secrets, according to the proportion of their faith: but the public declarations of them, as aforesaid, are committed to none in a prophetical or ministerial way, but those that are immediately sent forth by the eternal Spirit. "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to them it is not given, or in parable only." To whom is it given? To chosen prophets or apostles only, that they might demonstrate them to their elect brethren. "When thou art converted," saith Christ to Peter, "strengthen thy brethren." It is true, the secrets of the Lord are with all those that serve Him with an upright heart, as before; but it doth not therefore follow that they are capable to ~~manage~~ them in a prophetical or ministerial way, for the convincing or converting their elect brethren into a real comprehension of them to their everlasting establishment. No; I say again, from an unerring light, none can do that but spiritual commissioners only. O that you, and all preachers that are of a merciful spirit, were convinced of this saving truth!

Moreover, you say, "David called upon all creatures and all men, kings and all people, and upon everything that had breath, to praise the Lord." To this I answer, Did he call upon them all, or any of them at all, to praise the Lord in a prophetical or ministerial way, as he himself often did? I trow not; that was none of his intent when he uttered these words; for he knew that none but selected ones could do that. But it was an extraordinary comprehension of the love and goodness of God to his

soul and body, which caused him with such zeal to call upon all breathing things to praise the Lord for His goodness towards them according to their kind or light, as he did according to his light. Also you say: "And therefore the apostolical ministry is to continue in the church in all ages; and Christ promises His presence with them and that ministry to the end of the world." To this I answer, If you mean an exact form according to the letter, as namely, visible praying, preaching, baptizing, breaking of bread, laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and such like; I know none capable to administer those apostolical ordinances for want of the gift of tongues and miracles. Whoever, therefore, imitates the apostles' ministry from the letter, are but scripturian usurpers and deceivers of their own souls and the people, for want of a commission from the Spirit, as aforesaid. But if you mean, Christ will own the invisible spiritual ministry of the apostles with His presence in His elect church or people, in all ages to the end of the world, we join with you. For whensoever the Spirit of Christ convinces a soul to believe the truth of the Scriptures, and to yield a spiritual obedience to them to the utmost of his power, it may properly be said, that He owns the apostles' ministry with His presence in the creature. Why? Because they were the penmen of those records of truth. Again, if a man, through the hearing of a national preacher, should be convinced of the truth of the Scriptures as aforesaid, what doth he do in such a case? Truly he justifies the ministry of the true prophets and apostles, and sits down in peace in his own soul, and becomes wiser than his teacher,

by seeing him in the dark in spiritual things; and so hears him no more, but pities him. This is the condition of all those that are taught by the Spirit.

Now this I shall commend unto you, If any minister in the nation or world, mediately or immediately, were moved or sent by the Spirit of God to preach unto the people, no man would be capable to become his teacher. Why? Because the oracles of God are committed to such men only, upon the account of ministerial declarations. If David's teachers had been all Nathans, he would hardly have said he was become wiser than all his teachers. For I dare boldly say, there was never any of the apostles' hearers did attain to an equality of spiritual understanding with them. Why? Because the power and glory of God would be obscured and His messengers put to open shame, and the truth delivered by them subject to be questioned by all, if the hearers should become wiser than or equal with their commissioned teachers in things of eternal concernment. Sir, I would not have you guilty of calling the following truth out of its proper name, to wit: from an infallible light we declare, that God has chosen us two only, in this age, to bear witness unto Himself, and His invisible true teachings in His people by His Spirit, in opposition of all visible teachings in the world in a ministerial way, as false, vain, and of none effect to the preachers thereof, but rather a dreadful witness against them in the great day, for their ministerial meddling with holy things without a spiritual command. What answer doth the glorious Commissioner say He will make unto them, when they shall think to plead their

ministry before him? "I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." That is, I never knew you as ministers of my sending; you have had the reward of your ministry already; you have had your souls' chiefest desire of riches, pleasure, or honour among the earthly honourable ones; whilst my poor messengers were afflicted with many necessities, persecuted and despised as dross, and deadly enemies against your ministerial happiness; you have had your reward already. Go, therefore, into everlasting shame with them that set you to work, whilst my poor messengers receive a crown of eternal glory in my kingdom, with myself and my holy angels, as a recompence of all their faithful sufferings for my name's sake. Be faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

8. In your eighth reply you say, when you did speak formerly, you were as fully satisfied as we are now satisfied in our ministry, neither do you now wholly condemn your former speaking, but you have seen an evil spirit that got into it; and you say it was not the least evil of that spirit that you did undertake to judge all others. To this I answer, If your satisfaction had been the same as ours is, it would have remained with you to this day, neither could an evil spirit have got into it if you have been kept unspotted of the world; for so long as a man is preserved from outward pollutions, the evil one in him hath no power over him nor his ministry, nor an evil spirit without him could have any power over him (if you think there is any). Moreover, if your satisfying ministry had been from the Lord, as you suppose it was, we verily believe an evil spirit could

not have had power over it one day, no, nor yet one hour. For let me tell you, if your ministry had been of God, the higher the light had appeared, the lower would your soul have been humbled in the sight of your brethren. For though the true prophets and apostles had their natural failings through the manifold infirmities attending them in their ministry, yet an evil spirit of lofty exaltation above their brethren, because of their great light and favour with God, did never predominate over them. Indeed, a seeming glorious light proceeding from men's own imagination, is that which will not only exalt a man above his brethren, but also above all that is called God. Nay, it is so highly conceited with its own rational wisdom, that it would rather it had never had a being, if it may not bear rule over all inferiority or equality; it is an abomination to such a spirit. Therefore, if you now find an evil spirit captivated your former ministry, either with lofty conceits of an essential oneness with God Himself, or a triumphing over men with your empty notions and such like; what good thoughts soever you may have of that ministry in reference to the joy and glory you then possessed, yet we dare boldly say, from that God that sent us, that the head of that ministry was an angel of darkness. Furthermore, if that ministry of yours had been from the Spirit of God, though it had given judgment against all gain-saying opinions in the world, yet the Lord would have justified you in it. Why? Because the sentence proceeded from Himself. "We know," saith the apostolical commissioner, "that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." In this saying the intent of the apostle was, not that they

knew that all men in the world were in bondage to their own sinful lusts, except themselves. No; but the meaning was, that they certainly knew that their ministry was spiritual and of God, and that all the contrary ministry in the world was carnal and of the devil. Wherefore, Sir, whatever you think of your present ministry, the same spirit remains in it as formerly. If you are moved, therefore, to acknowledge an evil spirit in your former ministry, that we might apply it to ourselves; truly, Sir, you have lost your labour in this particular. Why? Because we have the seal of everlasting satisfaction abiding in us, that our commission and declarations are of the Lord, whether they be unto eternal salvation or condemnation. If any man therefore can truly convince us of wrong done unto him since we received our commission, we are both ready and willing to acknowledge it and bear our shame. But as concerning our inward or outward failings towards God, in reference to our ministerial commission, the acknowledgment of such things belongs only unto Him, because none can cure it or pass it by but Himself only. For because we say the Lord only hath made us two His spiritual commissioners in this age, therefore we know that all men are subject to lie in wait to catch us, though they be taken in their own net.

9 and 10. In your reply to the two last queries, you say you are of this faith, "that God alone doth teach His chosen ones," but you omitted that clause, "by the inspiration of His most holy Spirit." And you say, "Yet Christ Himself taught, and His apostles taught, and the prophets taught." To this I answer, If you mean there is another spiritual God to teach

men besides Christ, we disown that; for God is our Christ and Christ is our only God, who is a spiritual God-man, in one distinct person glorified. As for two or three distinct persons and but one essence, or an infinite formless Spirit, we own no such imaginary confusions. Yet we hold forth a three-fold spiritual trinity in unity and unity in trinity, under a three-fold title of Father, Son, and Spirit. But this glorious mystery is operated only in the singular person of our Lord Jesus Christ, as aforesaid. Moreover, you say we likewise hold the same faith, and yet we teach. To this I answer, We have a commission from the Lord for our ministry; but we know that you have none, because you cannot own those words of "immediate" or "infallibility." And besides this, we deny that ever we used the national form of teaching at all. Indeed, when we first appeared there came divers unto us to prove our commission by way of queries; to whom we gave answers endeavouring their satisfaction. And this was and is, with our declarations by writing, our manner of teaching, adding this further; for the discovery of the ignorance and fallacy of all the ministry in the world and their formal worship, we are moved in a discursive way, to treat of the foundation of spiritual things; which things were so opposite to some of the hearers, and did so enrage them, that they did not only condemn them as blasphemy and delusions of the devil, but would also willingly have torn us in pieces, and (some of them falling under the Lord's eternal sentence for their despising) with a warrant apprehended us. The Lord knoweth what we have suffered and are to suffer at the hands of merciless men, for His name's

sake. Our joy and glory is, that our sufferings principally are for yielding obedience to His blessed command. Again you say, "God teaches by His son, by His servants, by His word, by afflictions, and in all by His Spirit." To this I answer, as afore, God never did nor never will own any man as a teacher to his people, but him only that he commissionates. It is confessed, God teaches by his Son, which Son is Himself; or rather teaches in His Son, for that is most proper. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself; and God did teach by His commissioned servants, the prophets and apostles; but it doth not therefore follow that any shall be truly taught by you or me, or by any man else, unless we have a spiritual commission, as those his servants had. If we have, then we may be confident of a blessing in our ministry; otherwise our expectations will certainly come to nought. Sir, if you mean, all mankind are or may be capable of spiritual teachings; that is denied by us. But if you mean, all God's elect through the whole world are immediately taught by His Spirit only, in the things of salvation, where his commissioners are not; we join with you. Moreover, you say, for our commission received by voice of words you judge it not, but leave it to the Lord. To this I answer, though here you say you judge it not but leave it to the Lord; yet in your sixth reply, appears to me as harsh a judgment almost as possibly could be given. But seeing you have here disowned it, our God will pass it by. Sir, I now humbly beseech you seriously to consider what I shall write unto you, in relation to your true and lasting peace. In the holy name and power of our God, we advise

you to cease from your ministerial way of preaching; not minding your honour in the thing, for you will never find any true peace in it, but the contrary altogether, after so clear a discovery of the fallacy of it, as this is. Christ Jesus our God never committed the ministry of His gospel to the rich, but He hath chosen the poor and contemptible things of this world for the confounding the mighty and honourable things thereof. If you should think that Paul was rich and honourable, I believe he enjoyed it but a very little season after his conversion. "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," saith our God. Sir, we have not looked upon you as one of the tithe-mongering ministers of the nation. Therefore in Christ's stead we desire you never to imitate them more in their hypocritical forms. For we are persuaded that God hath made you a steward of great possession, principally for a covering to many of His afflicted ones, in this hard-hearted time. Therefore go on, not in your ministry, but in your mercy, and prosper. For (whatever you may think to the contrary) all the peace you enjoy springs only out of the bowels of your compassion to helpless souls. "Love covereth a multitude of sins." "There is none can stand in judgment, but the merciful." "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," saith our God. O the manifold real praises that ascend up to the Lord of Glory, through the charity of the merciful! No man, nor angel, can ever speak forth the excellency of charity. Why are the most of our rich men uncharitable? Truly, because there is no spiritual light or love in them. "Howl, ye rich men," saith St. James. For what? Because you had no

compassion to your poor afflicted brother, notwithstanding your bags of gold and silver. That rich man only that hath found mercy unto eternal life, is made very tender of men's natural lives, not to give away a whole estate, from an imaginary call thereunto; that is none of our intent, the Lord knows, but to refresh the bowels and backs of the oppressed, with the overflowings of his possessions; that was the very intent of this exhortation. To conclude, In the great day, the Lord Jesus seems to take notice of nothing else in the rich but their charity, or their want of charity, in that saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father; when I was hungry ye gave me meat." "Go ye cursed; when I was hungry, ye gave me no meat." Thus you may see, it is not a rich man's ministry, but his mercy that will stand in stead in the great day. Sir, if you are not satisfied, I shall wait for your return. That no flesh may glory in His presence, the Lord Himself satisfy you in this, and all things else, that may further your eternal happiness.

This return was delivered into Mr. William Sedgwick's own hand, July the 30th, 1654.

*The Prophet John Reeve's Answer to a Letter sent
to him by Isaac Pennington, Esquire.*

IN THE YEAR 1654.

See Acts of the Witnesses, 3rd Part, Chap. IV.

HAVING soberly perused thy last writing, and with much deliberation weighed it in the balance of divine truth, I doubt not but the Most High will move thy ponderous spirit to do the like without just offence at me.

Therefore, most acute penman, I confess, that in reference to my real understanding of the Holy Spirit, its wonderful commission, and revelation, with the nature of my own spirit, I cannot but confess thy counsel is much like that of Jethro's unto Moses. Wherefore undeceiving truth being the only searcher of all spirits, by it I am first moved to write a little of man's unutterable deceits.

Friend, It is kindly confessed that man's carnal imaginary reason is an angel of such satanical depths, that the most high God-like men that ever were, have oftentimes been snared therewith. And why so? That they might not put confidence in any received light in them whatsoever, but with trembling spirits be abased before that infinite

Personal Glory without them, from whence it proceeded.

Again, from the aforesaid darkness, a man may mightily counterfeit lying visions, signs, and wonders, concerning God, angels, and men, to the utter deceiving himself, yea, and the blessed ones also (if it were possible), for everlasting.

Moreover, I am filled with confidence, that a man by mere supposition may imagine to discern much weakness in the declarations of truth, from a man sent by the Creator; and to know the true God's various operations in his own soul, notwithstanding he owns no God or Creator at all, but an imaginary God only, which he calls an infinite, or vast Spirit, which is without form and void.

Furthermore, I am not ignorant now, that from natural parts and education only, a man may be endued with such sharp comprehensions, profound languages, divine sentences, and seeming self-denial, that neither man nor angel can possibly discover him, till the Lord Jesus makes him manifest by his fruits.

Again, I suppose it possible, that, from a meritorious conceit only, a man may have power to distribute all he hath to the poor, and give his body to the fire, and yet be but a cast-away, for want of acting mercy, in obedience from a divine light or love in him, to an infinite Personal God or Glory without him.

Moreover, because the serpent-angel, or devil in man's flesh, naturally winds itself into every good desire, thought, word and deed, oftentimes predominating over men's spiritual peace; there-

fore a son, full of God-like compassion, is subject to question his eternal inheritance, when an uncompassionate child, possessed with goodly words only, is under deep damnation and knows it not, until his light descend into sensible darkness of a fiery life or everlasting burning death.

In the next place, having manifested thy suspicion of the truth of my commission, or inspiration, as proceeding from the Spirit of all truth; or if true, of a thorough renewing of my spirit by it, or of walking contrary to it; somewhat shall be declared in answer thereunto.

Friend, if thy light informs thee, that the most high and Holy One may empower a man in this age to declare divine secrets to the heirs of immortal crowns; is it not wisdom's way, rather to magnify himself in a contemptible vessel, than in that which is with riches and honour among men?

Again, be it known unto thee, that as a man speaks privately with his friend, so did the Creator Himself speak eight times distinct words unto my spirit, even to the hearing of the outward ear; by virtue of which powerfully I was sent forth to demonstrate the substantial things of eternity, prepared only for those spirits that proceeded out of the nature of the glorious Spirit of all variety of infinite excellences.

Therefore, though many angel-like men may be under their seasons of light and darkness, doth it therefore of necessity follow, that the commissioners of the unerring Spirit should be in the same condition?

Is it not more meet they should be preserved

from the power of visible or invisible temptations, above all other men; seeing Paul-like, they have been and are to be abundantly tried, by serpentine spirits, in another manner, in relation to Him that sent him, concerning His wonderful secrets of eternal life and death upon the spirits and bodies of all mankind very suddenly?

Moreover, their persons being prevented from the honour or dishonour of riches, or any worldly incumbrances, above many of their brethren; may they not, in all stillness of mind, have more communion with the Holy Spirit, concerning unutterable glories to come, than other men?

Moreover, being set apart to be more than ordinarily enlightened with a real understanding of the Personal Glory of an infinite Majesty itself; as soon as ever they feel the carnal serpent begin to sting, before it becomes a fiery serpent or dragon, to torment the whole man; may they not, by the light in them, look upon the Son of Man in His glory, and be immediately healed?

Again, it is written, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God: for he that is entered into his rest is also ceased from his own works, as God did from His." What thinkest thou then of the restlessness often arising in wise men's spirits? May it not be for want of the power of love in them unto their poor brethren, from their mixing divine notions and carnal notions together, and building them upon an imaginary God, instead of the spiritual Rock of all Ages?

Moreover, if men, whose tongues and faces appear like angels in comparison of others, shall

often be subjected with eternal snares ; is God's eternal rest indeed manifest to such men ?

Furthermore, though angelical subtile serpents, and simple doves, or childish saints, may be subjected to many sad soul-distempers, through ignorance of the spiritual foundation of glorious peace ; yet may not those men, unto whom the living light hath manifested itself in power, be entered into their royal rest for ever, unless they are left to commit some known rebellion against the Lord, and His heavenly light within them ?

Again, may not those men which enjoy the aforesaid divine rest, certainly know that the principal cause of many wise men's sorrows, whether rich or poor, is through want of a clear comprehension of the glorious Person of the high and mighty God ? For if men's spirits were really acquainted with the Lord of all light and life, how could their souls frequently want spiritual rest, being virtually one with salvation itself ? And how can those men but be as springs of settled light of life eternal, unto whose spirits an incomprehensible God of Glory hath appeared as the sun in his brightness ? But, on the contrary, thinkest thou those men can possibly be freed from many agonies of deep darkness, who idolize a false God, or vainly imagine that no man is capable to know the true God, because He is infinite ?

Moreover, though the Spirit of our Personal God, by virtue of its glorious Brightness, comprehends all spirits at once, yet, except men are enabled by the light of life in some measure to comprehend His infinite glory also, for what I know they may everlastingly perish.

Furthermore, though men or angels have no divine light of life in them, but from the influences of an infinite Majesty; yet thou mayest know, that His all comprehensiveness consists not in its spiritual Quantity, but glorious Quality only. If I should say to thee, that the Essence of an infinite Glory, in its quantity, is but as a spark of fire, canst thou or any creature disprove me? And if so, doth not His transcendent excellence so much the more appear to those which shall in some measure be enabled to comprehend so wonderful secrets?

Again, If thou art really convinced in thy conscience that there is a Creator, and dost truly understand Him to be a distinct Personal Glory from thee, and all things and places, as He is; then with us (which live in this light) thou must needs know, that the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, in one person glorified, is called infinite, incomprehensible, vast, or boundless, upon the account aforesaid. O! would it not be a divine rarity, if but the honourable wise men should own this our God in power, and His glorious truths revealed by us His poor despised messengers? Why? Because they clearly discover the sandy foundation of all those who, through darkness, slight a Personal Glory, and adore an incomprehensible formless spirit, otherwise an infinite Nothing, but glittering words only.

Again, says he, "If the spirit of satan cannot utter great mysterious things, both concerning the creation and redemption, whence did those arise that *John Robbins*, and his prophets, did wonderfully utter in this kind?"

To this, from the light, may be answered, if the Spirit of an infinite Majesty had discovered *John Robbins* to thee as it did in love to me, about eight months before his recantation to *Oliver Cromwell*, thou couldst not then have possibly yoked us together; but the light of life in me imputes it only to thy not knowing of *John Robbins'* cursed tenets and carnal designs, when his own hellish darkness appeared in its power upon him, and those that were under the same deceit, by thee called prophets.

Moreover, notwithstanding thy carnal confidence, that divine mysteries may be truly declared by a satanical spirit: as to that, from a glorious light I am emboldened to affirm, that neither men nor angels from a false spirit are capable to demonstrate the wonderful mysteries of creation and redemption. Why? Because thou mayest know, that the right understanding of all spiritual excellences is inclosed only in these two secrets. As it is written, "Why speakest thou to them in parables? He answered, and said unto them, Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to them it is not given."

Furthermore, are any secrets comparable with those of Christ's everlasting kingdom? Again, seeing all is not gold that glitters, was it the Spirit of God that moved thee to write, that His salvation secrets may be truly laid open by a lying spirit?

Moreover, suppose a man, by a natural instinct, be able to comprehend all men's ordinary experiences, yet this man hath not heard the voice of God at any time, neither certainly knoweth whether ever the Creator did speak to man or no;

was it the Spirit of God moved that man to judge his writings, who hath not only heard the Lord's voice, but hath also inwardly both seen and felt the exceeding Brightness of His Glory, yea, and the dreadful horror of his own natural darkness, even as that man did who cried out, he was undone, when the glory of the Lord appeared in him? But who can attain to heavenly wisdom, till it be given him from on high? And can that man wait for a spiritual distinction between the things of eternal life and death, who already is possessed with great confidence that the choicest secrets of the Most High may be truly demonstrated by a diabolical spirit, notwithstanding himself hath no immediate commission or revelation from a known God or glory to build his understanding upon? But what shall I say to such an angel-like man as thou art, concerning the glorious and dreadful things of eternity, seeing thou art exalted in the midst of such notional and natural heavens already? Only this: The secrets of the Lord are with them that fear Him, and love Him, and His beloved ones, with His own pure love rooted in them, from a real understanding of His Personal Glory, in the wonderful mysteries of creation and redemption. But unto glittering worldlings, this light appears as weakness or foolishness; because it discovers the vanity of their perishing gods of gold, silver, precious stones, fleshly honour, good language, and such like. And how can they bear it, till a more excellent Glory powerfully presents itself unto them?

Again, thou advisest me seriously to consider, whether I was immediately moved by the

Spirit of the Lord, to present that writing unto thee. As to that, if the love of God or man so shines in thy soul, that thou art not concerned in that epistle, blessed art thou above thousands. Nevertheless, it is unquestionably known unto me, and some others also, that the Creator will one day own the substance of that epistle as from His own Spirit, to the utter confounding of all gain-sayings for everlasting. Moreover, though natural wise men's God is health, wealth, honour, long life, and goodly words only, and who take the Creator's name in vain all their life long; yet I cannot forbear much mentioning of His Glorious Person, because He spake unto me from the third heaven, as He did unto Paul.

Furthermore, If the everlasting true God, in variety of spiritual discerning, hath appeared in thy soul, thou canst not then be a stranger to almost all that is here written: but on the contrary, if a spiritual majesty, with the Personal Glory, the glory of the elect and shame of the reprobates, at the great day is as yet veiled from thine eyes; then indeed what is here related may appear unto thee but as brain-fancies only. Nevertheless, except these substantial truths be written in thee, I aver, from that God from whom thou hadst thy being, that all thy former writings or speakings to thy brethren, as upon a spiritual account, were but as the language of a parrot.

Again, thou sayest, that I harp much concerning thy distributing thy outward possessions, in which thy spirit doth not at all answer mine. As to that, if thy spirit had been clear as to that glorious Spirit or God of real love or pity, through whose

appearance my soul is preserved from those inward snares of eternal burning death in utter darkness; my epistle could not have been slighted by thee upon that account, except thy light persuades thee, that to improve thy talent for the exaltation of thy own relations only, is the greatest pitch of charity, and to feed thy helpless brethren only with goodly words.

Moreover, if, upon a spiritual account, thy soul hath travailed under the condition of eternal life and death; and upon a natural account, thou art acquainted with a condition of straitness as well as fulness: findest thou more inward satisfaction in bowels of enlargement, or when thou wast chained up from all brotherly pity whatsoever?

Furthermore, Though it be not in the power of any creature to think a good thought, or prevent an evil thought; yet if any man shall pretend experimentally to own a glorious God or Spirit of all variety of infinite love itself, and tender compassion to the sons of men, and shall neglect the spiritual duty, of doing as he would be done unto, from a conceit of waiting a divine motion thereunto, his heart may become as adamant to all God-like pity for evermore.

Again, thy language is like unto him that certainly knows that there is no hiding of men's serpentine wiles from the All-seeing glorious Eye. If thou speakest from thy own possessed light, thou knowest it to be impossible for any man to enjoy true and lasting peace, but from love increasing to an infinite Majesty, manifesting itself unto men, representing His glorious image. Nevertheless, blessed thou art above all temporal inheritors, if thou art

guided to know when and how to act thy charity for divine enjoyment, according to the Spirit of the Lord.

Again, thou sayest, revelations are of great danger, and do lift up the flesh, making way for a greater fall, unless the spirit be sufficiently poised beforehand, by the natural growth and power of life, that maketh thee undesiring of any such thing, though thou acknowledgest it to be of esteem and worth.

To this I answer, doth not true wisdom teach men to speak or write in their own line, and not in another man's? Wherefore, seeing thou art so far unacquainted with the nature of divine revelation, that thou never didst desire it, how canst thou know thy affirmation to be true? Moreover, dost thou think it possible for any man really to know the nature of spiritual or temporal secrets, if his soul hath never tasted them? But who can blame thee for not desiring the knowledge of eternal excellences, if thou supposest it dangerous to enjoy them? Furthermore, if (according to thy declaration) thy soul is unacquainted with the operation of divine revelation, how canst thou then know the effects of it, upon my account, in another man? When Saul was travelling to Damascus, with a bloody intent to all that published the name of Jesus, was he fore-qualified to receive a commission, vision, or revelation from the Lord Jesus in glory? Wherefore, seeing the glorious power of divine revelation as yet veils itself from thy understanding, what moved thy pen to determine of it? Was it not the same spirit or light in thee aforesaid, which gave judgment con-

cerning the mysteries of creation and redemption?

Again, may not the greatest appearance of light that ever was in men or angels become the deepest darkness in the end, except it be preserved with the holy inspirations of an infinite purity? It is confessed, there are degrees of this purifying light; but what thinkest thou, would it not have been better for all sorts of angelical speakers, or spiritual non-conformists, that they had never been born, if they enjoy not a measure of it before their death?

Moreover, though this everlasting light have not clearly manifested itself in thy soul at present; yet because thou mayest enjoy it in due time, when the Holy Spirit presents the superexcellency of it into thy spirit, therefore suffer me to write a little of the effects of it in my own soul.

From the truth itself, be it known unto thee, before I was possessed with this light, I wanted power to bear an angry word from any one living; but since this light became my guide, for bearing witness to my God's commission and revelation to our brethren in the flesh, I have been enabled patiently to bear many bitter words, blows, shame, and scorn, even before the powers, among brutish men, besides seven months' close imprisonment, and often in danger of life itself; yet for all this I was made willing to return good for evil to my sharpest persecutors; wherefore (as most due is) all honour, praise, and glory be rendered from elect men and angels to the God of all inspiration, for everlasting! Also, the higher the vision appeared, the lower was and is my dark spirit humbled before its

incomprehensible brightness; yet because I find doubting in thy spirit of a real discovery of my inward carnalities, therefore I confess to thee, that this light hath broken the head of an aspiring serpent in my flesh, that, John Robbins-like, would have exalted itself above all that is called God, and trampled His infinite glorious wisdom and heavenly love, in all His redeemed ones, under foot, if it had not been prevented by His divine appearance. Wherefore, that words may provoke thee to thirst after these unknown excellences, I say, that this light doth not only discover and destroy men's carnal rebellions against the Creator's Person, and show men the beauty of those inward virtues of eternal life through which their souls are delivered from judging things unrevealed, but it doth also enable them, in some measure, to comprehend an infinite Majesty itself, and His vast glorious throne, with the variety of transcendent excellences fitted for elect men and angels; and everlasting sensible burning death or wrath in utter darkness, which is stored up for all those that are left to exalt their own wisdom of words, above this inspiring light of the things of life eternal.

Again, thou sayest, thou shouldst have concluded with a solemn prayer for me, but that thou perceivest it so great an offence to me. As to that, who could have known thy formality by thy language, if thou couldst have contained thy light to thyself? Suppose thou art under literal, natural, or notional prayers, what virtue is there in them to cure my infirmities? Indeed, they may pacify thy own spirit, if it be void of charity, for a moment, as David's harp quieted the merciless spirit of Saul.

Moreover, if thy light be spiritual, thou knowest then that an heir of immortal glory sounds a trumpet no more in his prayers, than his alms. Furthermore, if the light of God hath appeared in thy soul, then His love in thee undoubtedly beareth witness of the excellency of mercy above all sacrifice. Nevertheless, if, Cornelius-like, thy private prayers and alms are entered into the glorious ears of the Lord of Hosts, as the effects of His divine love abiding in thee, then what is aforesaid, concerning compassion to thy poor brethren, can be no offence to thee, it being but a repetition of thy own enjoyment.

Again, if in very deed, from a divine fulness, thou art not only bountiful to men's natural wants, but art often also compelled to pray for eternal blessedness upon a spiritual account; if thou hadst really known my condition, it would have appeared unto thee, that my soul was then, and now is, almost always in a frame of spiritual prayer and praises unto the Personal Majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ in the throne of eternity. Moreover, if thou art a praying man, thou mayest know, that that spirit which hath been filled with inspiration from a known God is so qualified, that it is ever hearkening to His divine motions, or full of heavenly desires for His elect brethren as his own soul, or spiritual liftings up for all conditions to the throne of divine excellences, or in continual expectation, not only of the invisible but visible appearing also of the divine Majesty, with His mighty angels, to make an everlasting separation between compassionate Israelites, and bowel-less Canaanites.

O Lord God, if through many fiery temptations, and almost unutterable afflictions, thy own beloved ones scarcely be saved, where shall merciless gilded-tongued hypocrites show their faces, which, for truth's sake, were never acquainted with any spiritual or temporal sufferings in their own persons in the least?

Furthermore, if thou approve of prayer to an infinite Majesty, I humbly beseech thee, are not the inward speakings of the spirit, in all stillness of soul, the only prayer? That is, to all those that are under the teachings of the Spirit. Note, I do not in the least deny the use of the tongue in prayer, and praises also, so that a man be undoubtedly moved thereto by the true light of the righteous Judge of quick and dead; but glittering words, flowing from natural parts only in merciless men, are abomination to our God, and His tender love in His new-born people.

I say again, blessed art thou above millions of mankind, if thou art one of this number; then for the most part thou knowest, that earthly possessions are men's only God, therefore grievous to part with any of them in private upon the account of charity. Wherefore, to stop the mouth of an accusing conscience, instead of seeming mercies, thou knowest they offer up many blind sacrifices to an unknown infinite Nothing, but goodly words only; and so, for want of an enjoyment of pure love to an infinite known God, powerfully manifested to poor innocent men, representing His glorious person, through the excessive love and deceit of uncertain riches they everlastingly perish.

JOHN REEVE.

An Epistle from the Eternal Jehovah, or Jesus, unto that noble christian gentleman, styled by the name of the Earl of Pembroke, wherein is recited an Answer to a public assertion of Isaac Pennington, Esquire, by the last true Messenger and spiritual Prophet of the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man in one distinct Person, blessed for evermore.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1654.

See Acts of the Witnesses, 3rd Part, Chap. IV.

Loving Friend and Brother in the only Lord of all truth, when you have perused this writing, if you shall count it worthy of the press, my desire is, for the truth's sake, that you would be pleased to further the publishing of it, because of my inability.

MOST COURTEOUS AND CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN,

THAT good report of God-like compassion in you, especially unto the innoeent lambs of Jesus Christ, hath made me to present this epistle unto your spiritual consideration.

In the first chapter to the Corinthians, the 26th, 27th, 28th, and 29th verses, it is thus written: "After the flesh not many mighty, not many noble

are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the mighty things, and vile things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should rejoice in his presence."

Sir, It was my lot to peruse a printed book, written by Esquire Pennington, son of Alderman Pennington, of this city of London, which book is styled by the name of "Divine Essays: or, Considerations about several things in Religion." And among several expressions, in the fourth page of that writing are these lines, viz. "Now who knoweth whether those things which have been so contrary in all dispensations hitherto, shall not here meet? Life and death, heaven and hell, which everywhere else are at such a distance, may here touch one another, and agree sweetly together, and so fully that both their names and natures, whereby they did appear and were so various in their dispensations, may here be drowned and vanish; yet it is not, by either's real loss of anything whereby or wherein they differed, they become thus harmoniously united, but by their entering into a more perfect fulness; and he to whom this seemeth strange, and is so much offended at it, let him fairly answer me this following question:

"Were not *heaven* and *hell* in union in their *root*? Before they were brought forth, were they not at rest and peace in the power of God, from whence they were produced? Without controversy, whatever lay there lay in rest. Now did the Lord bring forth anything that He cannot bring

back again? And who can say He will not? Surely everything most naturally breatheth after that condition of rest and fulness which it can enjoy in His bosom. Most certain it is, the vast Spirit of the Lord taketh in all things, howsoever it disposeth of them; whence they came, whither they return, there they are; and doubtless there they may be found in union and agreement by him whose spirit is quick and piercing enough. Happy is he that can read this truth in the Spirit of the Lord; but wretchedly miserable is he who frameth false imaginations in his own spirit, by the vanity of his own mind concerning it."

Sir, As the esquire, by his high imagination, was moved to propound a hard question, so likewise the Spirit of God moved me to return him a soft answer, which is as followeth: Sir, by your writing I perceive that all experiences have passed through you concerning religion, or opinion among men, but you should not therefore have concluded your affirmation infallible, for the Lord shall fairly answer you by the hand of his poor despised messenger. And as with moderation you would have men to peruse your labour, the like is required of you; and as you count them happy, which are not guided by their own imaginations, so likewise happy are you, if you are preserved from judging the inspirations of the eternal Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ by your high imaginary reason, which is utterly incapable to comprehend invisible things that are eternal, unless it be inspired into you from on high.

Sir, I confess, that if the Lord of Glory

Himself had not spoken to me from His immortal throne by distinct words, voice to voice, as one man speaks to another, I could not possibly have set pen to paper to so high a query. Your question is this, were not heaven and hell at union in their root before they were brought forth?

From the true Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ I answer you, that from all eternity, hell was a distinct being in itself, there was no harmonious union between it and the Creator; but light and darkness, life and death, heaven and hell, in the sight of God, eternally were distinct from one another, both in their root and in their fruit.

But it will be said to me, how can I make this appear to any man's understanding? First, I shall speak something of the Creator Himself; and then, in order to the clearing this truth, unto those whose faith is strong in the true God, by inspiration from the Holy Spirit of the only true God, I declare that the Creator neither is, nor never was, an infinite or vast Spirit without any bodily form, as men blindly imagine, for want of a spiritual distinction in them. But from all eternity, that uncreated Creator of all sensible, spiritual, natural, and rational creatures, was a distinct, immortal, bodily substance, in the form and likeness of a man; only His divine form, or person, was an unutterable bright burning, fiery glory, in motion swifter than thought; and His divine excellence, as a crystal fountain or sea, infinitely overflowing in Him, as namely, pure faith, His almighty power, or heavenly love, His ravishing glory, or any spiritual glory or virtue that can be named.

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Thus you may see, if the Lord will, that before any creature was formed to live in His sight, the eternal Majesty possessed His glorious joys by Himself alone. Now the original ground of all infinite variety of new spiritual wisdom, joy, and glory, that the Creator did enjoy, or foresee He should possess to all eternity, naturally sprang in Him, from His incomprehensible knowledge of His own endless infiniteness, or from His perfect understanding of an eternal increase in himself of all manner of heavenly excellences to solace Himself withal, or men or angels that should be created by Him.

So much, as a brief description concerning the immortal person of the true God, His divine nature, and heavenly glory, that from eternity He enjoyed, before any living creature was formed in His sight.

Sir, If this demonstration of the only blessed Creator seem as a low thing, or as a paradox unto you, from the eternal Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, my counsel unto you shall be this, that you beware of the imaginary devil of unclean reason within you, because, since it possessed mankind, the nature of it is to exalt itself and its own earthly wisdom above the heavenly wisdom of its Creator, and by it to condemn the things of its God, because it cannot comprehend them. For since the fall of Adam, the devil and his angels, so frequently spoken of in Scripture, both great and small, are all clothed with flesh, blood, and bone; but men, for want of the knowledge of the true God, are utterly ignorant of the right devil also.

Again, when it is the good pleasure of the Most High to reveal Himself to you, as from His eternal free love He hath unveiled a glimpse of immortal glory unto me, then shall you know indeed and in truth, that the eternal God, and alone Creator of heaven, earth, angels, and men, and all living creatures, is now clothed with flesh and bone upon His glorious throne, even the man Christ Jesus, who inseparably is both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost or Spirit, in only one distinct glorified body, or person, to all eternity.

Again, if you acknowledge there is a Creator, and that this Creator is a distinct spiritual substance; and that there is but only one wise God and Creator, and no more; then without controversy the man Christ Jesus, that all true Scripture bears record unto, must of necessity be that unknown Creator and Redeemer of His elect, God alone, blessed for evermore, which men so much discourse about, as if the immortal Personal essence or glory of this mighty God were all within them, and yet they remain utterly ignorant of Him; many of them glorying in this their darkness, as if it were the only light of eternal life in them not to know the Creator at all, and forsaking the truth of the visible record of the invisible spiritual God, the man Christ Jesus, by their imaginary blind reasonings they have converted the eternal spiritual truths of the only everlasting God into vain, empty, notional fancies, which they call the mystery of the history, when the Lord knoweth it is the Babylonish mystery of iniquity of men in darkness, in opposition to the true mystery of God, the everlasting Father, clothing

Himself with flesh and bone as with a garment, and in that glorious body displaying the splendour of His spiritual beams into the spirits and bodies of elect men and angels to all eternity.

Sir, I would not willingly wear out your patience with a superfluity of words. Oh! bear with me a little, I humbly beseech you, and conceive it to be from the love of the divine voice of God Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, in me unto you, and all of your sweet and tender spirit.

Again, in the next place, by inspiration from the Lord Jesus, I declare, that from all eternity, those elements of earth and water were uncreated substances, distinct from the ever-living Spirit, person, nature, or glory of the uncreated eternal God, or Creator of all living forms.

Wherefore, if you grant there was a time in which all things that have life had a beginning, then of necessity the Creator must from eternity reign alone, before anything was formed to live in His sight. Wherefore if you imagine the Creator to be an infinite or vast Spirit, without any bodily form; yet you cannot possibly deny, but that He must have a place to display His glorious life in or upon; so that (without controversy) earth and water, in respect of their matters and substances, must needs be eternal with God, or in His presence. Indeed it cannot be denied, that if the Creator should be an infinite or vast bodiless Spirit, as you have declared Him to be, but earth and water, and all things else, from eternity must needs be harmoniously one with Him. But as the Lord liveth, and all creatures that He hath made and formed into life, either for a time

or to eternity, it is no such thing. For there is no such God, or vast bodiless Spirit, nor never was at all; but death, hell, or utter darkness were eternally secretly hid in those dark, dead, or senseless elementary substances of earth and water, only of themselves they could not appear to be, but must be produced by the powerful word of a sensible living Creator.

Thus it is clear, the glorious eternal God being all light and no darkness, all life and no death, all heaven and no hell; He could not possibly be essentially one with any living creature he had formed, as men vainly imagine. "For God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all;" as in John.

Again, but you will say unto me, I have not clearly answered you to the question. Why? Because if it be granted, that from all eternity the Creator was a distinct glorious person or form, whose spiritual nature was nothing else but light and life; and that the elements of earth and water were distinct substances from Him, and that death, hell, and darkness were secretly hid in them, yet they could not possibly produce any living life or living death of themselves, but were all brought forth by the ever-living Spirit of the Creator; then what was that spirit or life that entered into elementary earth or waters, but the divine nature of God Himself?

By inspiration, from the Holy Spirit of the Lord Jesus, to this I answer (the man Adam only excepted), that neither the elect invisible angels, who are spiritual bodies in the forms of men, whose

natures are pure reason, nor any other living creatures, were of the same nature of His Spirit that formed them; but they were all variety of natures to one another, and to their Creator also. And in their kind, their natures or spirits were all pure in their creation, and in a sweet communion one with another, and with their Creator also, so long as, and no longer than, they continued in their created state.

Again, this secret I would gladly have the chosen of the Most High to understand, that herein lay hid the unsearchable wisdom of the Creator, by the almighty power of His word speaking into those substances of earth and water, from thence to produce as many several spirits or natures as seemed good in His sight; and yet wholly to retain the divine nature or essence of His own glorious Spirit in Himself, distinct from all those living forms created by Him, even as if they were not of Him, or created by Him at all.

Again, from the unerring Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, I declare, that it was impossible for the Creator to form both angels and men to be of His own divine nature. The ground of which impossibility is this, because His prerogative royal glory was the eternal wheel that moved Him to create any living creature in His sight; and if they had been formed of His own divine nature, I pray you what distinction of the variety of His power and wisdom could ever have been seen or known by men or angels? Nay, moreover, would not men and angels rather have been gods, or all creators, than creatures, in their creation, if they had been both in spirit and body of His own divine nature

or Spirit; and so were not capable to be changed from their created state, either to a more transcendent ascending God-like glory, or to an unutterable descending devil-like shame?

Again, in the Spirit of truth, and God of order and not of confusion, I humbly beseech you seriously to consider this truth, wherein all the eternal glory of God's creating of men or angels consists. Are there any bowels of love, mercy, or compassion in the Holy Spirit of the Creator? Is there any life, light, or ravishing glory in Him? Or hath He any power in Himself to do His own pleasure with His own glorious excellences? Or to do His pleasure with any creatures formed by Him? If thou shalt grant Him this His royal prerogative, then, without all controversy, this will follow, that unless He had created two vessels, of variety of natures or spirits, for a time to remain in their created purities; and in His appointed time and season did withhold the inspiration of His glorious light from them both by which they stood, that they might fall from their created state by their unlawful uniting of spirits or natures together, to produce two worlds, or two generations of people, for the manifestation of fixing His eternal love, light, life, and immortal God-like glory upon the one, and retaining the splendour of all His glorious excellences to Himself from the other; all His variety of new and glorious wisdom and power must have been veiled from men and angels, and they must have remained in their creation, like unto senseless stocks or stones, to all eternity, in respect of any spiritual or natural understanding of their Creator's infinite power,

wisdom, or glory. It is written, "He made all things for His own glory, and the wicked for the day of wrath;" and "the carcasses of the rebels shall be cast out, where the worm never dieth, nor the fire ever goeth out." When you shall see visibly an increasing glory in God, and elect men and angels, then you shall know indeed the truth of what is written.

Again, I humbly beseech you, can there be any distinction between God, angels, or men, unless there be a variety of natures, or names, to manifest a difference between them? Can there now be any God at all, and no devil or devils? Can there be any heaven at all, and no hell? Or any light, and no darkness? Or any life, and no death? Or any eternal life and glory for some of the children of men, and no eternal death, darkness, or shame for other some of the children of men? Can you possibly think, either from true faith or sober reason itself, that one of these can be without the other? Doth not the one give a being to the other? Can you therefore possibly destroy the being of the one, and preserve the being of the other?

Now, by the true inspiration of God, you may see, in due time, that there is no possibility of an harmonious uniting of heaven and hell together, by their entering into a more perfect fulness, according to your description. But heaven must needs be distinct from hell, or else there can be no perfect heaven; and hell must be distinct from heaven, or else there can be no certain hell. The Lord my God, if it be His good pleasure, preserve you from

exalting your natural wisdom of earthly reason above the spiritual wisdom of true faith, which is the heavenly nature of the only wise God, the man Jesus in glory!

Again, I humbly besecch you meekly to consider what I shall write unto you, concerning your charitable thoughts of heaven and hell's uniting together at the last:

By inspiration from the God of all truth, I declare, that since the fall of man, Christ and His angelical believers, who are the lost seed of Adam; and Cain, and his reprobate, unbelieving, unmerciful generation, who are the seed of the angelical serpent;—thus, hell and heaven, or light and darkness;—were never in a spiritual union or communion together since they had a being, nor can possibly be reconciled, whatever men dream of, unity with the whole creation. These natures and names, conditions and places, whether of eternal life, light, and glory, or eternal death, darkness, and shame, are to be distinct and utterly opposite to one another, to all eternity as aforesaid, for the manifestation of His royal prerogative, of the variety of His heavenly glories unto some, whereby they become persons full of ravishing excellences, when time is no more, like unto Himself; and withholding the brightness of His love from other some, through which they become utterly darkness, eternally tormenting themselves with their former filthy rebellions, or the vain-glorious pleasures they lived in. Hence ariseth continually all variety of heavenly songs, from elect men and angels, unto the Brightness of His uncreated Majesty, because they

are not also cast out of His heavenly presence with him.

Again, concerning those words of yours, "Most certain it is that the vast Spirit of the Lord taketh in all things, and doubtless they may be found in union and agreement by Him whose Spirit is quick and piercing enough;" from the Holy Spirit I declare, he that can prove this your assertion to be certainly true, as you have declared it, he hath or is endued with a spirit more spiritually quick and piercing, more wise and loving, or merciful, than God Himself, elect men, or angels, and may prove them all liars, both in the spirit and in the letter.

Wherefore, in opposition to this your opinion, from the Lord Jesus I affirm, that there is no spirit that ever was created that returns into the Creator again; but they are to be distinct from Him in their essence for everlasting, that the Creator, to the visible sight of the creature, may remain to be the Creator, and the creature continue to be a creature, unto the glorious praise of His transcendent brightness, even face to face, world without end.

Moreover, when man dies, and turns to his dust again from whence he was taken, his soul or spirit doth not return into the Spirit of the Creator, as men, from Solomon's words, blindly imagine, who was no prophetic penman of the Holy Spirit of the Scripture records; but the soul, and all created life or motion, dieth within the body of man, and turneth to dust. Even as fire goeth out and turneth to ashes in an oven that is closed, for want of aerial motion, even so man's

mortal fiery spirit goeth out like the snuff of a candle within his body, because he is shut up by the Most High from all airy or fiery motion, until the visible appearing of the mighty God and our Saviour in all His glory, with His mighty angels, to judge both the quick and the dead. Then, and not till then, shall every seed and spirit of mankind, that was sown in the heart of the earth by the almighty word or powerful decree of God, bring forth its own body in glory or in shame, and shall remain so to all eternity.

Again, by inspiration from the Holy Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ I declare, that no spirit hath any sensible being distinct from its body; no, nor never had, nor possibly can have, neither of the Creator Himself, nor men, nor angels, nor any other created living form.

Wherefore the Creator is no such vast bodiless Spirit as you have described Him to be; no, nor ever was; but as from all eternity He was an immortal substance or body, distinct from elementary earth and water, so likewise He is now become a glorified body of flesh and bone, in the likeness of a man, and is essentially distinct from men and angels to all eternity; and the compass or substance of His glorious Person is no bigger than a man is, and the essence of it is but in one place at once. Only take notice of this, that His little eyes are so transcendently bright and glorious, that at one look or view they pierce through heaven and earth, angels and men, and at once, or one word speaking, through His heavenly mouth, it entereth (if it be His pleasure) into all

the spirits of men or angels, or into one man's or angel's spirit only; so that all things in heaven or earth, or under the earth, continue acting His pleasure, by the almighty power of His word that He hath spoken, or shall speak, notwithstanding the essential being of His bright burning glorious Person is distinct from them all, as one man's person is distinct from another. This is the only very true God and eternal life to believe, or eternal death not to believe, or rather to despise it.

And now, in the last place, I shall write a little of eternity itself. That which is essentially everywhere is not infinite, but finite, or rather no living thing at all.

Wherefore, that God or Creator that is so essentially vast, that all places and things become as it were a God, that can be no God nor Creator, nor being of beings at all, but mere senseless earth or water, stocks or stones.

But, as aforesaid, He is an ever-living true God, Creator, or pure spiritual substance, which is but of small circumference, and whose glorious essence or personal substance is resident but in one place only at once; and yet, by the power of a word speaking, through His heavenly mouth, all variety of spiritual or natural wisdom floweth into the spirits of men or angels, like rivers of living waters, and naturally returns back again all honour and glory unto the uncreated Fountain of all eternal excellences.

Thus desiring the Lord, the Most High, to reveal the true understanding of Himself unto

you and all His chosen ones, I remain yours, in the eternal Spirit of love itself, and witness unto the only very true God, the man Jesus, aforesaid,

JOHN REEVE,

*A pilgrim and stranger unto the blind vain-glorious
age of confusion in religion, or notional opinion.*

The Prophet Reeve's Epistle to his Kinsman.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1654.

KINSMAN, unknown in the flesh, but well known in the spirit, by the divine seed or voice of love speaking in me, and the Holy Spirit of the glorified body or Person of the Lord Jesus and everlasting Father, present I these lines unto your spiritual understanding.

Loving friend in Jesus Christ, you long professing a desire of knowing the very true God, that you might, by His power in you, render all glory to His eternal Majesty, which is not hid from me: likewise it is made known unto me (you being of an inquiring spirit after truth), that there hath come to the view of your understanding almost all seeming spiritual appearances since the delusions thereof; and that that one, eternal, true, and only

wise God, the Lord Jesus Christ, my Creator and alone Redeemer, within whose blessed body essentially abide all immortal crowns of eternal glory, would reveal Himself unto you, and to all those meek and patient souls that are so united to the love of such spiritual things which are eternal, that they are made to trample upon all the perishable vanity of honour among men, as dung, and snares of eternal death, appointed for all men and women, which with their tongues seem to love the Lord Jesus and His innocent people above all others, but in their hearts and souls this world, and the glory thereof, is their only heaven. You may know that they are those glittering Pharisees, which take upon them, by the letter of the Scriptures, to judge the inspirations of God in His chosen ones, because they are contrary to their quaint formalities.

Again, there is another generation deceived, called "Ranters," which are looked upon as the elect of God, that are spiritually weak, as the only inward lights in this land.

These are those that glory of a union with a God or Christ within them, calling themselves eternity, or everlasting love, and one pure being with the Creator; and when they are sifted, they call themselves the very Creator, utterly denying the Lord Jesus Christ and the Scriptures, and the resurrection of mankind after death, either to glory or shame. These are those (or the generality of them) which act all uncleanness, and cursedly call it the appearances of God in them. There are many of the tender-spirited elect of God among

them which are of their lying opinion, but are kept from their abominable practices because of the Lord's eternal love towards them; who, in due time, will call them back again.

There are many other seeming strange appearances, both in city and country, which pretend to be called or sent forth by the power of God coming upon them at certain seasons, deceiving their own souls, many being deceived also.

Friend, the Lord of Glory hath been pleased to make choice of me, the weakest of ten thousand, for the discovery of all appearances or opinions in the world, that are not by inspiration from the Holy Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ; for there is not any seeming spiritual appearance in this land of any account that hath not, by the hand of the Lord, been weighed by the gift of the Holy Ghost or Spirit in me; and by this I find them too light in the spiritual balance of the living God, in that they know no God at all but what is within them, nor that either.

Loving kinsman, I am not ashamed to tell you, that the Lord Jesus Christ counted me worthy, for His name's sake, in the city of London, to have such a trial with the chief magistrates thereof as never was in this land, nor I am sure ever shall upon any account again. Seven months was I, and one more with me upon the same account, close prisoners, chiefly for our declaring Jesus Christ in glory to be the only wise God and man, in one distinct Person, and the Creator of all things, and the alone everlasting Father.

And now, being utterly released from bonds,

I was moved to see my own native country, and not only that, but also to see your city of Bristol, because in it are some that have received the everlasting gospel,—I mean, the man Jesus in glory, to be the very true God, and none besides Him; for which spiritual power in them, in love to that glorious God, from that eternal love of His glory they are made willing, not only to act all righteousness to all men, but to suffer all kind of wrong also, returning good for evil, in full expectation of the sudden visible appearing of the Lord of life and glory in the air, with all His mighty elect angels, to judge both the dead and the quick; I mean, to make an eternal separation between the persons of the elect and the persons of the reprobate. For this I would have you to understand (if it be His good pleasure who is both Father, Son, and Spirit in one distinct glorious Person), that, except Moses, Enoch, and Elias, whose persons were translated into the highest heavens in glory, all mankind, elect and reprobate, both souls and bodies, are dead asleep in the dust of the earth, until Christ cometh in His glory.

Then shall the elect, by the decree or voice of Jesus Christ the Archangel, first appear out of the graves, and in the twinkling of an eye, with all the elect that are then living, as one man, with a glorious shout, shall, with distinct immortal bodies, like unto their God, ascend to meet the Lord in the air, and with Him and His mighty angels, as swift as thought, enter into that infinite vast new heaven and new earth above the stars, where actual sin was never committed against Him,

there visibly beholding His glorious Person face to face; and the persons of elect men and angels naturally singing new songs and glorious praises, in eternity to eternity, unto their blessed Redeemer.

Then immediately also shall the reprobates appear out of the dust, with bodies of a descending nature, according to their former earthly-mindedness. My meaning is this: their bodies spiritually shall be as dark as pitch, and naturally as heavy as lead; and their own spirits shall be the devil, and their own bodies shall be their prison of hell; which, through the absence of the voice or motions of the Spirit of God in them as formerly, and the presence of all their former glory and filthy thoughts, imaginations, actions, and their desires, their spirits shall burn with an envious living death and dying life, beyond all natural fire whatsoever; and their flesh shall burn above all natural brimstone, never seeing one another's dreadful faces, nor stirring their bodies from the place they appear in to all eternity. And the reason of this their utter darkness, both within and without also, will be this: because the sun, moon, and stars, with all their natural lights within this world, through the absence of the Lord Jesus, will go out like the snuff of a candle; and all the glory of this whole world, from the firmanent of heaven to the earth, will be burnt up and vanish like smoke, and come to nothing; the seas and rivers or springs shall be dried up as if they had never been, and the earth that we now tread upon shall be like unto the fiery burning sands, suitable for those hellish firebrands who, at this time, in the days of their mortality, despised to yield obedience to the spiritual

Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and scoff at all purity in His angelical saints.

You are my beloved kinsman in the spirit, if you are made one with what I have written; for as sure as the Lord liveth, and as certain as you are a man of flesh, blood, and bone, what I have written is as true as truth itself, and will suddenly come to pass. Oh! blessed are all those which long for the second and last appearing of Almighty God, who alone, by His own precious blood-shedding, hath redeemed elect mankind from the wrath of eternal death, before mentioned in this epistle.

Your kinsman, in the only eternal pure Being,
and glorious Fountain of all streams in elect
men and angels, the Lord Jesus Christ,
infinitely transcending all heavens, angels, or
men,

JOHN REEVE,

*The Son of Walter Reeve, deceased, commissioned
Messenger of the Lord Jesus Christ, by voice of
words from on high.*