

The New Covenant . . . Distinguished From the Old

by Isaac Penington

Isaac Penington's sermon explores the profound differences between the Old and New Covenants, emphasizing the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 30:14, Matthew 5:18, Luke 16:16, Romans 7:12, Romans 8:4, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Galatians 3:3, Galatians 5:1, Colossians 2:16, Hebrews 4:3

Topics: "New Covenant", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Isaac Penington preaches about the distinction between the old covenant of the law and the new covenant of the gospel, emphasizing the transition from the shadow of the law to the substance found in Christ. He highlights the ministry of the Spirit in the new covenant, guiding believers to live in the Spirit and fulfill the righteousness of the law in a spiritual manner. Penington urges Christians to seek the eternal light of life, to understand the difference between the ministration of the letter and the ministration of the Spirit, and to wait on the Lord for the true understanding of His laws written in the heart.

Transcript

THE

NEW COVENANT OF THE GOSPEL

DISTINGUISHED FROM

THE OLD COVENANT OF THE LAW

AND THE

REST OR SABBATH OF BELIEVERS, FROM THE REST OR SABBATH OF THE JEWS; WHICH DIFFER AS MUCH FROM EACH OTHER AS THE SIGN AND SHADOW DOTH FROM THE THING SIGNIFIED AND SHADOWED OUT

IN ANSWER TO

SOME QUERIES OF W. SALTER'S, TENDING TO ENFORCE UPON CHRISTIANS THE OBSERVATION OF THE JEWISH SABBATH, WHICH WAS GIVEN UNDER THE LAW TO THE JEWS

FOR A SIGN

AS ALSO TO

Some other QUERIES sent in writing, upon occasion of an EPISTLE directed to all such as observe the Seventh Day of the week for a Sabbath, now under the GOSPEL. As likewise some LETTERS to the same purpose

WITH A BRIEF EXPLICATION OF THE MYSTERY OF THE

SIX DAYS' LABOR, AND SEVENTH DAY'S SABBATH

Whereto are added

Some CONSIDERATIONS propounded to the JEWS, tending towards their Conversion to that which is the Life and Spirit of the Law

BY ISAAC PENINGTON THE YOUNGER

[1660]

We which have believed do enter into Rest. Heb. 4:3

Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or sabbaths; which are a shadow of things to come: but the body is Christ. Col. 2:16,17

PREFACE

The apostle Paul saith, that God had made them "able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit," 2 Cor. 3:6. After the dispensation of the law, which was a shadow of good things to come; and after the dispensation of the prophets, who foretold of better days, and of a better state to come, than the days and state under the law were; it first pleased God to send the forerunner John the Baptist, in the spirit and power of Elias, to prepare the way for the King and his kingdom; and then to send the King himself, in the fulness of his spirit, to gather disciples to him, and to furnish them with a competent measure of the same Spirit, to raise up a spiritual seed to him, in whom he would set up his kingdom, dwelling, walking, and reigning there; causing his light to shine from thence round about the earth, as from his holy city, founded upon his holy hill of Zion.

Now those disciples or ministers whom he chose to raise up this holy seed unto him, he made fit and able to minister his new covenant, by which it was to be raised; yea, he furnished them with such a power of his Spirit, that they were able through him to minister, not in the letter, as the old covenant was ministered (which left the people still dead; nay, because of the transgressing nature, made the offence abound, and so increased death upon them), but in the quickening Spirit, which raiseth from death, and bringeth into the light of the living, to walk with the living God towards the land of eternal rest and peace. So that that which they ministered was Spirit, and that which they ministered to was spiritual. By the power of the Spirit, in preaching the living Word of faith, they reached through the veil to that which lay in death; they stirred up a living principle, and ministered life to it through the Spirit. Gal. 3:5. And such as were born of this living principle, they taught to live in the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, to be made perfect by the Spirit, and not to run back to the ministration of the letter (as was proper for the Jews in their day) after the manner of the former dispensation, but to keep in the living principle, to grow up in the seed, into the

eternal life and immortality of the gospel.

Mark well (O ye christians, who desire eternal life), the different way of ministration between the law and the gospel! The law was a ministration of the letter, in which they were to wait for assistance from the Spirit, by which they might be kept in the faith of, and made obedient to, the law. Neh. 9:20. The gospel is a ministration of the Spirit, wherein they are to begin with the Spirit, and to go on with the Spirit; not to gather outward rules out of the letter, from what is written or spoken, but to keep to the living principle, and feel refreshment to that, in reading or hearing what is written or spoken by the Spirit. And thus the Scriptures being read, or any one speaking from God being heard, it is mingled with faith, and becomes profitable, feeding and refreshing the young, tender plant, the living principle, and causing it to grow up into God: whereas whatever is understood, or received, or held out of this, feeds but the earthly, and doth but thicken the veil over the living seed; to which the kingdom belongs, and to which the gospel is sent to be preached, to raise it, that it might live and thrive, and grow up into its stature, that so it might inherit.

"The kingdom of heaven is at hand," said John the Baptist. Mat. 3:2. "It is come unto you," said Christ, Mat. 12:28. that power of life which was made manifest in him, to the Pharisees. Luke 17:21. The Pharisees demanded of him when the kingdom of God should come. It cometh not, saith he, with outward show or observation; it cometh not that way you look for it; to wit, by the manifestation of an outward glorious king, to reign outwardly in the commonwealth of the outward Israel; but the kingdom is within you. How was it within them? Christ explains to them in another place; it was in them like a grain of mustard seed; it was the least of all the seeds in their hearts. There were many great seeds of darkness there, but yet there was also one little seed of light. It was there as well as the rest (though less than them all), and did sometimes cast some glimmerings of light, and of its shining in the darkness, though the darkness could not comprehend it. This seed was also likened to leaven, which being received by faith into the lump, would leaven the whole lump, and bring it into the savor and domination of the kingdom. Now the ministry of the apostles was to turn men from Satan's kingdom to this kingdom; from his large compass of dominion in the heart, to this narrow seed; from his great territories of darkness, to this little principle of light; from his great power of death, to this little, weak thing of God; wherein the eternal power and godhead is made manifest, as this comes to be opened and increased by the Spirit. Here light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart; where it is to grow up, and from whence it is to be reaped after its growth to perfection.

Oh, how long have Christians (so called) wanted the Spirit! How have they wearied themselves, in running to and fro about the letter, to find out the mind of God, and are still unsatisfied concerning it, and even drowned in fleshly imaginations and contentions about it! They seek to have that satisfied which is not to be satisfied: they seek to have that know which is not to know: they offer to God the service, faith, and obedience of that which he will not accept; and keep that from him which he calls for.

They seek for the Spirit in the letter, according to the manner of the law; but wait not to feel it in the seed, quickening the seed, raising up the seed, and dwelling in the seed, whither Christ and his apostles directed to wait for it. They look for that knowledge, that faith, that life, that Spirit, from words written, which the apostle preached was to be waited for from the Word in the heart. And by this means they raise up several buildings, and get various kinds of knowledge, each according to his understanding and apprehensions of the letter, every sort being very confident concerning their own apprehensions that they are the right; and thus they wander from the city of the living God, and from the living knowledge; building up images, some outwardly, some in their minds; some more gross, some more refined; but all, more or less, who are not acquainted with the living knowledge and truths of God, but have gathered

apprehensions with the wrong tool from the letter, have set up somewhat else instead of the true life and power (the knowledge of the true God, which is life eternal), the knowledge of the true Christ (whom no man can indeed call Lord, but by the Spirit), the knowledge of the everlasting gospel (which alone is read in the Spirit), the knowledge of the Spirit (which alone is read in the seed).

These are strange things to the several generations of the Christians of this age, who commonly know no more of them, than according to the apprehensions they have taken in concerning them; even from that wisdom and understanding which hath not a capacity in it to receive them, but must be destroyed before these things can be understood aright. 1 Cor. 1:19. Oh that ye could read in the eternal light of life! O Christians, Christians! Oh that ye could see how your understandings and knowledge from the letter stand as much in your way, as ever the Jews' did in theirs; and must be broken down as flat as ever theirs was, before the foundation of the kingdom can be laid, and the building of eternal life reared up in your hearts!

Be not offended at my zeal for the Lord my God, and for your souls. It hath cost me very dear, what I testify to you in the simplicity and integrity of my heart; and this I know to be most certainly true, that that spirit of man, which, without the leadings of the eternal light, hath nestled itself in the letter, got a seat of wisdom and knowledge there, raised up a building from thence, either of inward or outward worship, will be dissettled and driven thence, even by that very Spirit which gave forth the letter.

And when this is done, and God's Spirit again openeth the letter, oh, how sweet, how profitable, how clear, how refreshing will it be, being read in the light of the Spirit, and in the faith which is in Christ Jesus, which is begotten in the heart by the word of faith, which is nigh there. From that light, from that spring (as the Lord pleaseth to open, enlarge, and fill the vessel), all the words of the holy men of God came; and in that alone they have their sweetness, freshness, virtue, and fulness; but how to read the words outwardly written, keeping to that, and understanding them in that (and how to keep out the natural man, with his natural understanding, which knoweth not the things of the Spirit, nor can know or receive them, 1 Cor. 2:14), is a mystery to them who have not been turned inward to this word, nor have known or heard his voice.

The Lord is recovering the mystery of life; and as that appears, the mystery of death, under all its paint (under all its painted faith, painted love, painted knowledge, painted obedience, painted duties, ordinances, and worship), will be made manifest. Happy is he whose inward building will stand, whose gold will abide the fire and everlasting burnings of the jealous God, whose eye-salve was bought of the true Spirit, whose raiment is right spun; but exceeding hard will it go with that man whom the Lord (when he cometh to search him) shall not find a right inward Jew, as he took himself to be, nor truly circumcised by the Lord's eternal Spirit with the light thereof, but only by such a circumcising-knife as he himself had formed out of the letter of the Scriptures.

This is the great misery of Christians; the veil lies over their hearts, even the same veil which covered the letter of Moses from the Jews: and they are groping after the mind of God in the letter; but the life is hid from them, even as it was from the Jews: and because they also say they see, and that they have the life and the Spirit, therefore the veil remains, and the caul of iniquity surrounds them, so that they cannot see into that which makes free from it, but remain yet in captivity and bondage to the enemy.

THE

NEW COVENANT OF THE GOSPEL

DISTINGUISHED FROM

THE OLD COVENANT OF THE LAW

SOME QUERIES OF W. SALTER'S, TENDING TO ENFORCE UPON CHRISTIANS THE
OBSERVATION OF THE JEWISH SABBATH, ANSWERED

Query 1. WHETHER the fourth commandment, expressed Exod. 20. be not moral and perpetual, as well as the other nine be, yea or no?

Ans. That covenant which God made with the Jews at Mount Horeb, when they came out of the land of Egypt, was not to be perpetual; but to make way for that covenant, priesthood, lawgiver, and law, which were to be perpetual. That law, so given forth, made nothing perfect; but was a continual handwriting of ordinances against the Jews; and the very salvation of the Jews was by another covenant, and by the laws thereof, Deut. 30:11. by which covenant, and by which law, they might be made perfect, and come to the better hope. Which other covenant is the covenant of grace, or the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, or the Word which is nigh in the mouth, and in the heart, and speaks life to them that can hear and believe the joyful sound of it.

Now that this former covenant was not to abide, but to give place to the other, see Heb. viii, which treateth of the new covenant: for God's speaking of a new covenant importeth that he himself hath made the first old. ver. 13. It had a long continuance among that people of the Jews; but now against the coming of Christ, who was to be Mediator of a better covenant, ver. 6. even a new covenant, ver. 8. as it had been long decaying, and waxing old, so now it was ready to vanish away, as ver. 13.

And indeed it was necessary it should pass away; for it was not faultless. How, not faultless! Was there any sin in the holy law and ministration of God by Moses? Can there any just blame be found in any thing that proceeded from the Lord? Nay, surely the ministration of Moses was holy, and without blame; but it was weak, through the flesh, Rom. 8:3. and therefore God would lay that aside, so far as it was weak, and suited to the weakness of a fleshly people, and bring, instead thereof, a ministration of the law in the Spirit, which should be lively and powerful and effectual in the spirits of his people.

That which God aimed at in a covenant, was to keep him and his people together. Now this covenant was weak on the people's part; they continued not in it, and so, according to that covenant, God disregarded them. ver. 9. Now God finding this covenant not able to effect his purpose of love towards his people, he finds fault with it, bringing forth another, or second, which this gives place to. ver. 7. And this other covenant, or new covenant, is not according to that. How not according to that? Why this: it was not written outwardly, as that was. "Not according to that which I made with their fathers, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." ver. 9. "For I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts." ver. 10. And here they shall learn the knowledge of God, every one from the least to the greatest, ver. 11. "So that all the children of this covenant shall be taught of the Lord," and learn the law from his mouth; not as it was given at Mount Sinai, (which ministration was to the children of the old covenant) but as it goes forth out of Zion, and from the "Jerusalem which is above," which is the mother of all the children of the covenant, and nourisheth them, not with the law of Moses, but with the milk of her own breasts.

Now if any think to restrain this to the types and shadows of the law, they therein err: for the main covenant was the law of commandments, which they still broke, worshipping other gods, making images and likenesses, taking his name in vain, profaning his sabbaths, and so of the rest. It is true, the first covenant had a worldly sanctuary, a tabernacle wherein was the candlestick, &c., but the chief matter of the covenant was the ten words; therefore the tables wherein it was written were called the tables of the covenant, or the tables wherein the covenant was contained. Heb. 9:4. Yea, the ten words are expressly called the covenant itself. Deut. 4:13. Observe therefore diligently these few things following in the fear of the Lord:

First, The ten commandments given by Moses from Mount Horeb were the covenant which God made with the Jews when he took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.

Secondly, That covenant God found fault with, because it was not able (through the weakness of the flesh on their parts) to keep them to God.

Thirdly, Against Christ's coming God provideth a new covenant, a better covenant for him to be Mediator of; which covenant was not outward, like the former, but inward, put in the mind, writ in the heart. As the people was inward, the sanctuary inward, the ark inward, the tables of the covenant inward, so the covenant itself, and the writing of it, were inward also. And this covenant, as it is only written in the Spirit, and in that which is spiritual, so it cannot be read in the letter.

Fourthly, That wherever this new covenant cometh, the other waxeth old, whether to a person or people. Wherever the law of the Spirit of life is made manifest, the law of the letter is swallowed up in it, and is known no more but as it is comprehended, and is brought forth in it. And he that is in the Spirit, and hath received the law of life from the Spirit knoweth not Christ after the flesh; how much less Moses. But taking the whole ministration of Moses in the spirit, not only the ten commandments, but all the sacrifices and other types also, here they are owned and received, even in Christ the substance: but the ten commandments, so far as they were a shadow, pass away before the Sun of righteousness, as well as the other types and shadows of the law.

Objection. But was there any thing of the ten words a shadow? Do they not all command abiding things?

Ans. Moses' whose ministration (as it stood in the letter without) was but a shadow of the fulness and perfection of that ministry of the Spirit which was to come, and to be set up by the Son in his house. Heb. 3:5,6. Moses' people, but a shadow of the spiritual people; Moses' priests and sacrifices, but a shadow of the spiritual priests and sacrifices; Moses' law in the letter ministered from Mount Sinai, but a shadow of Christ's law in the Spirit to be ministered from Mount Zion. 2 Cor. 3:10,11. The law itself which was given by him, but a shadow of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. John 1:17. Of whose fulness every believer receives a portion of the same grace, "even grace for grace;" ver. 16 which grace is to be his teacher, both of what he should deny and turn from, and how he should live and carry himself both towards God and man. Tit. 2:11,12. Look particularly on the commandments, and see if there will not appear something of a shadow in them.

The first commandment to that people, "That they should have none other gods (like the heathen) but him only whose powerful arm had brought them out of Egypt." This is a shadow of the subjection of the spiritual Israel singly in Spirit to the Lord of spirits, who by his mighty arm redeemed them out of spiritual Egypt. Now must they bow to other lords no more, Isai. 26:13. as they did bow in the land of Egypt (Oh, who can read this!), but bow alone at the name of Jesus, and be subject to the arm of his power in their

spirits alone for ever.

The second commandment, "That they should not make any images or likenesses of things in heaven or earth, or bow down to them, is a shadow of what God requires of spiritual Israel in the inward, where all likenesses, inventions, imitations, resemblances of what they have seen in the Spirit above, or beneath in the earthly nature, they must not make themselves, nor bow to such as any others make.

And they must not "take the name (of the Lord their Redeemer) in vain," pretending to the living power when it manifests not itself in them; pretending to meet in the living name, and to worship in the Spirit, when they are gone a whoring from it, and become strangers to it. What should I mention any more? It is easy to observe how the other commandments were shadows of the inward innocency and purity which the believer receives inwardly into his heart from the powerful operation of the law of the Spirit of life in him.

Object. But may any of these laws be broken? If they may not be broken, then they are perpetual.

Ans. The reason why they may not be broken is not because that the dispensation of them is still in force, but because the dispensation of the law of the Spirit comprehends all the righteousness of Moses' law: and the end of Christ's dissolving that covenant was not that any might have liberty to do any thing which is there manifested to be unrighteous; but that the righteousness of it might be fulfilled in them who receive his law in the Spirit, which never could be fulfilled by receiving of Moses' law in the letter. Rom. 8:4. And mark this diligently, ye that have been exercised in the Spirit towards God: the law of sin is nearer to us than any law of the letter can come; the covenant of death and hell (with the laws thereof) is written within by the finger of Satan; and that which blots them out must be as near, even an inward covenant, an inward writing from the eternal Word in the heart, by the law of his eternal Spirit of life.

This then is my answer: Moses' law in substance remains, as it is taken in by Christ, and administered by him in Spirit; but not as it was given in the letter to the Jews: for so it was a shadow, making nothing perfect: but making way for the better hope, for the covenant established upon better promises, for the inward law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus: which effects that in the spirits of his people, which Moses' law could by no means do.

Quest. But what is the substance of the law which abides?

Ans. The substance of the law is love: to love God above all (above all without, above all within), and to love one's neighbor as one's self. To receive this love from God, and to bring it forth in his Spirit, this is the substance of the law; this is the thing which the law drove at in a shadow. The law is fulfilled in this one word love; but that love must be received from God which fulfils the law. A man may strive to love abundantly, and strive to obey in love, and yet fall short of the covenant; but the Lord must circumcise the heart before that love can spring up which fulfils the law. Deut. 30:6.

Objection. But doth not the Apostle Paul say, that by the law is the knowledge of sin; and that he had not known lust, except the law had said, "Thou shalt not covet;" plainly referring to the tenth commandment, which saith, "Thou shalt not covet."

Ans. By the law outwardly was the knowledge of sin outwardly to the people of the Jews; by the law inwardly is the knowledge of sin inwardly to the spirits of disciples. Now a little consider and wait on the Lord, to know what administration of the law it was that Paul knew sin by; whether it was by Moses'

administration of the law in the letter, or by Christ's ministration of his law to him in the Spirit. It is rendered in our last translation, "Thou shalt not covet;" but it might more properly be rendered, "Thou shalt not lust:" for if be properly rendered lust, then may as properly be rendered, "Thou shalt not lust." And he that hath received the administration of the law in the Spirit, knoweth it thus to issue forth from the Word of life into his spirit. It discovers the lusts and affections of the flesh, which draw from the yoke and subjection to the Spirit; and then, by a command from the living Spirit, it hedgeth up the way after the other lovers, saying, "Thou shalt not lust." And as the law of the flesh ariseth, kindling desires after vanity, and after fleshly ease and delight; so the law of the Spirit arises in the inner man, forbidding, pricking, stopping, and limiting that which would be at liberty out of the life and purity of the holy law. And here begin the bitter fights and terrible battles and conflicts between the two seeds, wherein all the powers of heaven, earth, and hell are engaged.

Now because this interpretation of Paul's words may seem strange and uncouth to persons who have drunk in another apprehension, and have taken it for granted that Paul there refers to the tenth commandment, consider the place yet further, and perhaps the Lord may please to open it to you from the very letter, even as he hath opened it to others immediately by his Spirit, by causing them to feel the thing which Paul felt, and to receive the law as he received it.

Paul (in that seventh of the Romans) speaks of three states which he had known.

First, A state of life before the law: "I was alive without the law once." ver. 9.

Secondly, A state of death after the commandment came: then sins revived, and he died. When the word of life came with its living commandment to set upon sin indeed, then sin would dally no longer; it would no longer lie as dead, and let Paul live in his zeal and worship as he had done before; but it slew him, it showed its power in him, sometimes deceiving him, and sometimes forcing him from that which was holy, spiritual, just, and good, and to that which was unholy; insomuch as he did do what he hated, and could not do what he loved; and found himself a wretched man, and in miserable captivity, because of the body of death and the law of sin in his members. ver. 23,24.

Thirdly, A state of life, after the commandment had done its work in thoroughly slaying of him; when that was removed which the law came against, then he was married to another husband, then he could bring forth fruit unto God; Rom. 7:4. then he could walk freely with God, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, chap. 8:4. and rejoice in the life and the peace, instead of roaring out because of the death, which came from the carnal mind. ver. 5.

Now when was the time when Paul "was alive without the law"? Was it not when he was righteous, when he was whole? Then he had no need of the physician, then he had not received the wound, even the terrible wound which Christ then gives the soul when he calleth to it by his Spirit, and giveth forth the commandment, "Thou shalt not lust." When he had "confidence in the flesh," being circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. Phil. 3:4,5,6. Here was a living man; and his exact receiving the ministration of the law in the letter was part of his life; yea, but he had not received the commandment yet that slew him. Paul was alive yet, and could flourish in the freshness of his life, zeal, and abundant knowledge under this administration of the law: but when God, who caused the light to shine out of darkness, shined in his heart; when God began the work of the new creation in him by his living light; when the commandment came fresh from the

Spirit (the commandment which was ordained to life, Rom. 7:10. which the ministration of the law in the letter was not, no not to the Jews, but another. Deut. 30:14,15), then Paul began to feel the sting of death, and the power of sin, which now rose up in its strength to retain one of its subjects, and to keep the stronger man than he from dispossessing him, if he could. And now how was poor Paul rent and torn, and harrassed by the enemy, and made to see and feel his miserable captivity, until he had passed through the death, and was redeemed from under sin, and consequently from under this bitter administration of the Spirit, by his holy, pure, and severe law against sin! For the man being dead, the law hath no force against the seed, nor against that which is one with and lives in the seed: and this it is he speaks to the Romans concerning, who also were acquainted with the ministration of the law, as ver. 1. of the 7th chap. Now is it not very manifest that Paul knew not sin spiritually by the ministration of the law in the letter, but was alive without it, until he felt the ministry of it from Christ in the Spirit? And that soon struck at his life, and by degrees slew it, killing the body of sin in him, with its members, and so preparing him for the marriage to another husband.

Object. But by this then a man is not only freed from the law of the letter, but also from the law of the Spirit: for if this law be ministered to him till death pass upon him, and till he be married to Christ, then after death is passed upon him, and he is baptized into death, and risen with Christ, and married to him, the law passeth away likewise.

Ans. There is a double ministration of the law of the Spirit; a sharp ministration against sin, and a sweet ministration in the renewed Spirit. The ministration against sin passeth away, as the sin is wrought out; but then the sweet, spiritual current and law of its holy and pure life in the renewed Spirit is more vigorous and full. So that the law of the Spirit remaineth for ever; but its convictions, its reproofs, its chastisements towards the worldly part, diminish and pass away as the worldly part is wasted; and its sweet, comforting presence, pure peace, fresh joy and life, increase as the new man grows and flourishes.

Query 2. Whether the scope and drift of that fourth precept be not to persuade us to lay by the works of our calling one day in seven, that we may on that day wholly give up ourselves to wait on the Lord, in the performance of duties of piety and mercy, for our attaining of, and growing in, sanctification and holiness?

Ans. The scope and drift of the fourth commandment was to enjoin the Jews to keep the sabbath strictly as a sign, by forbearing all works, and sanctifying it as a day of rest to the Lord according to the law. Ezek. 20:12. But the substance being come (Christ, who is the body, Col. 2:17), the day and rest of the Spirit being known, the sign is at an end, and the thing signified taketh place. So that the rest is now in Christ, through the faith, by his Spirit, where the worship is. And this in the gospel comprehends the time of worship, the place of worship, and the worship itself (which are spiritual), where, in substance, all is known, enjoyed, and solemnized, which was figured out in shadows under the law. The sanctification being come, the rest being come, the Lord of the sabbath being come, shall not the sign of the sanctification, the sign of the rest (which rest the Lord of the sabbath was to give, and lead the spirits of his people into), pass away? Exod. 31:13.

Query 3. Whether the fourth precept do not as strictly bind us to keep holy the seventh day of or from the creation, as it bindeth us to the observation of a seventh day?

Ans. The fourth commandment did not require the observation of a seventh day in general; but of a seventh day in particular, of those of whom it required it: for what the law required, it required of those who were under the law, and not of others. Rom. 3:19.

Query 4. If the seventh day's sabbath be not moral and perpetual, then how comes it to pass that it was instituted or appointed from the first creation, when men by guilt stood in no need of a Saviour, nor yet of such a ceremony; Gen. 2:3.

Ans. That it was instituted or appointed from the first creation, or that God intended to require of man the observation of it had he abode in innocency, is not manifest in the Scriptures; but that God did then bless and sanctify it (in relation to the service he had for it), that is expressed in scripture. Gen. 2:2,3. And that this was one end for which he did sanctify it, namely, that it might be for a sign unto that people of the Jews (which were the people he chose to set up his signs and figures of the invisible things among), the scripture also testifies. Exod. 20:11. but what further meaning there is in it, and what relation it hath to all the redeemed of the Lord, in whom God brings about the new creation, with the rest thereof (as he did the old), it is better to wait to know and feel in the Spirit, than to be prying into with the curious, searching, fleshly understanding.

Query 5. If the seventh day's sabbath be not moral, and belonging both to Jews and Gentiles, then how comes it to pass that it was given to all men in Adam, when there was no difference between Jews and Gentiles and was observed by command from the beginning, as appears by comparing together Gen. 2:3. and Exod. 16:18, to 31.

Ans. That it was given to Adam in innocency, or to all men in Adam, I do not find, nor do these places quoted make it manifest; but its being practised before the giving of the law doth not prove its perpetuity, or that it was not given for a sign: for circumcision was instituted and observed long before the giving of the law, Gen. 17. and sacrificing long before that, Gen. 4. both which were signs of the inward, and not perpetual as to the outward observation of them.

Query 6. If when our Lord Jesus saith, (Mat. 5:18) that "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle should in no wise pass from the law;" if he there meant not the law of the ten commandments, expressed in Exodus xx, then what law did he mean?

Ans. By the law is meant the whole ministration of Moses; as by the prophets (ver. 17), the whole ministration of the prophets: and that it is not to be restrained to the ten commandments, is manifest by the instances which Christ gives, more of which relate to other parts of the law than to the commandments: for there are but two instances out of the ten commandments; but there are four instances out of other parts of the law, as may be seen, ver. 31. 33. 38. and 43. of that chapter. So that Christ doth not only take in the ten commandments, but he takes in the rest of Moses' ministry in the Spirit, not one jot or tittle whereof is to pass till it be all fulfilled; but was to stand in the letter to the Jews till full season, and then in the Spirit till all be finished there also.

"The law and the prophets were until John;" from that time the kingdom of God began to be preached, Luke 16:16. and both the law, prophets, and John himself were to decrease, and Christ and his kingdom to increase. Christ, in this fifth of Matthew, had been preaching the kingdom, declaring to whom it appertained, and the blessedness of such. Now this his manner of preaching might seem to derogate from the law of Moses, and from the prophets, whose doctrine and dispensation hereby he might seem to destroy: but Christ taketh away the occasion of such a misapprehension, bidding them not think he came to destroy the law, or the prophets: for he was not come for that end, but to fulfil. Wherein he doth these two things:

First, He establisheth that ministration of the law and prophets for its season, till it should be fulfilled by him the substance, who was to fulfil all the righteousness of it. It should last out its whole day, and should not fail in the least tittle of it (as he himself explaineth it, Luke 16:17); till the heaven and earth of the Jews passed away. Heb. 12:27, 28.

Secondly, He taketh in the substance of it into his own ministration, and layeth it more inwardly, and closely, and largely upon the spirits of his disciples than Moses had done in the letter upon his disciples; but he doth not give it out in full, but only giveth a taste to his disciples how straitly he would minister it to them by his Spirit as they came under his yoke, Mat. 11:29, which yoke is the Spirit of the law thereof, as Moses' yoke was the law of the letter.

Now mark yet further: Christ does not give out the letter for his law, as it was delivered by Moses; but requireth somewhat of his disciples which comprehends the letter. As now when he administers the law against revenge, from whence murder proceeds, he doth not say, "Thou shalt not kill," as Moses had said to them of old time; but saith, Thou shalt not be angry without a cause, nor give thy brother any provoking language. ver. 22. Nor does he say, "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" but, Thou shalt not let out a lustful look, nor let in a lustful thought. ver. 28.

And had he spoken here about the sabbath, would he have administered it in the letter, or would he have commanded the observation of the true sabbath, where no work is done, no fire kindled (nor so much as any sticks gathered to make a fire with), nor no burden borne; but the man-servant, the maid-servant, the ox, the ass, and every creature rests in the seed? "The Son of man is Lord of the sabbath." It is true he subjected himself under the law; but yet he was still Lord; and he maketh all his, kings and priests to God! who being once baptized into his death, know also his resurrection and reign.

Object. But all the other commandments are to be kept according to the letter; for although it should prove so, that believers are not bound to observe them by virtue of Moses' ministration in the letter, but by virtue of the ministration of the Spirit, yet the commandments themselves are kept; but take away the outward observation of the sabbath, and this commandment hath no fulfilling at all according to the letter.

Ans. This ariseth from the different nature of the thing: for the other commandments require or forbid that which is either good or evil in its own nature; but this is but good or evil by institution or command. To keep a day, or not to keep a day, is not good or evil in itself, but as it is commanded, or forbidden, or left at liberty in the Lord, and according as it is done or forborne by him who received the command or prohibition, or is let into the liberty of the gospel. Rom. 14:6. So that if the nature of the thing required in this commandment, had been alike with the nature of the things required or forbidden in the other commandments, it would have been as durable after the dissolution of that covenant, as the other things therein contained were; which vanish not in themselves upon the dissolution of that covenant, but only pass into a higher way of dispensation, where they retain their full virtue and strength, even according to the letter, though not by virtue of the administration of the letter; another higher and fuller administration of a better covenant challenging and taking its own place.

Query 7. If the seventh day's sabbath be not moral, but an abrogated ceremony, now since the death of Christ; then wherefore should our Saviour instruct his beloved apostles, that they must instruct the Christian churches to pray, Mat. 24:20. that they might not flee on the sabbath, knowing that their flight would fall out more than thirty years after his death?

Ans. Great was the hardship the Jews underwent in the siege of Jerusalem, by that apprehension of theirs that they ought not to do any work (not so much as of defending themselves) on the sabbath; which hardship such disciples of Christ among the Jews, as could not easily be drawn off from the law and Jewish observations, but still were for circumcision, and keeping of an outward sabbath, might be liable to. Now Christ, and the apostles after him, were not hasty to withdraw them from such things, but for a time bore with them therein; insomuch that Paul circumcised Timothy, and became to the Jews as a Jew; and to them that were under the law, as under the law himself also. But the strength of the query seems to lie in this, That it should bear the name of sabbath from Christ's own mouth, in relation to somewhat which should happen on it more than thirty years after it should cease to be sabbath. To which my answer is plain, that that may as well bear the name of sabbath, as Jerusalem, or the temple, bear the name of the holy place, ver. 15. of the same chap. For Jerusalem and the temple did as much cease to be the holy place above thirty years after those words were spoken, as the Jewish sabbath could cease to be the sabbath.

Now for the sakes of such as have been truly exercised in their spirits by the Spirit of the Lord (and have felt the powerful work of his grace, and a building raised up by him), and may yet be further exercised, I shall add this. Jerusalem was a type of an inward building in the spirits of God's people; both in its rearing up, in its situation, in its standing, in God's dealing with it all the time of its standing; and lastly, in its downfall and utter desolation. There is an appearance and building of God in the spirits of his people, which is to give way to, and be swallowed up in, a fuller and higher appearance. But the fleshly spirit, getting into this building, will not give way to the further and more inward and spiritual appearance of the Spirit, but will have the first building stand as the building, and will entertain no further appearance of God, than as it can comprehend it, subject it, and afford it a place in the first building. Hereupon God distresseth Ariel, even the city which David built (saying within his heart; surely "that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted will I pluck up, even this whole land, so he causeth the overflowing scourge to pass, even over thy whole land, O Emanuel"). Now when the enemy enters within the holy city, and within the holy temple, it is time to flee, and exceeding great distress will befall that disciple, whose flight is either in the winter or on the sabbath day. Do not imagine at this; but if the Lord open it not at present, wait his season; for the thing is true and sealed, both by the openings of the light eternal, and by sensible exercises and experiences from that light.

Thus I have answered such of the queries as concern the seventh day's sabbath. Such as seem to argue the unwarrantableness of observing the first day of the week for a sabbath, I leave to those to whom they are tendered (and of whom an answer seems so conscientiously and zealously desired, as I do not see how it can be reasonably neglected or denied), that by weighty evidence of Scripture he may be reduced, if he hath erred; but if not, but it be truth which he hath therein held forth, the Lord may be honored in men's bowing and subjecting to every truth of his, by what instruments soever it pleaseth him to make it manifest.

SOME QUERIES

SENT IN WRITING, (UPON OCCASION OF AN EPISTLE DIRECTED TO ALL SUCH AS OBSERVE THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE WEEK FOR A SABBATH)

ANSWERED

Query 1. If the whole law of Moses, the law of the ten commandments, as well as the law of sacrifices, were both added upon one and the same account for transgressions; then why doth the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures lay forth such an antipithical use of them (I suppose he means antitypical), the one that sin might abound, Rom. 5:20. the other sacrificing for sin? Heb. 9:7,8,9.

Ans. That the law of Moses was added because of transgression, is manifest from that scripture quoted by me in my epistle, as well as from other scriptures; and one end why it was added in relation to transgression, was, that the offence might abound, which would make the sacrifice of propitiation for sin appear more necessary and more acceptable. And the sacrifices also relate to the sinner, some referring to the sin committed, others to the thankfulness and acknowledgment due for the peace, mercy, and blessings of God towards his poor, sinful, erring creatures; both which were to last till the time of reformation from the sin. Heb. 9:10. Gal. 3:19. (But that they were both added upon one and the same account, that I did not affirm; that is wrongfully put upon me.)

Now though both these were added because of transgression, yet they had not both the same use and service in relation to transgression, but the one was added to discover sin, and to make it appear exceeding sinful, Rom. 5:20. the other to blot it out, to take it away, to make atonement for it; which the sacrifices did, making the sinner upright and perfect as relating to that outward state and capacity, though they could not as pertaining to the conscience. Heb. 9:9.

Query 2. If the whole law, the ten commandments, as well as the sacrifices, were representations, figures, or shadows of somewhat relating to Christ, the seed; then what did they in general, or either of them in particular, represent, figure, or shadow forth, before they were written in tables of stone, or since they were written in tables of stone, more of Christ then than now?

Ans. That the ten words were some of the precepts of Moses, and appertaining to the first testament or covenant, all which precepts were sprinkled with blood, cannot be denied. And the apostle distinguisheth the precepts of Moses under the law, which were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifices under the law, Heb. 7:19. from the precepts of Christ which he writes in other tables, chap. 10:16. which also are sprinkled with blood, but not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood; and he that receives any of these precepts out of the blood of Christ, cannot truly and spiritually obey them, though he may strive much to form his spirit into the obedience thereof. Now the time and season of their signification was the time which God allotted them under the law, wherein was the use of signs; but the gospel is a state of substance, of bringing the life and immortality into the heart, and into the possession of believers, which the state of the law shadowed. So that they are not signs since the gospel, since Christ put an end to the law-signs, shadows, and figures, nor yet before the law to believers, so far as they were in the new covenant; (for as the thing signified cometh, so that which signifieth it passeth away) though that was a mixed state, wherein God gave a taste of both covenants, before his perfect dispensing or bringing forth of either.

Query 3. If the whole dispensation of the law was given to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles, and so the Gentiles not bound to that law, but another way for them to know the mind of God; then whether that law cited, Rom. 2:15. which the Gentiles showed the work of in their hearts, be another law contrary to that law that was given to the Jews, even the ten commandments?

Ans. The law which is the substance, is not contrary to the law which is the shadow, but is the comprehending and fulfilling of it. The law in the Spirit (written by God's power and presence in the heart

and mind) is not contrary to the law in the letter, but is a higher and more glorious ministration of it. The one commandment which God gave by Moses to the Jews, Deut. 30:11. which was the commandment of life and death, as relating to their inward and eternal state, ver. 15. was not contrary to the ten commandments, which God had commanded them before by another covenant, which he had made with them as an outward people, and which was to be their rule as to their outward state; for they were chosen by God to be a holy people outwardly, and so an outward rule of holiness and obedience was prescribed them; but by all their obedience thereto, they could not be justified, but only by hearing, believing, and obeying Christ, the word nigh in the heart, and by feeling in the spirit the blood of that one offering.

Query 4. If the Gentiles were not bound under that law that the Jews were, which carried the curse with it; then which way have the Gentiles redemption by Jesus Christ? seeing all that are redeemed, are redeemed from the law, and the curse thereof. Gal. 4:5 -- 3:13.

Ans. As they were under the curse outwardly, by transgressing that outward law or covenant, and so missed of the outward happiness of the holy land, and still met with wrath and judgments, and at last utter cutting off, as to their outward state, and as to all their hope from that covenant; so he that comes to receive the ministration of the law of the Spirit, will find the curse as abundantly inwardly, even till that be cut down by the sword of the Spirit, which the curse is to; and that brought into dominion, to which is the promise and blessing. So that the Gentiles find as great need to be redeemed from the curse inwardly, which the inward law brings upon the transgressor, as the Jews did outwardly; yea, and find a more heavy burthen and load than ever the Jews did outwardly. Paul, when he was alive in the outward administration of the law, not being acquainted with the inward, he knew little of the curse; he was according to it blameless, Phil. 3:6. but when he came to receive the living light of the spiritual administration of it into his spirit, then he felt the burthen, and weight and misery of sin, and the curse indeed; and cried out, "O wretched man, who shall deliver?"

Query 5. If the duration of the dispensation of Moses' law in the letter was till Christ, the seed, should come and fulfil it, and the dispensation of Moses' law (so stated without distinction) between that that was perpetual, and that that was ceremonially vanishing, and so in the fulfilling of it besides; then what law or commandments that or they were, which, while Moses' dispensation was in full force, is said to be perpetually sure, to stand fast for ever and for ever, as Psa. 10. 11:7,8. and when Christ, the seed, was come, and had fulfilled all that the Father had appointed him to do, was established, Rom. 3:31. and not one jot or tittle of it to pass so long as heaven and earth remain? Mat. 5:18. and Luke 16:17.

Ans. That distinction between something in Moses' law being perpetual, and something ceremonial, is not sound and proper in this place; for all that was under Moses' law was but a shadow, as in that dispensation; and that testament was dedicated with blood (with the blood which was a shadow) which related to every precept, Heb. 9:18,19. and it was all substantial and perpetual in what it signified and related to. The sacrifices were substantial in that sacrifice which they signified, as well as the law and precepts were substantial in the law and precepts which they signified. And as the first covenant pointed at a second covenant, so the laws of the first covenant pointed at the law of the second covenant, the ministration whereof is from the Mediator of that covenant, and they come into the heart sprinkled with his blood. Now the law or commandment, which even under that dispensation, was to be perpetual and last for ever, was "the word in the heart," and the laws thereof, Deut. 30:14. which Moses by especial order from God, and according to the tenor of another covenant, directed the Jews to. ver. 4. For the law, as administered by Moses, in the letter, is not perpetual or eternal; but as it comes from the Spirit, and is administered in the Spirit, so it is spiritual and eternal. That administration was fitted to that people; and,

we know, the Lord, if he had pleased, could have given a fuller administration of his law in the letter than that was, as Christ plainly intimates divers times. Mat. 5. But if it had been ever so full, yet the administration of it in the letter is to give place to the administration of it in the Spirit; so that the administration of it in the letter is not perpetual, but for the time which God allotted it; but the administration of it in the Spirit is eternal and perpetual, and there it remains an eternal light, witness, and sword against sin and the transgressor. And thus it is established in the hands of the Spirit, after the season of that ministration of it in the letter was ended; and thus not one jot or tittle of it was to pass away, after the other ministration, with every jot and tittle of it, was ended.

Query 6. If the coming of Christ in the flesh; and his fulfilling all the righteousness of the law; and being foretold by Moses to be that prophet that was to be heard in all things (which is not denied by us); but if by these he put an end to the law of the ten commandments, and gave forth another law to his house or family; then what law that is, and whether it be contrary to that law that he with the Father gave forth, as Deut. 33:2. with Psa. 80:17. which now is in gospel ministration holy, just, good, as Rom. 7:12 and spiritual. ver. 14.

Ans. It is the law of the Spirit, or the light of the Spirit in the heart, which discovers sin (not only in the outward acts, but in its principle, rise, first motions, and inward nature), giving forth his living commands against it. This is the law now, in which the believer is to begin, Gal. 3:3. and according to which he is to go on to perfection. For as the believer is begotten of the Spirit, and born of the Spirit, so he is to receive the ministration of his law from the Spirit, and in the Spirit. He receives a gift of faith, a measure of faith from the eternal spring of life, and that is his law. His law is the law of faith. The light of life, which he receives in the faith, opens the mind and will of Christ to him in the Spirit, showing him both sin, and also the things of God more fully than the law of Moses could, though opened by the Spirit; for it is a fuller, a deeper kind of ministration, and so opens the things which it ministers more fully than a ministration of an inferior nature can. Yet it is not contrary to Moses' law, but comprehends all the substance, all the righteousness and equity of it (as I said before), which it as a shadow represented, and commanded to that outward or shadowy people, the Jews. But the law which Paul spake of, Rom. 7. was the law of the Spirit, or such a ministration of the law as Paul knew not, all the while he was under the ministration of Moses' law blameless; but this law found out sufficient blame in him. ver. 14. &c.

Query 7. If Jesus Christ, as he is the Son, gave forth another law to his house or family; and that law contrary to that that the Father gave forth; then whether there are not two lawgivers, when the Scriptures say there is but one. James 4:12.

Ans. The substance, when it is shadowed out, and or when it is nakedly dispensed, is one and the same thing; so that whenever it comes, it cannot be another thing than what the shadow represented it to be. Moses' dispensation and Christ's are one in Spirit; and when he cometh in Spirit, he doth not destroy either Moses or the prophets, but comprehends them; so that the law is but one, although the dispensations of it have been various; but the proper dispensation of the law now to Christians is Christ's dispensation, not Moses' dispensation; and Christians are now to look for light and knowledge of it in the tables where Christ writes it, according to his covenant. So that there have not been two laws given out, but the one law of God hath been variously dispensed; in and according to the letter by Moses to the Jews; in and according to the Spirit by Christ to his disciples.

Query 8. If the tables of stone, the writing of the law of the ten commandments in the tables, and the law of the ten commandments itself which was written, were figures or representations; then whether the finger

of God's Spirit doth write the law of God two ways, in the inward table (so called); namely, in the heart of Christ's family; in one way whilst Moses' dispensation was on foot. Psa. 37:31. For the Psalmist speaks in the present tense (which was under that dispensation): now is it another way in this latter dispensation expressed? 2 Cor. 3:3.

Query 9. If two ways, then how doth the finger of God's Spirit write them these ways?

Ans. The eternal covenant was the same under the law as under the gospel; and its tables were the heart then, as well as now; and its way of writing the same then as now, even by the finger of God's power or eternal Spirit: and thither the Jews were even then referred for the inward writing of the law. Deut. 30:14. So that they who truly hearkened even to Moses, were to wait on this word, which was nigh in the heart, for the writing of his laws there. And they that hearkened to this law, which endureth for ever, knew the writing thereof in their hearts: whereas the Jews, who were very diligent to get the law into their hearts from the letter, could never thereby attain the writing of it there; but were still found breakers of it, and under that curse which belonged to the breach. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David and the prophets, knew the inward Jew, who becomes so by the inward covenant, and by the inward dispensation of the law in that covenant; and the law which was after the promise could not disannul the promise which was before it: but it stood good and firm to the children, even to all the spiritual seed, the whole time of that outward dispensation of the law.

Query 10. If not, then how doth the writing of the law in tables of stone represent the writing of the law in the tables of the heart; seeing the tables of the heart were wrote upon by the finger of God's Spirit, whilst the tables of stone were in full force, and the dispensation had not ceased?

Ans. Though the tables of stone, or law thereof, were in force to that outward people of God, the Jews; yet this did not destroy his inward people, nor his inward tables in their hearts, nor hinder him from writing his inward law there; but the inward and eternal covenant ran underneath to them inwardly, (even all the time of their outward dispensation) whereby they were made inwardly righteous and obedient to God. And as God had particularly directed, by Moses, to the word and commandment of that covenant, so he would not fail to write it thereby in the hearts of such as turned to the word and commandment. So that this was the law which God wrote in the heart even then, and was always the inward substance, while as Moses' dispensation was but an outward sign thereof.

Query 11. If the law of the ten commandments itself, which enjoined love and duty to God, and love and duty to man, as Mat. 22:37,38,39,40, was or is a figure of another; then what law that is that is the anti-type of this law, which in succeeding of it, enjoins not love and duty to God, and not love and duty to man?

Ans. This query ariseth from a great mistake, as if the law in the letter and the law in the Spirit could not require the same thing; whereas they do require the very same thing in substance, but several ways, according to the difference of each administration; to wit, the one literally, of a literal or outward people; the other spiritually, of a spiritual or inward people; one requires love according to the tenor of the letter, the other according to the Spirit.

Query 12. If the owning of the ten commandments, as they are plainly laid down in the letter, be a breaking of them in the Spirit, and especially those contained in the first table; then how doth the truth of God written, which is life and truth, Acts 7:38. and Eccl. 12:10. and the Spirit which is given forth, meet together; seeing the Spirit leads and guides into all truth?

Ans. I do not know any who have said, "that the owning of the ten commandments, as they are plainly laid down in the letter, is a breaking of them in the Spirit;" but he that hath the Spirit owneth the dispensation of the letter in its place and season: but the Spirit doth not teach them to run from his own dispensation (where it is livingly administered to such as wait on the eternal Word in his covenant of life for it), to that dispensation which was appointed for, and given forth to, others. But that the truth, as it is written (outwardly), is life, I do not read; but otherwise, 2 Cor. 3:6. where Paul saith, the letter killeth (speaking of the letter of the New Testament). The Spirit indeed guides into all truth; but it is the living soul whom he so guides, and it is the living truth into which he guides in the new covenant; though it was he also who gave forth, required, and was able to lead into, the letter of the old covenant.

Query 13. Whether, when Jehovah gave forth the ten commandments plainly as a law in the letter, he did intend, by the observation according to the letter, the breach of them by the Spirit?

Ans. The Spirit doth not teach to break the commands in the letter; but such as are under the ministration of the letter, to observe them according to the letter: and such as are under the ministration of the Spirit, to fulfil the righteousness of them in the Spirit. Yet the Son of man is "Lord of the sabbath;" and if he bid a man "take up his bed and walk, which was bearing a burden and doing of work on the sabbath-day, it is no breach of the sabbath. Now this is most righteous; that as the Son's rest should be entered into under the gospel, so the day of rest should be kept by his disciples and family.

Query 14. Whether to say, the keeping the law of God according to the letter is a breaking of it in the Spirit, be not a charging of God, that gave it forth to be kept, and the Holy Spirit that incites us so to do now in this administration, James 2:8. and says they do well that do so; and yet thou sayest they break it in Spirit: but tell us by any one scripture, how a man, assisted by the Spirit to own Jehovah alone to be his God according to the letter of the first commandment, doth break the command in the Spirit? Or so the like of any other of them.

Ans. This query is altogether from a mistake; for it was not said by me, that "the keeping the law of God according to the letter is a breaking of it in the Spirit;" but that he that "runs back to the law in the letter, to take up any command as held forth in it, will be found a breaker thereof in Spirit." And for this, the Jews in general, and Paul in particular, may be my instances; who was exceeding strict according to the letter of the law, but yet was a grievous breaker of it in Spirit; and did not love his neighbor as himself, but, in a blind zeal, was a bitter persecutor: and if the Jews had taken that direction of Moses, Deut. 30:14. the observation of the law in the letter might have been more easy to them. So that the turning towards, and receiving the Word in the heart, from whence the letter came, is the only way to fulfil the letter; and the law is not so much as to be known, much less fulfilled, by running to the letter of it in the first place. And this I certainly know, that there is no coming to the Lord of life, nor no keeping chaste to him, but in the new covenant, and in the light of the Lord, as it is there dispensed: and till then, the mind cannot forbear making of images and false representations of him to itself; though being from the light of this covenant, it cannot discern that it doth so, no more than Paul by the letter of the law, could discern that he was a breaker thereof in his violent persecutions.

Query 15. Whether the prophets, Jesus Christ, or the apostles, by their keeping the law according to the letter (that they did so is evident), did break the law in the Spirit?

Ans. The prophets were under the law as to their outward state; though inwardly not without feeling the virtue of the new covenant. Christ also was made under the law, and took upon him the fulfilling of that

dispensation of Moses, that he might bring the believing Jews from under it into the liberty of the Spirit; that they might receive the adoption of sons, and the free ministration which was appointed for the sons, and might not be held under that ministration of bondage which was appointed for the servants. And the apostle bids believers to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, not making themselves debtors to the law. Gal. 5:1. For they were children of the promise, children of New Jerusalem, the free woman, children of the new covenant, and not children of Mount Sinai, the old covenant, the law in the letter. chap. 4:15,16.

Query 16. If there be but one day of rest holy to the Lord, and all the sabbaths of the law were but signs of it, that is said to be the day of redemption which the Lord hath made: then whether that day be a day natural, one of the seven days of the week, which either respects the day on which our Redeemer suffered, or that on which he rose again from the dead, or any other?

Ans. As the gospel is not natural, but spiritual; so its day of rest is not natural, but spiritual likewise. Yea, I may add this also, the six days' work in the new creation is not natural either.

Query 17. If not so, but that it should be intended applicable to the day or time of the gospel-administration from the time that Christ suffered in the flesh unto the end of the world: then whether this day, that is intended as a sabbath, is one with that day that the Scriptures intend and call a sabbath, which Christ himself gave his disciples charge to have respect unto in their flight. Mat. 24:20.

Ans. The supposition here put, demonstrates that those that put it have no acquaintance with the gospel-sabbath; but propose another outward time for it, even the time from Christ's suffering in the flesh, to the end of the world. Now if any should so affirm, it were as justly to be excepted against, as pressing the observation of the Jews' sabbath is. That which signifieth is outward or natural, and signifieth to that part which is without: that which is signified is inward and spiritual, and is known, entered into, kept, and enjoyed in the Spirit. It is a spiritual sabbath, not a natural, which God hath instituted for his spiritual people, after he hath

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