

CLOUD TAKEN OFF THE TABERNACLE

that the Israel of God might journey.

Two Sermons preached by Mr. John Webster at
All Hallows Lombard Street, London.

The judgment set, and the books opened. Religion tried, whether it be of God or of men. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the House of God. To separate the sheep from the goats and the precious from the vile. And to discover the blasphemy of those that say that they are apostles, teachers, alive, rich, Jews; but are found liars, deceivers, dead, poor, blind, naked, the synagogue of Satan.

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A Late Chaplain in the Army & Servant of Christ.

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"And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys; but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys." Exod.40:36-38.

This book out of which we have taken these words, is called Exodus, that is, the book of the goings out, or the book of the goings forth, for it shows the manner of the going forth of the children of Israel out of Egypt, being brought out thence by a strong and mighty hand.

But beloved, if we look on the things contained in this book of the goings forth, or goings out, only as an history of the Jews going out of that land of Egypt, wherein they were enslaved in their cruel bondage, we shall fall short of what the Holy Spirit intends, for their going out is the type and representation of all the people of God in all generations, and of their going forth from under the bondage of spiritual Pharaoh, and out of the kingdom of darkness.

When Moses as you may see, had obeyed the command of God, he showing him the form of the tabernacle, and Moses setting up all the things therein "according to the pattern," Heb.8:5, then it is said that "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode

thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle," Exod.40:34-35, which tabernacle was always to be carried before the children of Israel; and if the cloud was not taken up from off the tabernacle, then they journeyed not, but sat still; then they were to arise and go upon their journey; this rule they must observe, and this was to be their leader, and their guide in all their journeys.

Thus it is the history, and this is the letter; now if there were no more in it than so, what advantage is it to us, but only to deduct and raise some moral observations and directions, which every carnal man may do, and be never the nearer the meaning of the Scriptures, or to eat of the tree of life, and of the hidden manna, or knowing the mind of the Lord? And having no more, we have but the letter that kills, II Cor.3:6, which is no other but the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Gen.3:3, whereof God hath commanded Adam, that is whole Adam, all mankind not to eat thereof. For to imagine that that eternal, infinite, and most spiritual, and divine wisdom, should have no greater depth, nor any further wisdom to employ itself in than in relating histories of an outward tabernacle, and of silk, blue and purple curtains, and of the pot of manna, and of the outward sacrifices, and washings, what depth of wisdom answerable to that infinite wisdom in the Almighty Jehovah were this in him? To tell of Solomon's state, and his throne, and his majesty; of his gold and silver, and of the magnificent stately Temple that he built, of the workmanship and great cost and the like; what were

all this, if there were not more in it than the letter, and what every man by his study, and reason, and learning may find out? But without all question there is that mystery and depth of wisdom and knowledge, hidden and covered in all these things which none can find or know with all their utmost endeavors, unless we be anointed with that holy anointing which teacheth all things, I Jn.2:27, neither can we ever know them, except they be given us from above, Matt.19:11, and so these things may be spoken out only by that divine teaching in us.

And for that history for which this book is called Exodus, that we are now upon, the book of the goings forth, without all question, and to be brief, Satan is that true Pharaoh, which keeps the true Israel in bondage, which is here held forth by that external Pharaoh, for what is that Pharaoh to us, except we find in ourselves all those things acted and done? And Egypt there, to us, is no other thing but man's bondage, and miserable slavery under the prince of darkness, and shows what cruelty is exercised upon the true children of Israel, and what mighty signs and wonders the Lord is fain to work before the soul can be brought from under this bondage, and without question, he that hath not found it so in himself, was never yet brought out of Egypt, has never yet found the true Moses, which is Jesus Christ, demanding this spiritual Pharaoh, that the soul may depart out thence, to serve the Lord; for until then, man serves but himself, even in his highest forms and duties.

And likewise the children of Israel's passage through the Red Sea, and Pharaoh pursuing, and their journeyings, and fightings, and meeting with so many enemies in their passage to Canaan, what are all these things but the oppositions and dangerous passages of the soul to the heavenly Canaan, and the pursuing thereof, by the prince of darkness, and the god of this world. II Cor.4:4. What is this but the violence used by the prince of the power of the air, which continually works in the children of disobedience, Eph.2:2, that is, in all the sons of men until they are by a mighty and strong hand brought out of this their Egyptian bondage?

And all this trouble and shaking is that which the Lord promises in Hebrews 12:26, "saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven," for what the Lord did then externally, he will once more do, that is, after the same manner, but now spiritually. And this is that work, and the birth of Christ at which Herod and all Israel is troubled. The spiritual birth of Christ causes the whole power of the natural man to shake and tremble, even those under the purest external forms. And when the people of Israel were led a long and tedious passage to Canaan, being carried up and down, backward and forward, what is all this to us and them, in the substance and mystery, but holding forth man's lost and miserable condition in the way of his own heart, in the way of sin, showing the desolations, the darkness, the forlorn and lost condition of all men by nature; that even when the heart of man thinks he is upon the borders of

Canaan, and he is now in the right way, and shall surely by his travel and industry possess that good land, he is for all this deceived and brought back again to the very borders of Egypt, and is brought down to the very sides of the pit. "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." Isa.14:13-15. And 'tis revealed and made known to him, for all his fair progress in his religion, and for all his forms and inventions, that he is still under misery, darkness, sin, and condemnation; and that all those things which were but things taken up of himself, and were no other but shows and pretenses, and coverings to delude himself and the world, because he could not abide to see the internal misery, and that bottomless gulf in himself; he could not endure to see the smoke of the bottomless pit arise out of his own heart, and those innumerable locusts crawling and covering the whole earth; that there are in his heart, pride, lust, malice, murder, covetousness, idolatry, witchcraft, sorceries, and lies, and everything that worketh abomination which cannot enter the New Jerusalem. Rev.21:27. Therefore I say, because man cannot abide to see himself thus, nor that any other should see him thus vile and abominable as indeed he is, therefore he gets himself a covering for all these things, he makes himself aprons because he knows he is naked, Gen.3:7, and he would cover himself

also to himself, so as to others, and {if possible} from the face and the light of God himself; and having done this with all the art and cunning he can invent, then {he thinks} he hath covered the gulf, he labors having thus seen himself in this gulf, to forget what manner of man he is, Jam.1:23-24, he stops the guilt and cry of his own conscience by these aprons, coverings and forms, and he begins to be secure, and he is holy both in his own sight, and in the sight of others, and he thinks that he shall enter and possess the good land flowing with milk and honey. Exod.3:8. Now for this man to be uncovered and laid open, to be emptied of all this goodness, to be stripped of all his forms and holiness, and to be brought back to the borders of Egypt, and to make him see that he is as far from the promised land as the worst of men, nay that publicans and harlots are nearer than himself, Matt.21:31, this cuts the very core of his heart, this undoes him, and he has no more ability to abide these words than the Pharisees could the preaching of Jesus Christ, who sought in all his teachings to pull off their coverings, and to make them appear as they actually were, and not to be such as they would have the world to believe them to be with all their holy shows and pretenses.

Now every man, the best of men, being in this condition, if they could but be content to see themselves so, that they are filthy, and abominable in all their works, and that they were utterly lost and destroyed and confounded in themselves, and knew not what to do, nor which way to turn themselves,

then indeed when the Lord comes in and shines upon them with light and life; and the tabernacle of the Lord should guide them, and it would show them the way, the truth and life; and the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth. Jn.16:13. The cloud and the darkness should be taken up, and the Lord himself should be their sun, their light, and their guide, Isa.60:19, then they should see experimentally by the teachings of the Father in them, and not by the outward teachings of men, that Jesus Christ is the true Tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man, Heb.8:2, as the Apostle applies all to Jesus Christ in the ninth of the Hebrews, as the beginning, as the sanctuary in all things therein contained, viz., the candlestick and the shewbread, and the golden sensor, and the ark of the covenant, the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that was always green, flourishing and budding, &c., the Holy Ghost signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet manifest, which were only figures for that time, and could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, which stood in meats and drinks, and diverse washings and carnal ordinances imposed upon them, until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, and so he goes on. Heb.9:1-11. Of which things, I must say, as the apostle does that of them, that we cannot now speak particularly. Jesus Christ is the light set upon the candlestick, Matt.5:15, giving light

to all that are in the house, and he is the hidden manna to nourish us to eternal life; and it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell, Col.1:19, even the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Col.2:9. Oh beloved, Christ is that true tabernacle, which the Lord hath pitched, and not man; and from this tabernacle must the soul expect all its leadings, all its teachings, and not from the wisdom of man, or the ordinances of man; for here they are all taught of God, "and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Heb.8:11. And whosoever is not led by this light, and by this star only to behold the Lord Jesus Christ as his only and true Guide, if you look at any other way, he says the same thing that the prophets of old said of them that followed the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of their god Remphan, and followed after lies, and the inventions of their own evil adulterous hearts, Acts 7:42, figures which they have made to worship, saith the Holy Ghost, the fifth chapter of Amos. "Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves." Amos 5:25-26.

Now then, you may hence see and take notice, that until the cloud be removed by the Lord himself, there must be no journeying, no going forward by any of the sons of men; and tis only the Lord, and not man that can remove it. The children

of Israel must wait the Lord's time, when he pleases. Man is always furnished and ready, "your time is always ready," {saith our Saviour,} "but my time is not yet." John 7:6. There are certain days and times while the cloud is upon the glory of this tabernacle; and until the Lord removes it, man can do nothing but wait; he must sit still in his tent, and that is, when all things are in darkness in man, both within him and without him, and he sees himself lost as to all of his own wisdom, power, endeavors; in this case tis in vain for man to arise and think to create a light, and a wisdom, and a power to himself, for then he goes on in his own power and light, and not in the light and power of Christ. Ye know, that the fire in the tabernacle never went out; there was always light there, Lev.6:13, but if there be a cloud upon it, and thou canst not see it, and yet will be journeying, and doing, and acting, this will be thy fall and stumbling, and a curse will be upon thee, and not a blessing, and thou shalt not prosper. When that fire kindled the word in the mouth of Jeremiah the Prophet, then that word was a light to them and a command to depart out of their captivity, and to return to their own land; until then the cloud was upon their way, and they were as in a wayless wilderness, where no man passed, the land of deserts and of pits, a land of drought and of the shadows of death where no man dwelt, as in that second chapter of Jeremiah. Jer.2:6. While man is in this condition and in this night of blindness and darkness, and land of death and drought, he knows not his way, until the Lord show him a light; until

the Lord remove the cloud, there is no finding the place of rest, nor any feeding on the hidden manna, nor drinking at the wells of salvation. Isa.12:3. When man is in this dark night, how can he arise? But if he sits still as to all his own powers, actually seeing his own weakness, and utter inability, then this light in due time will shine forth; and if he ever stir before this day, he arises, and works, and walks unto his own ruin and destruction. It may be this doctrine may seem harsh and very unwelcome to most men, that they shall not be doing, and going on, and journeying, and working out their own salvation. Phil.2:12. Many are in this much offended, at which I do not wonder, for they not being able to see the mystery of the Scriptures, only rest in the letter, and no not the teachings of the Spirit, and think they must do something by way of condition, or else all is nothing. And herein is the great mistake of most men who though ever so highly esteemed by themselves and others, yet are no other but blind leaders of the blind, both alike falling into the ditch. Lk.6:39. But those who are acquainted with these things in their own experience, know and feel this mystical interpretation to be the truth, and all others in the letter to be but resemblances and shadows under which the truth is hidden and covered from all except such to whom it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom, Matt.13:11, but to others in parables, that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; as in that seventh and eighth chapter to the Hebrews, where the Apostle speaking of the Law, and of many

particulars appertaining to that priesthood, he shows that the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw nigh unto God; and so there by several arguments he proves that Jesus Christ alone, was the true Priest, and the true Ordinance. Now in the first verse of the eighth chapter, he applies all that he had before spoken to Jesus Christ alone, that perfect High Priest. "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum," and so he goes on and applies it to Jesus Christ, that true High Priest "who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man," Heb.8:1-2, which things "serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things," Christ having obtained "a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises," Heb.8:5-6, "Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb.9:11-12. Christ is such a one whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, II Chron.6:18, and he offers not sacrifices, but himself, his own body; and he and all his members are the true tabernacle wherein the Lord is served and well pleased; for the law made high priests which had infirmities, saith the apostle, but the word of the

oath which was since the law, maketh the Son, who only is consecrated for evermore. Heb.7:28.

But what shall we say then of all those things wherein Moses was commanded to be so exact, and to make all things according to the pattern, Exod.25:9, and here he calls Christ the True Tabernacle, Heb.8:2; what was theirs a false one? It was in regard of Christ who is the Son himself; for not any of all those things the Jews themselves were to rest in, though done exactly according to the Pattern. But this MESSIAH was he that they should have eyed through and beyond all those figures and shadows; for that tabernacle was but pitched by man, {note that,} though commanded by God; but the true Tabernacle is pitched by the Lord himself. So that the Apostle there, we may clearly see, expounds this last chapter of Exodus, and reduces all those shadows to the substance, proving that Christ Himself is the true Tabernacle, and the true Ministry, and the true Sanctuary, and that those things are but the patterns and emblems of the heavenly things. Now all things must be according to him; for he is the true pattern, and he is that one and alone Sacrifice, once offered; as in that ninth chapter of the Hebrews, and the 11th verse and so on, "but Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the

ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God, &c." Though all these things were done by Moses, and all done according to the example and pattern; yet, saith he, the things we speak of are not things done by man, not of this building; that is, not done by the wisdom, power or will of man; no, nor those done by them according to the direction of God himself, {and in that sense commanded ordinances,} yet these made not the comers thereunto perfect; therefore saith he, it was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb.9:24-25.

The heavenly things themselves purified, what's that? That is, the souls of men, which possess heavenly natures, and if those external sacrifices must be purified with blood, it is much more necessary that the heavenly and immortal soul of man should be purified with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Man having departed from God, and defiled his soul by turning away from him, and having descended down to earthly things, to find himself a god, and a trust, and a refuge; this departure is of such infinite depth, that nothing but

this Eternal Priest and Mediator could reconcile and bring together again the majesty and nature of God, and polluted man thus at an infinite distance, II Cor.5:20, but he by himself and of his own mercy and goodwill has reconciled us to his Father, and hath trod the winepress alone and none stood by him, Isa.63:3, and herein was the eternal and infinite love of Jesus Christ our alone Saviour seen.

And by the way, let me mind you of one thing; that when the Scripture speaks of Christ ascending and entering into the third heaven, and far above all heavens, and sitting down on the right hand of his Father, Eph.4:10, Heb.12:2, I would not have you so childish as to be diluted by those tricks and devices of the men of the Letter, who not being able to see through the mystery, do take those things as spoken literally, as though Christ now had a material body, flesh and bones, the same which he had in the flesh, when he was upon the earth. These are very fond inventions of men, that Christ is in a local place and sits upon a throne above in heaven, next to his Father as upon his right hand or the like; and when he comes to judgment he will set himself in the material clouds, and call all nations before him, just as judges do in the court room; and there to sit in a chair of State above all, or as Solomon upon a glorious throne. Truly the world hath been a long time deluded with these fancies. Now as the Apostle saith plainly, "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands," Heb.9:24, nor into anything of this nature, nor of this building. But we are when we speak of Him to separate all our

thoughts far from all carnal things, and all creaturely beings. For there is no tincture of the creature concernments in those heavenly and divine things; but all those things are done spiritually and in a way far above the thought or comprehension of all creaturely conceptions.

From all this which hath been spoken, hence it is clear, that the Tabernacle here spoken of; is, the glory, wisdom, power, righteousness of Jesus Christ, and whatever is Himself, who is nothing else but majesty, purity, glory, wisdom, love, goodness, fullness, infiniteness, blessedness; and all sufficiency, and all good; he alone is the Lord, he alone is King, his is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory forever, and no creature can without blasphemy in the highest degree appropriate or assume any one, or any part of this to himself. Here now beloved, we have set before you the Tabernacle, and the fire in the Tabernacle. This is that fire of the Lord which can never be put out, nor extinguished, but is ever one and the same, Lev.6:13, it can never decrease nor increase in regard of himself, but only in regard of manifestation to us; and which cannot be procured one day sooner by all the wisdom, learning, industry of man, but only when the Lord is pleased to remove the cloud, then had ye liberty to journey, and walk, and work, and not before; whatever the dark and blind and the poor deluded sons of men make you believe to the contrary.

And further be assured, that until you come to possess and enjoy in yourselves, these spiritual

and divine things, you cannot know what they mean; and whatever you do, and whatever you see, or adore, below these, you adore nothing but the patterns and the images of them, wherein no man ever yet had any other but a false rest, and they lived in a false light, and enjoyed not the things themselves; nay, though we should know and behold Christ after the flesh, and look upon him in his conception, life, death, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension, yet all these things are but the patterns of the heavenly things, Heb.9:23, and of the Lord himself, which are to pass away and be forgotten when that Christ himself is personally manifested; henceforth know we him no more, saith the apostle. II Cor.5:16. When the eternal majesty and splendor of that which is the Truth comes in, all the glory of all other things vanishes before its presence. These are the things which are purified with the better things than the blood of bulls and goats; nothing could purchase nor purify these things, but only the blood and death of the Son of God. Here the soul comes to see clearly, and to handle, and experiment and taste the heavenly things themselves, which were from the beginning, "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." I Jn.1:1. Then the soul truly falls in love with Christ, then it eyes him, and surveys him, then it magnifies and adores him, then it loses itself in him, and dotes upon him, for then is he all beauty, and all perfection to it; and then it loses self-seeking, self-interest and self-

glorifying and the like, and sees him only to be the Lord of life, life alone, glory alone, riches alone, mercy alone, light alone, precious alone; and nothing in heaven or earth to be desired but him alone. Then it can say experimentally and feelingly with David, and not merely complementally as most professors do, "whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." Psal.73:25-26. This soul is indeed of the temple of God, and hath in it the true light, majesty and glory of God; but all other men do but play with shadows, and are but exercised about the patterns of these things which are to come, and have not the things themselves, notwithstanding their confidences and strong conceits.

And now this light being made bright in the glory of Christ, is to be thy guide, this is to be thy teacher, thy master, and no other can be; until this come in, the Scriptures themselves, nay Christ in the flesh, and all things whatever ye can name, are but dark lanterns without these divine teachings, for he is only a light and a guide, a master, and ruler unto spiritual men; 'tis not those that can talk much of him, and who have high notions and speculations of him, that can love or adore him truly, but only those who thus enjoy him. He that walks by any other light, or any other guide, than by the light of the Tabernacle, he walks in his own light and in the sparks of his own kindling, Isa.50:11, and they never did, nor never can receive anything at the

Lord's hand, but to lie down in sorrow. But this is to lean upon the highest and purest wisdom, to depend and rest on him who is only all-sufficient; this is to be taken off all other things, all other sufficiency's which are so to other men. These can really see that there is nothing in man, nothing in the world, but that all are full of emptiness and vanity, and deceit, this man sees and really knows all this in truth, whilst other men talk much of them, as if they were to them the only excellencies, and that all below them are nothing but shadows and delusions, but secretly in their hearts they do not think so, and their practices tell us otherwise; they are eager seeking them, their close holding and hugging them plainly declares, that they lie with their tongues, and dissemble in their hearts, Psal.78:36, and that they teach to others, that which they never yet touched with one of their fingers, and to them the things themselves, to act in them, to live by them, are those heavy burdens which the Pharisees laid upon other men's shoulders, Lk.11:46, but not touch them themselves.

He that is guided by any other light, or by any other teachers, he forsakes the true light, the life and glory of Christ, and goes down into emptiness, darkness, misery, sin, and the delusions of his own heart. He that thinks the Scriptures to be a light and a teacher, or a rule, or a guide, without this Heavenly and Divine Teacher, depends upon that which can never teach, nor guide aright without him; and therefore when men talk so much of the Scriptures, and miss this light, they are but in

darkness, and merely delude themselves and others. While Adam in the state of innocency beheld this light, he adhered to it alone, he saw no other light, no other fire, no other guide; this was the Tree of life to him, this was riches, glory, fullness, all in all; but, he casting his eye upon the tree of knowledge of good and evil, this false light misled him, and led him down into darkness, death, blindness, irrecoverable misery, and never to return to the tree of life; and this was by following the councils and teaching of his own heart, and indeed this is the condition of all the sons of men, not one excluded, no not one can return; for there is a flaming cherub turning every way to keep the way of the tree of life; and there is none that can remove this cherub, but only the Son of God; man with all his wisdom and power can do nothing therein; man with all his excellencies is gone down forever into the pit of darkness, never to return. Now only Jesus Christ is the new and living way, the gate to life, the true Teacher, the only Guide, the only Undertaker for all those that shall return. He alone sayest to Adam, "where art thou; hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat," for "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die." Jesus Christ alone is he that discovers man to be naked, to see himself undone and miserable by following his own will and wisdom, Christ alone can set up a light in the soul, to show man his folly and madness; he alone can set before him hell, death, the curse, damnation, and destruction. And if man go about to return to his own light, or by his own

wisdom, he sets himself more into misery and darkness; and even publicans and harlots shall sooner return than these men, Matt.21:31, who in their own and others' eyes, are the wisest of men, the brightest, the holiest of the sons of men. And these men for all they take so much pains, and are so strict over themselves, {as they would be thought to be,} and require it of others, which compass sea and land to make if possible one proselyte, and when he is made, they make him twofold more the child of hell than before. Matt.23:15.

While Adam lived in that state wherein he was created, in the light of God, and in the glory of God, in the wisdom and life of God, man was not ashamed, though he was naked; for the glory and light of God was in him, which was his life, excellency and glory; but when he went hence and followed other counsel, the whispering of the subtle serpent within him, Gen.3:6, then followed death, hell, misery and condemnation; then he sees his folly and madness in the harkening to and giving way to this false liar, who before told him he should better his condition, and that he should be like God himself. And thus seeing and beholding his nakedness, his folly and misery, he being not able to behold it, nor live in the sight thereof, for he is not able to behold the wrath of God, and hellfire staring in his face; then he bethinks of some covering, some shelter, some clothes to cover his nakedness; he is not able to behold his own condition, and thus he invents a thousand ways to shelter himself; runs to this duty and that rule, for

he must find out something, he must do something to quench the fire in him that is kindled by the breath of the Lord. Isa.30:33. And is not man in this more mad, more vain, and more miserable? For by all these things he doth but add fuel to this fire, for doth he think, till one stronger comes than himself, ever to be delivered? Alas, thus are all the sons of men deluded, but when Christ who is the true Mediator comes, Lk.11:22, when he sets up his light and truth, then he convinces man of his utter emptiness, of his weakness, of his nothingness, and that he cannot arise, nor live, without the loud and mighty voice of the Son of God to quicken him, Jn.11:43, when this light and life comes upon him, then though he be naked in himself, yet is he not ashamed; but he standing in this condemnation, all sin, and darkness and condemnation vanish before the glory of these heavenly things and come to nothing, and empty themselves into their own nothingness, that so the glory of Jesus Christ may come in the room thereof, who is truth, and life, and fullness, and perfection, and all things.

But while man walks by the light of his own fire, Isa.50:11, and in the sparks which he hath kindled, he is holy, and good, and pure, and excellent, and great in his own sight, and high in his own wisdom; but when once he comes to be guided by the fire and light of the tabernacle, then he is a miserable, empty, bare, and beggarly thing; nothing in him of wisdom, power, glory, riches, goodness, a mere naked, empty simpleton, except he be made happy in the light of God, and in the union with Jesus

Christ; wise in the wisdom of God, and holy in the holiness of God.

Here, says the apostle, I permit not a woman to speak in the church, I Cor.14:34, here let her head be covered, I Cor.11:6, that is, let not man speak anything in the church in the presence of the Lord; of his wisdom, of his goodness, of his upright walking, but let Christ be all these in the church; and there let all the weakness and woman-ish of man come upon him, let him be covered with shame in the presence of this Bridegroom; for 'tis a shame for a woman to speak in the church; let not her show so much pride, but let her ask her Husband at home, let him have all the glory. Let not the bride speak anything of her riches and of her beauty in the presence of her Lord; but to see herself in his riches, and glorious in his glory, and wise in his wisdom; let not her meddle herein without her head being covered, so that she sees she hath nothing of glory, nothing praiseworthy, nothing beautiful in her; but that her head be perfectly covered with the righteousness, riches and glory of Jesus Christ. All the men in the world, be they of what parts, learning, strength, or excellencies can be named, are but women in this respect, and are to cover their heads in the presence of Christ, in the church of Christ; in thy "temple doth every one speak of his glory," Psal.29:9, saith David. If a woman offer to speak in the church, this is but weakness, this is but shame and confusion of face. In the church, what's that think you? Without question the meaning of the apostle is not to be taken merely literally of a

material church; nor 'tis not meant of a congregation of men or women assembled, or congregated together {as the wisest of men take it} for this in the Scripture sense is not called a church, much less in the low and vulgar acceptation, of a meeting place built of bricks or wood, or stone; but the church is the temple of God, the house of God, the body of Christ in which the Lord discovers his riches, glory, wisdom, bounty, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and his everlasting power and goodness to the souls of believers; and in this church where the Lord is present, let not the weakness discover its pride, insolvency or empty boasting; for, this is the church, and this is the woman that ought not to speak there.

Now this fire of the sanctuary is that which discovers all this weakness, darkness and blindness in the soul, when this light of God appears, then all shadows vanish, then all coverings are removed, and all things in and of man appear as they are to be nothing but darkness, deformity, delusion, lies, confusion and misery, and God appears to the soul to be the only light, life, happiness, and perfection; and the soul is not ashamed to be thus naked, Gen.2:25, because this makes way that God may have all the glory, all the wisdom, all the excellency, and man may come to be nothing but sin and emptiness. Thus the soul comes with the Apostle to rejoice in and glory in his infirmities, and that the power and wisdom of God is made perfect in his weakness and folly. II Cor.12:5. As a good wife, she is not ashamed to be as nothing in the presence of

her husband, but rejoices that He is esteemed, and that He is made all in all to her. So doth the true spouse of Christ, let her be nothing, so that he may be all, for she acknowledges that she is only rich in her husband's riches, and only wise in his wisdom, and strong in his strength; she sees that she lives not by her own care and industry, but in the love and care of her Husband; and thus she glories not in herself, but in her Husband. This is to become naked, and yet not ashamed, as was Adam in his innocency, to have a poor sinner freely to confess to the glory of Christ, that there was a time when I was rich and had high imaginations of myself, Rev.3:17, and I was in my own esteem able to guide, and rule, and direct myself and all my affairs, and I thought myself in a blessed and secure condition, II Cor.10:5, but I find now, that I was nothing but a lie, and a delusion, but even then, the mere love and tender compassion of my Saviour and Redeemer set up a candle and light in my soul whereby I was discovered to be nothing but a sink of sin, a body of death, a bottomless pit of abominations, that I was a fool, and madness was in my heart in all that I did; and that Christ alone is my goodness, mercy, power, wisdom, eternity, salvation and all sufficiency; this he freely, and with all readiness acknowledges, and this he is not ashamed to declare, as those are that would be esteemed holy ones, but to tell it to all the world, though all the wise and holy men of the world esteem him a fool and a madman, yet this is his glory, to take shame to himself.

But all your wise and righteous man, in all their contriving is to hide all their shame, and they would be thought to be holy men, and strict men, and that they walk exactly, and according to the rule of the word; and this is their glory, that others have this esteem of them, they would not for a word be thought as a vile and sinful as others, they hate that Jesus Christ should so far lay them open to the world and themselves. What, are they to come before the Lord and have no goodness, no endeavors, no watchfulness, no bottles of prayers to offer, Psal.56:8, no sweet incense to offer, Ezek.8:11, no duties thereby to think well of themselves? This would be death and destruction, and desolation to them. When {God knows} once he will arise in them, and set their sins in order, Psal.50:21, then all their delusions and coverings will be removed, and they made naked. Then all their sin and neat contrivances to disguise themselves before God and men, shall be rent and destroyed, when the Lord will arise and come to judgment in their hearts, then all their inward parts shall be laid open, Jn.9:39, and what they have done in secret shall be proclaimed upon the housetop. Lk.8:17. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place," Matt.24:15, {whoso readeth, let him understand,} then shall there be in those days great tribulation in them "the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken," Matt.24:29, "then let him which is on the housetop not come

down to take anything out of his house," he shall not go down to fetch any of his riches, or gold, or silver; none of his fine utensils for worship, none of his fine and workmanlike duties, none of his strictness, none of his holy walkings; he is stripped of all, left naked; and how are their houses left unto them desolate, in one moment! Babylon in them is fallen, is fallen, and she that said in her heart, "I shall sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow," Rev.18:7, "therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Rev.18:8. Then is the hour of judgment come, and the Lord will arise, and nothing can hinder or stand before him. This will be a miserable day to these men, a day of blackness and gloominess, and thick clouds, the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood. A deluge of wrath is now irresistibly coming upon them, and then the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll and the earth shall melt with fervent heat and all their works burnt up. II Pet.3:10.

Then from hence we may conclude that at that day, all men, even the wisest men of the world, will be at their wits end, to cover and hide themselves from the wrath of the Lamb and from him that sits on the throne. Rev.6:16. Then all those merchants of Babylon shall lament for her, that their whore, their strumpet, with whom they have all their days committed fornication, is made desolate, &c., their trade of religion is quite overturned; those that made merchandise of the word, and preached for

money and for hire, Mic.3:11, and to get bread, or to make themselves great, and to that end got into forms and duties, and fellowships, that men might have high thoughts of them, and made long prayers under pretense, and to grow rich by devouring widows houses, Matt.23:14, and yet these things, these pretenses, these prayers and duties they heap to themselves, thinking that they may please God with them, and these things {as foul and abominable as they be} they think to be a goodly sacrifice. But when this day comes that the Lord will arise and plead his own cause, all these things will stand in no stead; all their works must be burnt up, then he will remember how these foolish men blaspheme his name. Psal.74:22-23. And if they should bethink themselves wherewithal to come before the Lord, and to offer thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil, Mic.6:7, nay if they give the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul, all were to no purpose. For the Father, the Eternal Majesty of Heaven can be pleased with nothing but that One Eternal and all Sufficient Sacrifice, the blood of his own dear Son. For men to call themselves Christians and Saints, and for others to esteem them so, is a poor covering. Now in this day {the day of the Lamb's wrath, when men will be at their wits end to cover and hide themselves from Him that sits upon the throne,} it will not cover their nakedness. For the bed is too short to stretch themselves on, and the covering is too narrow, they cannot cover nor wrap themselves in it. Isa.28:20. Tis not all their fellowships and congregatings, nor washings, nor external eatings,

and sitting down with Christ at his table, nor their persuasions that they do the mind of God, and conform exactly to the rule and letter of the Word. All things of this nature is but of man, and they glory in their own shame, Phil.3:19, for thou dishonorest thy Head Christ, to pray or prophesy if thy own head be not bare; if thyself be not stripped naked, tis a dishonor to Christ, who is the Head of the Church; for all honour, all praise, all wisdom, all goodness, all righteousness is Christ's crown, and no creature is to wear that crown but Himself alone. If thou takest these, or any part of these which are due alone to Him, thou makest Christ ashamed, he is thus dishonored. For there is no goodness, no love, no beauty, no life but only in the Son of God; and whatever is in him, is his for the Church; not that they enjoy it in themselves, but in Him. All glory be to him, and all shame and confusion upon themselves; and hereby is their Head magnified.

Christ alone is their covering, their righteousness, their wisdom, their redemption, their Saviour, their beauty; they have no shelter, no hiding place but in Him. Those that are ashamed thus to acknowledge and confess him before men, he will be ashamed to confess them, or own them before his Father. Matt.10:32. Those that are ashamed to bear their testimony of him, and to be witnesses and martyrs for him, he will be ashamed of them. He is not ashamed to own thee in thy blood and filthiness; and shall we be ashamed to own him and to ascribe that to him which alone is his due? But instead of giving testimony to the glory of his

name, thou contrivest which way thou mayest be something, that thou mayest be esteemed, and that Christ may be nothing, and that he may be debased; but be assured in that day all these things shall be laid open. And God is a jealous God and will not suffer his honour to be polluted, nor will give his glory to any other. Isa.42:8.

Further, from all that which hath been said, it appears that 'tis in vain to seek for, or expect any light to guide any of the sons of men, anywhere else but from the tabernacle. 'Tis in vain to follow any other star but that which led the wise men to Jesus Christ; for he that sets up any other Sun of Righteousness to guide him, Mal.4:2, any other light, any other rule to walk by, that thinks he can teach himself or offer any sacrifices or prayers to be accepted with the Father, but Christ's alone, or assumes any power to command himself in anything; this man is no other but a liar, a thief, and a robber; a blasphemer and a traitor, for he robs God of his honour, and denies Jesus Christ to be King, Priest, and Prophet, which is exclusively his right.

Beloved, happy is that soul who hath forsaken himself, and all other light, and minds only this light from the tabernacle, that cannot follow any other counsel, that knows only the voice of Christ, and the light and life of Christ from all other lights or lives, and that will not follow the voice of strangers. Jn.10:5. They know the light and shinings forth of God from all other shinings; and these are the true wise men, the spiritual and true magicians, if they

see any other star, any other meteor, they can distinguish it and follow his star alone; they have found in experience where they have followed any other light or guide, they stumbled and fell. He knows if he do, he shall be led into a land of darkness, into a wilderness of sorrows and miseries, where are thorns, nettles and brambles, a habitation of dragons and a court for owls. Isa.34:13. And again said he, "ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow." Isa.50:11.

Man naturally follows that light which he hath found out, not regarding the fire of the sanctuary, and as with a stone and steel, he strikes fire for himself, and gathers up some combustible matter, wood, hay, and stubble of his own finding, I Cor.3:12, some things of his own getting together, and here he makes himself a light and a fire, and he thinks by his wisdom, and by his learning to hammer, beat and find out the truth of the Scriptures; and he thinks that he can teach, and he can counsel, and he is a leader of the blind, which is only Christ's work and office; and he can define out errors, and refrain them by his rules and directions, Rom.2:19, when alas, poor blind man who has never yet discovered the darkness of his own heart, who has never yet seen the errors of his own heart. Are not these then blind leaders of the blind, as our Saviour saith, and both must needs fall into the ditch. Matt.15:14.

This is the very same thing which Nadab and Abihu did, to offer strange fire of their own before the Lord, "and Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not," Lev.10:1, for when thou bringest all thy duties, all thy parts, all thy endeavors, and though thou offerest them {as pretended} on the true Altar Jesus Christ, yet if offered by thyself, thou art that Nadab and Abihu there described; and the fire of the Lord will break forth to thy utter ruin and destruction; for never anything ever pleased the Father, but that one alone and eternal sacrifice offered only by Himself; for he abhors that any of thy duties, any of thy menstruous rags should be joined in with his most perfect and only righteousness. Isa.64:6. This Garment of linsey-woolsey his people may not wear. Deut.22:11. All things that are done in the world, proceed but from two principles; there is not one action of any of the sons of men, but proceeds either from the power or wisdom of man, or from Jesus Christ. If from man as man, it's loathsome, stinking, abominable, though never so refined; though they bestow never so much labor, industry, learning, all their wits and parts, to put upon it the neatest cut, and the finest dress, they are all but earthly, sensual and devilish, Jam.3:15, which must be cast to hell, and the earth with all the works thereof shall be burnt up forever.

Every sacrifice that is offered in the world must be kindled with fire from Heaven by the fire of

the sanctuary and offered on this Altar, which alone is Jesus Christ, and that alone perfect High Priest; else it is kindled by this strange fire which is no other but devouring fire. Either it is of the earth, earthly; or else it is of the Lord from Heaven. I Cor.15:47. If it be from Heaven, it shall be raised up to heaven. It is sown in weakness, but it is raised in power; if it be from man, it is from the bottomless pit, it is from sin and weakness, and thither it must return; and in this state and condition are all the actions of the world; even all the actions, inventions, forms, industry of men, and they all tend to crucify the Lord of life and glory; that so man and his doings, his contrivances, his idols may stand and be adored. All the sons of man cry out for a Barabbas, that so the wisdom of the flesh and the power of man may be established, and that that everlasting righteous Son of God may be crucified and utterly destroyed. John 18:40. This they may do, and this they do do, and yet may talk much of an outward and external Christ, which once died at Jerusalem, and pretend much love to him. Never any of the sons of men ever received that true Christ we speak of, {though much cried up in the world,} for never any received him, but to them gave He power to become the sons of God. John 1:12. Never any received him, nor followed him, but he denied himself and took up his cross; which never any man did that is not emptied of himself, made nothing in his own sight, that is not stripped of all his power, wisdom, righteousness and whatever man {as man} adores. All true Saints are brought to see this in experience; they see, all the

world seeking themselves, following after the gods that they have made, and crying up their Diana; they all see the whole earth always and continually crying out, "not this man, but Barabbas," and they know them to be all thieves and robbers. Matt.27:21.

But these only come to the light, and walk in the light, and the light of Christ in them hath discovered, that in man is nothing but sin, darkness, misery, and condemnation. This they really see, both within themselves and without themselves, and he that would be exalted, is in them brought low, and he that humbleth himself is exalted. Lk.14:11. Christ alone lifted up, and to them he is all in all, and this is their glory, this is their kingdom, this their pearl of great price for which they have sold everything, Matt.13:46, this is their heaven. Then they come to see, as the truth is, that they have no power, wisdom, excellency; nothing at all but what is to be condemned; and that all their works if they are accepted are wrought in God; that Christ is their wisdom, righteousness, justification, sanctification and redemption. I Cor.1:30. They come to this light, and they walk in this light; they continually see that Jesus Christ hath all power and wisdom in Himself; that he hath not given any part of his excellencies out of Himself, but whatever is wrought in them, is wrought by Him. John 3:21. They dare not say, I must do and I must act, and I must pray that I may be accepted, nor think as others do; I must perform the conditions on my part to do, and then I shall be accepted. All doctrine of this nature is no other but

crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame, and walking in darkness. Heb.6:6. Those that preach this are those grievous wolves which Paul speaks of, "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20:31-31. Of your own selves; that is, men that hold forth the same doctrine and preach Jesus Christ too, and hold him forth for a Saviour, yet under that pretense crucify Him, and make him as no Christ, and his cross ineffectual. But those that are in the light, they come to the light, and follow this light, live in this light, that their deeds may be made manifest, whether wrought in God or no. Then he sees that this is the true wisdom from above, Jam.3:17, which is pure, peaceable, easy to be entreated, and full of good works; 'tis not high, and stern, and subtle, and rigid, to keep a distance from all but whom they like; but they are easy to be entreated, meek, ready to do good to all, they see no such excellency in houses, inheritances, money, honour or praise, but for the love of Christ, they are not dear to them; for they know, if they have these, they are not given to make them great, or high, or praised among the sons of men, but that by them, Christ may make himself great, that they may be of another spirit than other natural men in the world, showing forth the virtues of him that hath called them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. Acts 26:18.

Then is their tongue touched with a coal from the Altar, Isa.6:6, and they must declare Jesus Christ to make him alone glorious, powerful, wise, mighty, eternal, &c., and then, it is no longer they that speak, but the spirit of their Father that is within them. Mark 13:11. My beloved brethren, if men were but come to the sight of this light, and were able to stand in it, and walk in it, they would not go forth {as they do} in their own name, and in their own wisdom and power, having furnished themselves by their study, and by their books, and by their borrowed matter; but all this is because they have no light in them. How many speakers be there now in the world, and with what confidence do they come unto you? When this spirit from on high never came upon them, for they never yet waited at Wisdom's gates, Prov.8:34, never yet stayed at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, Lk.24:49, but running before they are sent, having of themselves found a way to be furnished; for they can go to the University and there lay the foundation, and there they have the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, and then they can study Authors, and then they have wisdom, and eloquence of their own; and thus they come furnished, and are {as they think} able ministers of the Gospel. II Cor.3:6. Alas poor souls, Christ calls them no other but thieves and robbers which come not in at the door, John 10:1, they come not in by Him, but climb up some other way. These have not made Christ the door and the way, for did they but live in the true light, they durst not do thus; they durst not speak

until He had opened the door, they durst not walk till the fire of the sanctuary guided them, till this cloud of ignorance, not knowing themselves, nor the work of Christ, were taken up, else they sit still.

And I say, there would not be so many speakers as there be, they would not covet so much to be somebody that they may be taken notice of, to be wise, to be learned, to be holy, to be sober, to be endued with the gifts of Christ, as they would be thought to be. All this, is but putting new wine into old bottles, Lk.5:37, and both are lost; but if this light of Christ, this Spirit from on high, this fire of the sanctuary were upon them, then this new wine would be put into new bottles, and both preserved. Oh, my brethren, it woes my very heart to see how confident and bold men are in their own light, and he that will say to the contrary, but that 'tis the light of God, he must be a deceiver, and he must be a Schismatic, and Antinomian, anything, yea the most odious of all men. Oh, that these men did but know from whence they speak; oh, that they did but know whether they were life and light in Christ, whether sent from God or the devil, whether from Christ or antichrist, who indeed sits in the temple of God, as if sent from Christ. Nay, let me tell you, they come with such deceivableness of unrighteousness, with such signs and lying wonders, II Thes.2:9-10, that they are able to deceive the very elect of God, if it were possible; but the truth is, it is only they that can discover them; it is only the Spirit of Christ that can lay them open; only he that hath the true light can discover these hidden deeds of darkness.

He that hath this true light, and this true spirit, he sees he is nothing, nor cannot step one step in this work except the Lord go with them; not only in words to say this, for that is nothing; but really from the light of God to know this. Then he durst not go forth to speak of the things of God, but in trembling and fear. Nature, it thinks itself always ready, it is never unfurnished; call him when you will, he can preach, he can pray, he can fit you for mourning, for rejoicing, for he is well furnished for all occasions, he can indeed manage and order all his affairs, and govern the very Church of Christ by his wisdom and learning, and he is never to seek, but as always ready as Christ saith. John 7:6. These men are become masters of their religion; and I, 'tis true, for the true religion was never yet master over them. But beloved, 'tis not thus with the saints of God, nor with the true ministers of Christ, for they see Christ the sole Master and sole Orderer of the Church, and they dare not awake their beloved until he please, Cant.2:7, they know that none other can furnish them, nor commission, nor command them to go forth, but only him. They know there is no other Master, no other Father, no other Teacher, but Christ alone. Matt.23:9-10. They cannot think it enough that they have University learning, that they have the most Orthodox authors, {as they call them,} and sometimes most excellent divines, but most blasphemously to rob Christ of his honour; for there can be no Divine, but Christ; no Teacher, but Christ; no Doctor but Christ.

They know that they must have the inward teaching before they can open their mouths, the coal from the altar to touch their lips, or else they dare not speak. Isa.6:6. They know that the Spirit of their Father is an Almighty, Eternal, Free Spirit, like the wind which "bloweth where it listeth," John 3:8, man neither knowing from whence it comes, nor when; for sometimes the cloud is removed, when it pleases Him, and then they may, yea they must go forth, then they may journey; but when the day is cloudy and dark, and the Spirit of the Lord doth not speak, then they must be content to sit still, until the day, that the Lord himself takes up the cloud. Men can never remove it, no not one hour nor minute sooner, but when the Spirit listeth; but in the day of light, then they may go forward, nay then they shall go forth with power; then they shall not speak as the Scribes and Pharisees, but with authority, Matt.7:29, then they shall not regard the honour of men, nor glory in those things that the foolish and vain heart of man does, because they are sent forth by their presbytery, and they have gifts, &c., and they can speak and declare themselves, and that they stand up in a pulpit or high place above all their brethren, and that they are in high esteem and the like. All these things are banished in that soul when the Lord sends forth a messenger. Far be it from me to think that I have wisdom or learning, or knowledge more than the meanest saint amongst you. What am I? What is Paul? What is Apollo, but mere ministers, and your servants, and the servants of Christ, by whom you believed? For me to think

because I stand in this high place, therefore I am ever the better, or have the more honour, or be more esteemed, God forbid; for I am nothing if Christ speak not out by me, any, yea every experience of the truth as it is in Jesus. Therefore look only at him, for what came you out in the wilderness to see, a reed shaken with the wind? Matt.11:7. Oh look not at the weak instrument but behold the wisdom, the power, the majesty, the authority of the Almighty. Rather than I should hide him, let me be as I am, nothing, an empty and light shaken reed, and I confess a hill or a monument in a wilderness, or a stool were more fit for me, or for any man. Oh let no woman be heard in the church, but only the voice of Christ; there everyone speaks of and seeks his glory, even the glory of him that sent him, Jn.7:18, and that same is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him. Let him increase, but let man and all the womanly weakness in man decrease, and whatever is of man; whenever he would have glory or be anything, let him be confounded, and the pit shut her mouth upon him, Psal.69:15, for 'tis not only unseemly, but a shame for the woman to speak in the church.

SERMON II

“And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys; but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was upon the

tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys." Exod.40:36-38.

We have beloved according as God was pleased {in mercy} to be present with us, spoken concerning the meaning of these words; wherein we have manifested that the Holy Ghost holds out higher, and deeper, and more mysterious things than that which is conceived of by the mere history and letter, and we have showed and held forth the same exposition that the author to the Hebrews hath given of them, namely, that these things were but the patterns of heavenly things, Heb.9:23, and that this tabernacle built by Moses was but a shadow, a similitude, and type of the true Tabernacle which God did pitch, and not man; and from thence we have showed that the Tabernacle in the mystery is the riches of that glory, life, mercy and immortality which God makes out to the sons of men, and that Jesus Christ is that spiritual Moses, that spiritual High Priest, who hath once entered into this holy place, even once for all; and that the light in this tabernacle, which is as a fire by night, is that light and fire only that guides and directs the souls of Saints in all their journeying through the desolate wilderness of their own dark and blind hearts, and that this tabernacle is covered with the cloud, that the eyes of men, nay, nor of Saints cannot see or behold it until God himself withdraws and removes it. And that the souls of Saints are not to go on, but to abide in their tents until the Lord remove this cloud, as we may see expressly and fully

commanded in Deuteronomy 9, from the 16th verse to the end. And we have showed that in the day when he does not remove it, they are to sit still until the day and time he pleases to remove it; and even then, in the night, in the dark, when all other things are become darkness, then this fire, this light is a lantern to them in all their journeys or ways wherein they shall go, and whether they shall be led. For in this case, and under this dispensation they are not to walk or work, but their strength is to sit still. Isa.30:7. But I know that these things greatly offend some who are wise and strong in themselves; yet, saith the Lord, "now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever." Isa.30:8.

First, we have showed that the divine fire of this tabernacle is that only which guides and directs the souls of men in their way towards the spiritual and heavenly Canaan; we have showed thereupon the happiness of the soul that follows and keeps with the tabernacle, that always sees and beholds this fire of the altar, that knows the fire that cometh down from heaven, and burns up all things but itself, but that remains and abides forever. And this is the soul that is not a stranger unto the Lord, and the Lord is his Guide. Oh, happy is the soul that knows this, that waits upon it, is only led, counseled and conducted by it. We have likewise spoken of the misery of all men in offering strange fire upon the Lord's altar, Lev.10:1, and seeking for another star, but not the star of Jacob, but following of the tabernacle of Moloch, Amos 5:26, and the star of

their god Remphan, Acts 7:43, and thinking to go on in the light thereof; and showing the misery of those men who are kindling fires of their own, and compassing themselves with their own sparks, and thinking to go on and walk in the light thereof, Isa.50:11, yet this they shall have of the hand of the Lord, to lie down in woe and everlasting sorrow.

The next thing we shall observe is concerning the cloud that is over or upon the Tabernacle, wherein in the first place, this is apparent, that the Tabernacle contains all the mysteries of life and mercy, all the glory of life and eternal salvation; but this tabernacle hath a cloud upon it, that it cannot be seen until the cloud be taken away and removed, which all the power of man can never remove.

And secondly, that the remover and taker away of this cloud is God and not man; that God, I say, is he alone that draws and takes up the cloud from the tabernacle, and again lets it descend upon the tabernacle when it pleases him. 'Tis the Lord that draws away the veil, and man with all his wisdom, learning, industry, &c., cannot pull it off himself. It is the Lord alone that opens the eyes of the blind, and not the holiest man can do anything in this work of himself. It is the Lord that circumcises the heart; it is the Lord who baptizes the spirits of men with the true baptism; and all by one spirit, into one body, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, I Cor.12:13; and I have showed that one man cannot truly baptize another, as they undertake to do in an apeliike imitation of the thing; for it is the Lord's work only, he alone can remove the cloud from off the

tabernacle, and give the true baptism; otherwise it abides and must remain thereupon, and the soul is not washed, nor baptized.

Thirdly, take notice that no man naturally walks by a true guide, and he that {when the cloud is upon the tabernacle} offers to journey or move towards the heavenly Canaan, I say, when he offers or attempts anything in the way of God and Christ, he asked but blindly and presumptuously, and he cannot choose but stumble and fall; for, when the cloud is not taken off the tabernacle by the hand of the Lord himself, then he ought to sit in his tent, and abide in his habitation until the Lord remove the cloud, and then is the time of his travel, and day of his journey, and not before.

First then it is clear that by the tabernacle is meant the mysteries of the tabernacle; for, whether it be the pot of manna, the censers, or rod of Aaron, and the rest, all these be the mysteries of Christ, and all these have a cloud upon them, so that none can see them or discern them, or behold the glory that is in them until the cloud be taken away and removed.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep,” until God commanded the darkness to withdraw, and say, let there be light. Gen.1:1-2. So, until God makes a separation between light and darkness, otherwise there is a darkness on the whole depth, the depth of humanity or creaturely nature; there was and is darkness on it all, until the Lord said, let there be

light, and then and only then there is light. There is a darkness on all flesh until the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it and saith, "come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." Ezek.37:9. When the Spirit of the Lord that blows every way, and where it listeth, John 3:8, comes and blows on these dry bones, and they hear the word of the Lord, then they are moved, and sinews and nerves and flesh come upon them, and then they are joined together, and breath enters into them that they may live; so that darkness is upon the deep, and the cloud is over the tabernacle, and none can remove it, take it up, or disperse it, but the Lord alone. When the Lord takes away the cloud from the tabernacle then the tabernacle and the mysteries thereof appears; otherwise they are hidden, and no mortal eye, nor the sharpest understanding, nor the greatest scholar, nor by the use of all external ordinances, are they able to discern them.

Secondly, when this cloud is removed then is the time for the souls of saints to act and walk; when the cloud is upon the tabernacle, then they should sit still; and therefore saith James, we ought not {speaking of the saints} to determine this or that, we will go this way or that way, threatening a woe to them that say tomorrow we will go to such a city or place, and remain there a year, and there we shall buy and sell, and get gain, James 4:13, but we must from our souls say, only if the Lord will, when we once come under the tuition and tutorage of the Son of God, and come to be of the congregation of Israel,

then we go not when we list, or would, but we are to await and recognize the Lord's hand in removing the cloud from the tabernacle, and if he remove it not today, we are to stay until the next day, and whensoever he removes it, then is the day of our journey and going onwards. Therefore the Apostle tells us of a counselor and leader they had, and I know also the world tells us of a guide and rule; but it is a rule which they themselves know not, nor understand when it is crooked, and when it is straight, but the Apostle tells us of another Ruler and Teacher, as many as are Christ's are led by the Spirit of Christ. Rom.8:14. And in the Acts it is said that the apostles would have gone into Bithynia, "after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not," Acts 16:7, for they found trouble and opposition, there was the Lord leading them and guiding them, otherwise they did not set a foot forward, their eye was constantly upon the Lord, so until the cloud be removed from over the tabernacle, the soul will find nothing but trouble and destruction if it go onward, and the Lord hath not discovered the light of the tabernacle and himself going before it.

Then in the first place this discovers unto us, that there are usually two things in the way of Christ which often times in the world are mistaken, and taken for another; therefore I say, that the heavenly things themselves, and there are the patterns of them; now the pattern is not set forth for itself, but in reference and in relation unto the thing of which it is a pattern, and a copy or exemplar, it is not for

itself, but in relation to what we should act, imitate or do by it, so there are the heavenly things themselves, and the patterns or types, or similitudes of them. Take special notice of these two things. Now we shall find it apparent if we consider it, that the world hath always been quick-eyed to see the one, but not at all to discern the other. The world and especially the great professors of religion have been quick-sighted to discern the form, pattern and similitude of heavenly things, and there have been satisfied. But I say, to find, feel and enjoy, and to live in the heavenly things themselves, this is that mystery, Col.1:26, that hath been hid from ages and generations; your time, that is, the time of the flesh, is always, John 7:6, but my time, that is the time of Christ is not always {as to man} though always {as to God} I say, the world in all ages could never be found, to be without living upon and in the patterns, forms and shapes of heavenly things, according as they fancied, but to find the sons of men living in, under, and by the power of heavenly things themselves, that is the mystery that hath, I say, been hidden from ages and generations, as Paul saith. We all find the Jews in the time of Moses, they all lived under the Law in that for us, they also saw the outward form of the tabernacle, &c., had a reverential esteem for that and there they rested. And so how many are there now who rest on the outward form of washing and dipping, &c., and these I take to be Familists that the world so much hates and talks of, for they are all of this family and society, and herein lies so {far as I can see} their

church membership which they so much idolize. And for all this, how few are there of them that are of the inward assembly of the saints, that are come to the general assembly of the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven; they are come and brought, but only to the mount that may not be touched and that burns with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness and tempest. Heb.12:18-22. How many of them, I say, are there that are brought to forms, fellowships and washings, which are as they are used, produce nothing but blackness, darkness, fire and tempest, {not into the unity of that one spirit,} but only to be baptized with Moses in the cloud and in the sea, I Cor.10:1-6, for with many of them, saith the Apostle, God was not well pleased, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, and the text saith, that they entered not into his rest, Psal.95:11, but were overthrown in the wilderness because of unbelief. Heb.3:17-19. Now we shall find no age in the world where the people have wanted their forms and things in one kind or another, but you shall hardly find any age wherein people have lived under and upon the heavenly things themselves. How many patterns and similitudes have the papists in their church? The Pope himself in imitation of Christ can wash the feet of twelve pilgrims once in the year, and fares no better with those that call themselves members of other churches, to be only apostles in imitation. Some have one pattern, some another; one thinks he hath the true baptism because he hath the similitude, and pattern of spiritual baptism, which was then by some

used by way of dipping in water. Another hath the pattern and similitude of eating Christ's body, and drinking his blood in their breaking of bread, which was but the type of the heavenly bread that was the body of Christ. But Christ saith, except a man eat his flesh and drink his blood he hath no life in him. John 6:53. How many churches partake of the patterns and shadows, and whatever they say, they conclude from thence that they are the true Church of God; because say they, we have the right use of the sacraments, which is a sign of a true Church, because they have the patterns, types and shadows; observing only outward rules, forms, and carnal ordinances, which all perish with the using; "wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances." Col.2:20. Yet impudently, and blasphemously will they dare to say they are not the Church of men, but of God; when they know not the mystery, nor live according to the power of the heavenly things themselves; and therefore herein that Scripture comes to be fulfilled, that men shall have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, II Tim.3:5, for the one may be where the other is not; and the Apostle tells us, "for he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Rom.2:28-29. So from hence it is clear, many churches, and many hundred thousands of souls may have an

exact pattern, and yet want the heavenly things themselves; they may have the pattern, as the Jews had and were sanctified and washed only with the blood of bulls and goats; but to have the heavenly things themselves; namely, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of life and glory, and to have the purifications and sanctifications that are only by his blood, this they are strangers to. This is the spiritual and living fire; and wherever it is in the soul of man, it cannot but break forth to the destroying of all things of a man and flesh, and magnifying and exalting all things of Christ by the Spirit of God.

So that hence it is clear that it would be the wisdom of the sons of men to see whether they have the heavenly things themselves, and not just the patterns. For saith the Apostle, "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things," I Cor.13:10-11, and henceforth, saith he, "know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." II Cor.5:16. Alas, the Apostle had {as well as other men} known Christ by way of the flesh, and in outward conformity and observations, and in a low carnal apprehension of him, but when Christ was come unto him in the Spirit, then all things were become new. II Cor.5:17. Then he would not have a Christian to be judged in respect of a holy day, new moons, or of keeping Sabbath days and the like, which are but shadows of things to come, for the

body is Christ. Col.2:16-17. But there was a time when they were under the type of breaking of bread, which was only to show the Lord's death till he came, I Cor.11:29, but when Christ was come, then he rebukes the Corinthians for using the ceremony of the breaking of bread, and said, that they did not discern the Lord's body. For the eating his body, and drinking his blood, was a thing of a far higher nature.

And from hence will follow the great misery of the sons of men seeking rest and life in the patterns and types, and not in heavenly things themselves, for if a man have the exact patterns or pictures {of any meat} that ever could be drawn in the world, or of wine and drink, would either of these feed or refresh him when he was hungry, or satisfy him when he was thirsty? You will say they could not, and how then can the patterns of heavenly things feed any more than they? So also it is the true manna that feeds the soul, it is not that manna that fell in the wilderness, "your fathers did eat of it, and are dead," saith our Saviour. No it is the spiritual manna, "whereof if a man eat, he shall live forever." John 6:49-50. Then it must needs be a deceit of the devil, and a wonderful and sad delusion on the spirits of men, and yet notwithstanding this is that great delusion, wherewith Satan is gone forth to feed men, as the prodigal was, with the husks and shell of divine things. He desired the husks and no man gave unto him, but when the poor man had wasted that portion he had from his father, when that divine portion was gone, and he had wasted it among whores and harlots, that is, after his own inventions,

thinking they should nourish him, he saith, that he could eat husks, but he found that they would not satisfy. I, he should starve for hunger, yet many thousands think, and accordingly do, could I go into such a church fellowship, and walk as they walk, I should be as well as they, and yet for all that, there is no man can give unto them, &c., had he them to the utmost, alas they would not satisfy and fill him. But he cannot have that others have, he would have their holiness, and be able to pray, hear and speak, and have as much freedom and power against sin and the like, but it is not given unto him; but if he have all these external things, yet alas, they are but husks and cannot satisfy; so that there is a plain and absolute necessity which falls upon him, and he sees that there is no way but to go home to his Father, else he starves and dies, and now he sees his own weakness and poverty, and then he begins to come to himself, and saith, "I will return to my Father." Lk.15:18. So when the soul is brought into this desperate and helpless condition, then it sees that it is not he that hath brought things into any good frame by his own good husbandry, or by a providential care, for now nothing will service his turn, "no, I must go to my Father," he exclaims, and "I will go to my Father." This shows the misery of the spirits of those men that would feign feed upon husks; and from hence it comes to pass that they run here, and run there, from one to another, even as a poor creature when it is thirsty and dry, and sees many wells or vessels, thinking there is water. He runs to one to see if there be any, and then to

another, but they are all empty. So alas, a poor hungry soul, here it picks, and there it feeds, and as long as it can find a crumb, it will never go to God, for it had rather go to any trickster or charlatan, than come to Jesus Christ the true Physician. One day it will be of this church, another day of another membership, to see if these things will feed them. But they whom God intends to bring home find no satisfaction herein, but are ready to starve, and the true reason is, because they live by the patterns, pictures and resemblances of food.

Objection: I know that thou wilt object, although we are to live by the heavenly things themselves, yet we are to make use of patterns.

Answer: I confess that carnal reason will say so, though to me it is not so; or else those Scriptures must be a lie, for, saith he, "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away," I Cor.13:10, and when the apostle saith, "stand fast in that liberty wherein Christ have made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage," Gal.5:1, and bids them that they should not turn again to the beggarly rudiments of the world; and again saith, the shadows and patterns of heavenly things consisted in washings and rudiments, which was never able to make the doers thereof, and comers thereunto perfect. Heb.9:9. Admit, I say, that breaking of bread, as it is in the external use of it, and admit that using of water baptism were used by Christ, which is hard to prove, they were never, or could be anything else but the pattern of the heavenly things and of the

spiritual baptism, or else that text also tells us a lie, that saith, that there was never any but one baptism which is that of the Spirit.

Now the letter tells us of divers, as the baptism of the children of Israel in the Red Sea, and of the baptism of John, and the baptism whereby an unbeliever was baptized, and yet the text saith, that there is but one baptism, Eph.4:5, for these are but the shadows of the spiritual baptism, and when that which is perfect is come, then that which is imperfect is done away. I Cor.13:10. If thou didst really find thus, thou wouldest not then need to make so much of outward washing and breaking of bread; for, to the purer all things are pure, but to the unclean all things are unclean, and to the impure all things are impure, and even their very hearts and consciences are defiled. Tit.1:15.

And from hence this shows that thy soul needs be wavering and unstable, like the waves of the sea, and still casting up mire and dirt, while thou seekest any refreshment in the patterns themselves, whatsoever pattern thou canst imitate, or build upon that which is made by hands, and be sure that God dwells not in them; for saith the Apostle, he dwells not in temples made with hands, neither is he worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he gives breath and life, and being, and motion unto all. Acts 17:25. Whatever tabernacle or temple that man builds, they are but like man, they are fading and perishing, and there shall not one stone of them be left upon another, but when the soul comes to the true assembly of the

saints, to the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb.12:23, to the spiritual manna, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the true Tabernacle Jesus Christ, and eats that manna that doth not perish, but is meat indeed, and life indeed, then it is filled and satisfied, and never before.

So that while the soul is seeking after a life, and to get food in the pattern and shadow and form of heavenly things, it is sure and certain to find nothing but emptiness, bitterness and vanity; he shall be like the hungry man that Isaiah speaks of, who dreams and thinks that he eats, but when he awakes he finds nothing. Isa.29:8. So the carnal men who are praying and reading, and keeping themselves strict to outward rules, and when they have done, they think they find comfort and refreshment by them, and they break bread, and they are speaking one to another, and think they have consolation by it; but alas, this food will all fail; thou thinkest thou hast eaten Christ, when thou hast used these, but when the wrath of God falls upon thy soul, and thou art summoned to judgment, thou wilt find there was no meat to feed thee in these things that thou dost call ordinances, nor is there any water in these vessels to quench any parched soul, for though God of his good pleasure gave patterns of heavenly things, yet they were not those heavenly things themselves, but are only the type and shadow of that divine and heavenly Tabernacle, which God did pitch, and not man. Heb.8:2. And hence it apparently appears, that the power, life, and the meat and drink of a child of God, is only and

exclusively Jesus Christ, for he never eats and drinks, nor moves, out of God in Christ; for he eats and drinks, and does everything in the Lord, and thus he is come to that which is perfect, to the fountain of all fullness, to the mount that cannot be shaken, Heb.12:27-28, now he is gone over and passed by all the similitudes and shadows and patterns, and is come to that living fountain of the water of life itself, of which whoever drinks shall live forever, and it shall be in him a well of water springing up to eternal life. John 4:14.

Then this further discovers to us that the Tabernacle of God is a hidden thing, that the mysteries of God in Christ are covered so that the saints themselves cannot see them, except they be given unto them from above; then much more the natural man perceives not the things of God which are spiritually discerned, in which none of the men nor princes of this world knew, for had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of life, and when the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased the Lord by the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe. I Cor.2:8-14. So that I say, it is even now too true, according as we have a proverb and received as a maxim, but from whence it arose I am not certain, that the place of paradise doth not now appear in the earth, for no man knows where it is; but sure am I that paradise and place of pleasure which is the enjoyment of Jesus Christ, is vanished and disappeared, is gone away, and almost quite removed from the beholdings of all the sons of men. Adam was turned out, and you never hear

where it is, nor of any that can describe the way to come to it; and even so is the true knowledge of Jesus Christ in the mystery, so that the light of God and the spiritual manna is a thing that is utterly hidden and removed from all the wisdom and endeavors of any of the sons of men, and unless the Lord himself come forth and reveal it, and make it manifest, the wisest of men in the worlds esteem may do as those wicked men in Sodom, {when the angel was sent to bring out Lot,} being stricken blind, Gen.19:11, they labored to find the door, but could not; so he that is in the dark knows not whither he goes, for this is clear and true to this very day, that the true tabernacle of the Lord is still covered with a cloud, so that no man can see it until God discover it to him.

Now, notwithstanding this being so, yet what are the ways of men? What do they undertake to do? Do not all men that come out under the name of being the ministers of Christ undertake the opening and revealing the tabernacle of God? Yes, but what is that light by which they can show it unto us? Is it any other but what man hath within himself, and what he hath attained by his wits and industry, by the university, and searching several authors? Yet notwithstanding they will discover this tabernacle, and undertake to take off the cloud that covers it, and they will show how the pattern leads to it, and yet if they be put to it, they themselves must deny they ever saw it truly and really, as to what it actually was or is, but they will be guessing and imagining the way that leads to it. Now for a man to

direct another in the way that never themselves understood, may very easily make good what Christ saith, "if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch." And there be other men that are so grossly ignorant, as to tell us that if they go but to a Academy a few years and gather a little philosophy, and although it be that of the worst sort, being instructed by those that hold to the fallibility of the word and the universal goodness of all men by nature, now even these come out as they think furnished, and by this they will undertake to discover to us the heavenly Canaan and the tabernacle of God.

Generally most men whatever they be, though they differ in judgment, yet say, that they are either Papists or Socinians, &c., and they have the boldness to hold forth these things, though they be never so blind and dark in the things of Christ. And I find very few, but generally all take up this for truth, that human learning is the way to discover this by. Now I beseech you to see whether this be any less than the hellish pride of Satan to make man go out in the pride of their hearts, and say, that they have heard the word of the Lord, and they have seen a vision, when the Lord hath not spoken by them, and they have not seen anything. Jer.29:23. Again, if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit, for he that comes out and saith that he can discover the tabernacle, or any can remove the cloud from the tabernacle, but the Lord himself, he is a blasphemer and a liar. "They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, the LORD saith, and the LORD

hath not sent them, and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word. Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, the LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken? Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord GOD." Ezek.13:6-8.

But I know that they will object and say, indeed if we consider men naturally in their sinful condition, they are ignorant in the things of God, and are even as the heathens; but we have the Scriptures given to us, and they contain the mind of God; and having this help, we by our wits and learning, and industry are able to know the mind of God; for we know and understand the Hebrew and Greek languages. Truly, if it were so, that they did so, it were well; but that very word to which they appeal, in the very letter of it witnesses against them; for the word witnesses that it is a sealed book, whether delivered to the learned, or unlearned, Isa.29:11-12, and none is found worthy to open it but the Lamb, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Rev.5:3, and that none can so much as say, Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, I Cor.12:3; and again, that the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life, II Cor.3:6, and to you it must be given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, or you cannot know them, Lk.8:10, and when Christ spake with a lively and audible voice, and spake and preached so as never man did, yet said he very often, "he that hath ears to hear let him hear," Matt.11:15; Mk.4:9; Lk.8:8;

and so it is said of the disciples, that Christ opened their understandings when he was risen again, Lk.24:45, although he himself had taught them the same things before his death; yet it is said, "then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures," Lk.24:45, that it behooved him {according as it was written in the Prophets and Psalms} to suffer and rise again the third day. So that hence it is clear, that there is not any wisdom, learning, or knowledge in the world that can open this sealed book; for though it be the declaration of the mind of God through those Saints and Apostles by whom it was written; yet never can any man read the mind of God in it, but by the same Spirit that taught it, and unless the same Spirit that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead do quicken us. Although the most learned men in the world open it, it will not raise up our mortal bodies, nor be any savor unto life. Now from hence, let but the world judge, who are the blasphemers, and what is blasphemy, if this be not? We say that none can truly teach the spirits of men, but God himself, and that none can come to the Father but by the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. Matt.11:27. They say, the way to understand the Scriptures is to get learning and the tongues, and to reform their lives, to get into this or that fellowship. I say, this sharply reproves them that say they can open it with the wooden and fleshly key of carnal wisdom and human learning; for we have showed how there is a cloud upon the Tabernacle to this day, that none can remove it but God Himself, not only in regard of

men, but of Saints; for although a saint be brought to see into the tabernacle and to behold the glory of the Lord, yet when it pleases the Lord, a cloud shall interpose itself, that this tabernacle shall be hidden and covered again, and again, nay it shall be in hiding and opening continually unto the soul, for the glory of the tabernacle would not be made out, were there not a cloud to make it out to by; the strength of the Lord would not be made out, were there not weakness to make it out by; the light of the Lord would not be made out, were there not darkness to make it out by; and therefore there is a cloud on the tabernacle, and it is the Lord alone that removes it, that they may go on in all their journeys, and when he does it not, they must sit still; and he does it for this very end, that the glory of God may be more made out, and that the soul of man might more fully, more gloriously, and more welcomely enjoy those discoveries.

Light cannot be made out in the light, and wisdom in wisdom, but light can be made out in darkness, and wisdom in folly, and strength in weakness, and fullness in emptiness, and riches by poverty, and grace by sin, all-sufficiency by insufficiency and nothingness; and even things that are high in things that are low; one depth calls unto another depth, and the deepness of that glory and fullness that resides in our Lord Jesus Christ calls upon that deepness and emptiness, and nothingness that is in and upon the poor creature; and this is that cloud that is still covering and removing from over the tabernacle, that the glory of the Lord may be

made out in and by that cloud, and that we may know and behold that glory that was hidden from us, and that we may know how precious it is, by the cloud that withholds and covers it from our view.

And again that we may know that light is not in man's hand, as Peter said, "Master, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles, &c.," Lk.9:33, so I say, it is that man may not build a tabernacle of his own, lest he should say, that he was master thereof, and would think to carry the light where he pleased; but with a believer it is otherwise ordered, that he might walk in darkness, and stay himself upon his God, Isa.50:10, so that the condition of a true believer is not like the men of the world with their light, for they are the orderers and masters of it themselves. But it may indeed be said of your ordinary formal Christians, that they have a light which never goes out in regard to their forms of church government, manufactured prayers, formal readings, &c., so that their candle is always burning, and that they are masters of their own light; and if it blows out, they can light it again and recover it by their own pains and industry, but it is not so with those that truly fear the Lord, for when the light appears, then and only then will they walk and journey, but when their light appears not, then they must stand still, for they dare not go nor stir until the glory of the Lord appears, and leads them forth, so that the Lord himself goes before them.

Further, if this cloud be removed only by the hand of the Lord, then I say, first that it shows plainly the vanity, pride, folly and uselessness of

men's laboring to remove it, in their taking upon them that which belongs to God; and first, I say it discovers that horrible pride, robbery, blasphemy, arrogancy and infidelity that is in the heart of man to think that he will do that which none can do but the hand of the Lord; and 'tis infidelity to think God will not do that which he hath promised to do to the ends of the earth; and robbery in it that it takes away God's honor, wisdom and power, and this is man's arrogancy in assuming them to himself.

There is the magistrate who will take upon himself to remove the cloud, for he saith, he is the great man to propagate the Gospel, {which is only and properly the propagation of the Son of God,} and he must plant the ministers of the Gospel. And it may be that perhaps there are some that would have them go with the sword and blood to plant this in other nations; surely, the fruits must needs be good that springs from such a root! The gospel you see is a tabernacle that God plants and pitches, and not man; but ever and anon they will be taking upon themselves to do this, and then it must be their care to know and distinguish of blasphemy, errors and heresies; and this they do merely out of that principle of error and blasphemy that is in their own hearts, for this shows their infidelity, that God is not able to carry on his own work. And do we say we are Christians, and believe in him, when we have so done, tell him a lie to his face, for he saith, that the government shall be upon Christ's shoulders, Isa.9:6, but saith the magistrate, he hath the government upon his shoulders, and yet when we

have made great profession in words, we trample him under the feet of men, for if he cannot do his own work without the power of man, then he stands in need of man, and then it must be weaker than man. Matt.5:13.

Then comes another and saith that the churches, they must do this, and they must send out, and they must remove the cloud off from the tabernacle, and that darkness that is in several corners of the land, for the harvest is great, but the laborers are few. And our Saviour's counsel is, when he tells us, that that harvest was white, even to reaping, John 4:35, saith he, "pray to the Father that he would send faithful laborers." He doth not bid you to go to the men of power, of patrons or magistrates. And truly, then it were needful to pray to the Lord of the harvest when men can send them forth; now is not this pride, infidelity and arrogancy for any of the sons of men to take upon themselves to accomplish it?

But you will say, if that men should not do it, men would become Heathens, Mahometans or Atheists, and of no religion whatsoever. Thinkest thou so? Is religion planted by men? I thought it had been such a thing as the text saith, "every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Matt.15:13. May man then root up and plant at his pleasure? For the truth is, that man's ministry and ministers may send out men and plant churches, that is, they may make proselytes, and they may make them worse, but can never make them better, as the Pharisees, taking great pains

that way, to furnish men, as to imitations, notions, actions and external performances; but to fashion the heart of a poor sinner to that of an inward Jew, whose circumcision is of the heart, and not of the letter, this is that plant that alone is of the Heavenly Father's planting, and shall abide; but what plant either the magistrate or churches, either by exclusion or inclusion have planted, shall be rooted up. But what the Lord plants, that tabernacle which he pitches amongst poor creatures, the sons of men that are neither called by the magistrate or churches, that is the church that shall abide, being founded on the Rock of Ages, and shall stand forever.

Nay further, they will themselves remove the cloud off the tabernacle {which God must do and not man} and to do this they will lay heavy burdens upon other men's shoulders, &c., Matt.23:4, and towards this end they will bring forth a doctrine to put men upon it, teaching that men have free will, and may believe if they will, and repent unto life; that so man may be persuaded that he is not fallen so low as some say, that he need but wipe or throw off a little of the dust of his own eyes which he had received by his fall, and then, he may see presently, and using but his utmost industry, he may work out his own salvation. Alas, this is but a delusion of Satan to make a poor blind man rub his own eyes, who is afterwards a great deal worse off. No, this is not the way; 'tis the Lord which removes the cloud and not man; therefore until the Lord causes the soul simply to go out by believing, there is still a

cloud upon the tabernacle, and upon all those mysteries that concern Jesus Christ, and they cannot see the truth as it is in Jesus. Eph.4:21.

Alas, these souls look not at God, but man; the truth is, all men in their religion talk of God, but their hearts are far from him. This people {saith the Lord} "draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men." Isa.29:13. Yet more, though all men's religion talk of God, yet you that have eyes to see, may plainly that their hearts are on man and the creature; they talk of God, of Christ, of grace, of gaining knowledge, of acting by grace; and yet do not but follow the point home in practice and application, and ye shall find these are all laid upon man, and in effect they say, that man must remove the covering off the tabernacle, and he must by his study and pains bring down light, and life, and the like. So I say, though they say it with their mouths, their hearts are far from God; so that when once man really sees that there is a cloud upon the tabernacle, then he looks not to the right hand, nor to the left, thinking that man should remove it, but alone to the hills from whence his help and salvation comes, Psal.121:1, for when a man thinks his own zeal, performance, duties, belief, repentance and the like be the way to remove the cloud, thinking surely I shall remove it presently, I will go pray, and hear, and watch over myself, and keep close to those rules which I have chosen, and then I shall have light and peace, and joy and so remove the

cloud presently; and so he is bragging and boasting thereof in himself, and throwing dirt and mire upon all others that are short of him as he conceives, and so poor man is feeding upon the dead ashes of his own heart, and knows not that there is a lie in his right hand, Isa.44:20, his very light is darkness, and his goodness sin, and his riches beggary, and his life death, and that which he holds in his right hand is a lie. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Matt.6:23. Are thy repentings, believings, actings and workings, {if these be} as thou thinkest, the means to remove the cloud off the tabernacle? Is not this to trust in man, and the power of man, Jer.17:5, and to distrust the living God? "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Jer.2:13. But is not this rather to repent, to believe, and trust in the living God, to say, Lord I am really blind, open thou my eyes, thou Son of David have mercy upon me. Lk.18:39. Why, now this soul seeing this, it cries too, and waits upon none but the Lord, and then indeed is the heart fixed, Psal.57:7, upon him {as it should be} from whence cometh all our salvation and deliverance, and whoever waited upon him that is faithful and strong, and that only can deliver, who was not in due time delivered?

And from hence it appears that when the soul walks in the light, he knows full well that it will be in vain for him to think to remove the cloud until the Lord himself remove it. It may be the time hast been

when thou felt the heat of the Divine displeasure, and thy ear was then bored, and thy uncircumcised heart circumcised; and then light appeared, and thou didst bless the name of the Lord in that day. But now there begins to come darkness over thy eyes again, and thou art beginning to see thyself lost again, and the cloud is upon the tabernacle, and thou art gotten into the pathless way, Jer.2:6, and alas thou art saying to thyself and have concluded, though I am out of my way, I will be up and be doing, I will come to it again, and I will recover it; and so the poor man begins to wrestle and struggle it out, now at this thing and then it that thing; so that the poor saint now having lost the light he once had, runs through mire and dirt, thinking to come to the light by his prayers and holiness, and so recover himself. Then the poor soul thinks that he is running to Canaan when indeed he is going back to Egypt, and therefore it is clear to me both by the Scriptures and by the experience of the most precious saints which I have ever met with, that in this condition it's best to sit still. For "he that believeth shall not make haste," Isa.28:16, but waits until the Lord will remove the cloud; but if thou wilt turn from the Lord, and go buy another guide and captain, and not by that Moses which God hath sent, and art going to make a golden calf, and an idol to go before thee; if so, thou may indeed expect that thy carcass shall fall in the wilderness for thy unbelief, Numb.14:29, and not waiting the good pleasure of the Lord, for not one entered the promised land, but Caleb and Joshua. Know that this is the condition and

disposition of a saint, that he only rejoices in the Lord, and that all his expectations are from him who hath made light and darkness. "I have learned," saith the apostle, "in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," Phil.4:11, so that the happiness of a saint is when he can glory in infirmities, {as Paul saith,} and rejoice in darkness and misery, II Cor.12:9-10, for he sees that this is his portion, and he cannot remove the cloud, and thus he is willing to sit still there till the day dawn and the day star arise in his heart. II Pet.1:19. Happy is the soul that can sit in darkness, and when he hath no light, can stay himself upon the Lord his God. "Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God." Isa.50:10. Happy I say, is that soul {though there be a cloud upon the tabernacle} that can sit still, and wait the Lord's good pleasure, and cry unto the Lord until he please to lead him onward toward Canaan. "And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night; he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." Exod.13:21-22.

Know this further from hence, that in the time of a saints greatest light, there is often still a cloud upon the Lord's tabernacle at the greatest height of light, liberty and enjoyment to his own feeling and apprehension, even then there is some darkness

upon the tabernacle, especially immediately after such great light and glory. When Paul was wrapped up into the third heaven, II Cor.12:7, there was a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure; there was again a cloud fallen over the tabernacle when he was in the height of his joys, a prick was sent from above, in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him; and therefore he concludes in another place, that we walk by faith and not by sight. II Cor.5:7. 'Tis so with every believer in the day of his light, and the time of his greatest shinings, usually and then especially there is a cloud upon the tabernacle, and why? To let man know thus much, that he must not live upon the gift but on the Giver, that man must not gather today, forever, but he is to gather tomorrow, and every day, as the children of Israel in gathering manna, for if thou layest up store, it will be dead the next time thou comest to feed on it, it will all stink, and it will not nourish thee, but wait still on the Giver, and then his mercy will be sweet, fresh, flourishing and green.

Lastly, from this, that the fire shined on the tabernacle by night, we shall only note, that when the light of the tabernacle shines upon the souls of men, all things else become dark; 'tis night in that soul to all things but the light of the tabernacle. In the night there was a fire, and in the day a cloud. Now, I say, when the fire shined all things were dark round about it; and herein observe these two things; first, when man's spirit is shut up, not being able to discern or see the light, then is the time for the appearing of this light. And secondly, this light never

appears, but when all things are dark in man, for light discovers darkness; and if anything else be light to thee, and all things else be not darkness, thou hast never yet discovered this true light. To this soul there is nothing in the whole creation that seems to be glorious and excellent, but when the Sun of righteousness shines upon him, for then it appears to be all darkness. When the light of the tabernacle shines in the souls of men, then riches, honor, pleasure, preferments, all things below Christ are darkness; then the light of his reason, wit, morality and holy qualities that seemed to be a great light and shined before gloriously, being compared one with another, or with things inferior; now, when the light of the tabernacle appears, then all these things appear to be nothing but darkness, emptiness and blindness, and are all as mere vapors before the Sun of Righteousness, as the prophet saith, therefore thy "goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away," Hos.6:4, so that I say, whensoever the fire in the tabernacle shines on man, then this will be the sure effect in that soul, that he shall look upon all things in himself as nothing but darkness; and man will then no longer call light darkness, nor darkness light, but he will say, woe is me, verily I thought that my righteousness, my holiness, my performances and duties, and my worshiping of God, I thought these to be bright things; but now the Lord hath appeared upon me, and I see that all my goodness is as the morning dew, and as the cloud that passes away; and that Christ alone is my help, my deliverer, my

holiness, my sanctification, and my redemption; he alone is my song and my salvation, and of him alone will I make my boast.

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