

An
EXPOSITION
of
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE,
As Taught In The
Protestant Church
of the
UNITED BRETHREN,
OR,
UNITAS FRATRUM.
Originally Written In German,
BY AUGUST GOTTLIEB SPANGENBERG,
With a Preface
BY BENJAMIN LA TROBE,
And An Introduction
BY LANE A. SAPP

FOURTH ENGLISH EDITION

WITH FOREWARD

BY BISHOPS J. KENNETH PFOHL AND EDMUND SCHWARZE

ALSO

A Short Biography of Bishop Spangenberg

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Introduction to the 2005 Edition

When I was a child, I remember seeing an engraving of an elderly gentleman who appeared to me to have had a twinkle in his eye and a peaceful sweetness in his smile. That picture, I discovered was found in lots of places, in churches, in pastor's offices, in books on Moravian history and in provincial offices. It was later in life that I learned that the mysterious gentleman whose picture seemed to appear everywhere in the province, was none other than Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg, one of the great leaders of the Renewed Moravian Church.

My grandfather first introduced me to this "man of the picture" when I received from him a copy of Spangenberg's book of theology entitled: Idea Fidei Fratrum: An Exposition of Christian Doctrine. Later in life, after perusing the book and attending Moravian Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, PA, I became so intrigued with Spangenberg's life and work in the colonial communities of Bethlehem and Bethabara that I pursued an independent study in the theology of Spangenberg using as my text the Idea Fidei Fratrum.

Through that time of exploration, I must admit that I feel in love with Spangenberg's work. For me, Idea Fidei Fratrum, though antiquated in language and expression, contained the heart of the Christian message I had uniquely come to know and understand through the Moravian Church, which is the message of God's love, uniquely known in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The timeless message of the Christian gospel- Christ and Him Crucified – is clearly communicated in the pages of his theology, and I commend it to lay persons, theological students, clergy and educators - to anyone searching for gems of belief that have characterized and formed the Moravian understanding of faith.

Since this treasured volume has gone out of print, and seeing that its 1959 printing was a photostatic copy of the original English printing and difficult for modern readers, I began to transcribe the work over two and half years ago on my laptop computer hoping that the volume might one day be republished for 21st Century Moravians. Hearing about this project, a member of the Calvary congregation, Rick Cochran, inquired as to whether he might offer assistance with the work. Thrilled by the inquiry, I turned the project over to Brother Cochran who has transcribed approximately 358 pages into a modern typeface, which will make this volume more easily accessible to modern readers. We are all in Rick's debt for the countless hours he has spent at the keyboard preparing this new edition. I thank him, his wife Terry and a good Methodist friend of ours, the Rev. Edwin Needham, for his assistance in proofreading the final transcribed text from the original. Without the energy and vision they have given to this project it would never have come to fruition.

Finally, in a day and age when we must continually be well informed about our faith and practice, I heartily recommend Spangenberg's theology for any who seek to understand the heart of the Moravian faith experience. As always, may our Lord and Savior be glorified through the use of this volume and it is to the praise of His Name that this new edition is presented for use by Moravians and the wider Christian Church.

Lane A. Sapp,
Episcopus Fratrum

FOREWARD

Third English Edition

“Idea Fidei Fratrum” – Under such title as this, the republishing of an eighteenth century book in the spiritual interest and edification of a generation of twentieth century Christians, living under vastly changed conditions, would of itself appear to presage naught but failure for such an enterprise. However, knowing something of the singularly high character of the volume, its scriptural content and the wide and profound influence which it exerted in years past, we who have been called to write a Foreword for its renewed publication, esteem it a highly privileged service. We endorse and commend the effort without reservation and wish for it God-speed.

We know of no other portion of our Heritage of the Past, in the field of Moravian literature, which if used aright, could so deepen and strengthen our world-wide Unity or offer surer promise of a rich Harvest of the Future, as this book, long since lost sight of and left lying in comparative obscurity.

Neither do we have knowledge of any other volume whose republication is more worthy of a place in the literature of the Quincentennial Period.

Written by Bishop Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg, at the urgent request of the Brethren, and in a period of great urgency and need, this unique book had its first publication, in the German language, in 1778, and is said to have “found ready favor amongst laity and clergy beyond as well as within the bounds of the Unity.” There was attendant upon its use, from the beginning, a spiritual power that gave promise of better things.

In 1779 already “The Idea” appeared in a second edition, this time in English, as translated and prefaced by Bishop Benjamin LaTrobe, a foremost scholar and leader of our Brethren’s Church in England. That this edition was received with even wider favour is witnessed to by the fact that, within the brief space of five years, in 1784 a second publishing and distribution of the LaTrobe edition had taken place. “The Idea” had become a best seller.

It was of this period that Hamilton's "History of the Moravian Church" made the following note: "Meeting with a rapid sale, the work won friends for the Brethren in many lands, and effectually removed from them any previously existing suspicion of heterodox faith. And in the course of time it was translated into Danish, French, Swedish, Dutch, Bohemian and Polish."

Quite evidently, the sphere of service for "The Idea" was opening and widening, the book was in great demand; but more meaningful still, its concept and the way of life to which its doctrines pointed, were finding increased approval and its high and noble purpose was beginning to bear fruit. It was having a direct and vital effect on the religious life of the period which was in sore need of it; for it had been characterized as "a period of dead orthodoxy within the Protestant division of the Church and by a strong wave of aggressive rationalism without it. The two together had paralyzed Christian growth in grace and outreach in the spread of the Gospel."

But, with the strong impact of this singular book, under the guidance and enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, which appeared to accompany it wherever it went, renewed faith and hope and love, not only gave promise of a new day, but patiently and perseveringly ushered it in, making itself felt in all phases of the religious life of the time.

We note some of the recordings in Church History of the accomplishments of this truly remarkable book:

First, Bishop Spangenberg's personal witness, he who had labored so diligently and devoutly in its preparation. His testimony cites its influence within the inner circle of the Unity. "I know assuredly," he writes, "that the 'Idea' is agreeable to the mind of my Brethren, for we have often bound ourselves solemnly to each other, to adhere with all our hearts, to the doctrine of Christ and His apostles as we find in the Bible."

The Danish Minister of Religion, writing as one who represented Protestantism, exclusive of our Unity, bore this witness—"Its contents correspond with my conceptions. I have shown it to various pastors and all have expressed their satisfaction with it."

Still another, and he, "a famous philosopher at one of the leading European universities, after complaining about modern theology, said—"I

even now prefer to read Spangenberg's Idea. Of a certainty our posterity must get back their theology from the Moravian Brethren'."

And we close our summary of remarkable testimonies of the record of "The Idea" with these climactic observations of the biblical and well-versed students of Church history, who have declared:

"Nothing so fully established the evangelical faith of the Moravians as the work of Spangenberg."

"It restored the faith of many on whom the blight of a proud reason had fallen and delivered Protestant Christianity of the early nineteenth century from the delusions of rationalism."

"It saved Western Europe from infidelity."

How such a work as "The Idea," so influential and widely blessed of God, could have been lost to long generations of the Moravian Church, especially her administrators and religious leaders, so that few volumes can now be found, and those that still exist are to be looked for only in the unused sections of the libraries or more likely among the obsolete volumes of the archives, is not for those who write this Foreword to explain, for we ourselves might also be found among those guilty of oversight and neglect.

It is our privilege to rejoice and be encouraged that, through the foresight and generosity of a small group of our loyal and devoted laity, this same "Idea Fidei Fratrum" is to be given back to us, by the republishing in electro-plated type the La Trobe edition of 1779.

Though this now archaic type, particularly its antiquated symbol for "s", may for a time be somewhat confusing to its reader, it is the hope of the sponsors that this slight inconvenience may be more than compensated by the fact that they have a volume in their library in the original form in which it first appeared almost two centuries ago, and a tie with the past to serve as a reminder of their debt to the courageous and godly man who served to lay the foundation on which we now build.

At all events, they, whose liberality makes possible this venture for the Church's higher spiritual good, are actuated only by faith and hope, that it may make clear to this another age of uncertainty and need, the nature of the "Rock" whence the Brethren's or Moravian Church is hewn, the certain validity and authority of the Holy Scriptures and the type of

Christian doctrine that can again give strength to our Unity and to the larger Church beyond her borders.

But what of this book, “Idea Fidei Fratrum”, of which we speak and which we are to have the privilege of using? What of its character? And what may we expect to receive from its use?

First, let it be noted that in this English edition, the Latin title, together with the nature and intent of “The Idea” are well defined and set forth on the title page as

“An Exposition of Christian Doctrine
as taught by
The Protestant Church of the United Brethren
or
Unitas Fratrum.”

In seeking to classify and evaluate this book for those whom we wish to interest in it and encourage to read, study and profit by it, we can find no other volume with which it can be compared. To speak frankly with regard to it, we must say it is different and quite unique among Christian publications. So far as our knowledge goes, it has no companion volume in religious literature with which to compare. It is not a theological treatise, carrying original reflections, arguments or phrases usually found in theological discussions of creeds and symbols. It is not a concordance, bringing the thoughts and interpretations of many into one volume for the reader to reconcile or from which to make a choice. And it is not an exposition, technically speaking, as the term is usually understood, involving extended explanations of the Scriptures and their doctrine. Rather, it is the type of a *Topical Bible*, of limited content, and, as Hamilton has pointed out, “was intended to place before the ministers and members of the Church a scheme of Christian doctrine expressed in biblical language, and to present to its friends a vindication of its scriptural catholicity. Its twenty-four sections set forth the essentials of a sound Protestant theology, free from one-sided confessionalism. The Love of God in Christ is its central theme and the terminology of technical theology gives place to plain biblical language that makes for Christian edification.” The Scripture portions are for the most part given in full without comment and with book, chapter and verse references. So the reader need not be interrupted in his thinking by the necessity of turning to the Bible to find the portion involved. In short, “Idea Fidei” is

the Bible, limited to the doctrines, which go to make up the sum total of the Christian Faith, in the words of the Scriptures.

From the foregoing it will be evident that Spangenberg had carefully studied the doctrines of the Unitas Fratrum from the very beginning and in his long life span lived and labored with his brethren pursuant to these teachings. The "Idea Fidei Fratrum", therefore, is unquestionably validated as a presentation of Christian doctrine from the conservative, biblical standpoint and doctrinal statement of the Moravian Church, a church which has been correctly designated a "Christ-centered, Scripture-grounded Church."

The directives of "The Idea," consequently, are still applicable, vital and inspiring to our ministers and members of personal Christian experience and the message and mission of the Church: "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (I Cor. 2:5) Over the years our Moravian Unity has made commendable material progress and advance in efficiency along many lines. May the reappearance of the "Idea Fidei Fratrum" and its diligent use promote a gracious spiritual awakening among us and continue to bring us in renewed dedication to our Lord for personal growth in grace and knowledge of Him and fresh outreach and zeal in soul-winning at home and farthest out.

The "Idea Fidei Fratrum" is not merely a statement of Christian doctrine supported by Scripture. It is Christian doctrine presented in a warm and winsome manner that goes out to the reader and sees him as he may and can be in Christ. The book is thoroughly readable. The present reviewers found it hard to lay down and good to take up. To have the "Idea Fidei Fratrum" made available again to our ministers and our people is timely and potentially productive of great good. We pray for it wide circulation and careful reading. May God abundantly bless this effort to His greater glory!

Fraternally,
Edmund Schwarze
J. Kenneth Pfohl,
Episcopi Fratrum

Winston-Salem, NC
November 13, 1958

AUGUSTUS GOTTLIEB SPANGENBERG

Brother Joseph

They wept for joy to see him. No one had expected him that day. Brother Joseph walked into the chapel at Herrnhut on November 12, 1762, as unobtrusively as if he had but come a few miles; in truth he had just journeyed across the wilderness of Pennsylvania and through the storms of the Atlantic. He was always doing the most extraordinary things for God in the most unassuming way. As the Moravians stopped their singing to turn and greet him, their eyes looked beyond the plain brown clothes and the unpowdered hair, they could see only the glory of Christ shining in the pilgrim's face, a face still rounded and fresh for all his sixty years, and full of serenity, courage and happiness which only the Savior can give to a man. These Moravians knew that in this dauntless missionary, the survivor of a thousand dangers, there was a scholar and a wise administrator too; but it was his simplicity which they treasured most – that simplicity, which he himself had once described:

O holy blest simplicity,
God's wondrous gifts of grace,
In deepest wisdom, truest strength,
In all the heavenly race.

These Moravians loved Brother Joseph as children love a father. He was their man of crisis: in every difficulty he could point the way out. He lived only to serve. For over half a century he carried the practical development of the Moravian Church throughout the world upon his shoulders. By 1762 he had already safely established the Brethren in England, North America, the West Indies and Surinam; and now he had come home to restore the finances of the whole Unity and to defend the evangelical faith from the blight of Rationalism which threatened the pure Gospel in Europe.

Prepared to Serve

Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg (Brother Joseph to the Moravians) was born on July 15, 1704, the son of a Lutheran pastor at Klettenberg. He was an orphan at the age of ten. By the sheer brilliance of his academic gifts he won his way to the University of Jena in 1722 and under the influence of Professor Buddeus he turned from the study of law to theology. He longed to be a missionary and the visits of Zinzendorf and the Moravians to Jena convinced him that only among them could he find that self-less devotion and fellowship which the spreading of the

Gospel across the world demanded. When he visited their Settlement at Herrnhut in 1730 he found the Christianity of New Testament times in its purity and simplicity lived out in the daily round. 'The grace of God is uncommonly manifested in this place,' he wrote; 'the Moravians carefully strive to do all our dear Savior has commanded us. Whosoever is intent upon caring for the things of eternity, and is satisfied with a few pence on his journey towards heaven, will soon discover the blessedness of the communion of saints.' He declined a Chair of Theology at the University of Halle and in April 1733, arrived in Herrnhut to begin his life-long service to the Lamb in the Moravian Church. Years later he declared: 'I consider my acquaintance with the Brethren the means by which our Lord Jesus Christ has preserved me in the truth and way of holiness.'

Mr. Wesley Seeks Advice

This was a glorious period in the history of the Moravians. Through their pioneer missionary enterprise across the world, they were shaping the pattern and policy of Christian expansion in modern times. In this shaping they were quick to use the gifts of Spangenberg. In the summer of 1733, Zinzendorf asked him to conduct eighteen missionaries to Copenhagen on their way to St. Croix in the Danish West Indies; in November, 1734, he led the negotiations between the Dutch Board of Trade and the Moravians who wished to evangelize the Negro slaves of Surinam; in January, 1735, he arrived in London, obtained a grant of land for the Moravians in Georgia from General Oglethorpe and the Trustees, and sailed with the first company to the Savannah River where they landed on April 6. Under Spangenberg's leadership, the Moravians tilled the land in Georgia, doing more in one week than others had done in two years; they built a school for the Creek and Cherokee Indians and brought them that assurance of personal salvation through 'the slaughtered Lamb' which had transformed Spangenberg's own life and struggling faith. On Saturday, February 7, 1736, there landed in Georgia a young clergyman of the Church of England whose faith had been found wanting during the storms of the crossing from England. The very next day he went to Spangenberg, found in him a radiant faith and opened his heart to him: 'I asked Mr. Spangenberg's advice with regard to myself,' he wrote in his *Journal*, 'He told me he could say nothing till he had asked me two or three questions. "Do you know yourself? Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? I was surprised, and knew not what to answer. He observed it, and asked, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" I paused, and said, "I know He is the Savior of the world." "True," he replied, "but do you know He has saved you?" I answered, "I hope he has died to save me." He only added, "Do you know yourself?" I said, "I do." But I fear

they were vain words. After my answering, he gave me several directions, which may the good God who sent him enable me to follow!’ Thus John Wesley was set on his way to the discovery of a living personal faith in Jesus his Savior. The debt of the Methodist Church and modern Christendom to Spangenberg is no small thing.

The First Moravian Congregation in England

Wherever Spangenberg went he brought unity and strength. In April, 1741, he was sent as ‘General Helper’ to organize and superintend the Moravian work in England. It was not long before his calm wisdom had healed the discords in the historic Fetter Lane Society from which John Wesley had seceded. In the May he focused the members’ support for foreign missions in the ‘Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel’. On May 26, 1742, he set out for Yorkshire with twenty-six Moravians from Fetter Lane in response to Benjamin Ingham’s urgent invitation to establish a center for evangelism in the North. In July the ‘Yorkshire Congregation’ set up their headquarters at Smith House in Lightcliffe, near Halifax, and with Brother Joseph supervising the whole work, by the end of 1743 no less than forty-seven preaching places had been established. In the open fields, in barns and cottages as well, the Moravian evangelists drew large crowds which ‘flocked like hungry bees’ to hear them. One look from Spangenberg was enough to turn away their fears when stones and jeers were hurled at the preachers and many people were brought into the fellowship of Christ. At length, on November 10, 1742, having proved their zeal in the Lamb’s service, the Moravians of Fetter Lane were organized by Spangenberg into the London Congregation – the first Moravian Congregation in England.

To Bethlehem

The whole Moravian enterprise in North America sprang into focus with the arrival of Spangenberg at the outpost of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in November 1744. Still protesting that the title of Bishop was not appropriate for one who would journey through the American forests with a sack on his back, he had nevertheless been consecrated at Herrnhag the previous June. And now with the title of *Vicarius Generalis Episcoporum in America*, he set about the task of organization. He faced a host of difficulties, but his faith and his shoulders were broad enough. His only motive was ‘nothing but love to the Lamb and His Church’. When a mob stoned him in the Court House in Lancaster in November 1745, he fell on his knees and prayed for his enemies.

His master plan to wring a living from the American wilderness and to support the itinerant Moravian preachers was the *Economy* based on Bethlehem and nearby Nazareth. In the *Economy* there were no private enterprises, but a complete economy of labour. No one received any other wages but food, clothing and shelter. No one was too old or too young to take part: 'Everyone, even a child of four years of age,' wrote Spangenberg, 'may serve the gospel by spinning and picking wool for the pilgrims.' Family comforts and family ties were gladly sacrificed. By 1749 no less than thirty-two industries and farms were flourishing within the *Economy*. The 600 Moravians were not only able to support themselves, but to maintain fifty wandering evangelists; to carry the gospel to the Indians; to organize Congregations in thirty-one localities, in seven of the original American colonies; to establish fifteen schools; to cover the costs of missionaries on their way to the West Indies and Surinam; and to send funds to Europe to stabilize the Moravian finances there. Spangenberg was the master-builder but the constant theme was 'the Savior's credit is our proper stock – we leave the management to him.'

To Carolina Land

On the morning of August 25, 1752, Spangenberg and five other brethren set out on horseback from Bethlehem. They were bound for the unexplored wilderness of western North Carolina; their mission was to survey a tract of 100,000 acres which Lord Granville in London had offered to sell to Zinzendorf and the Moravians; the huge hazards of their journey demanded, and were matched by, the most undaunted spirit in the high Moravian tradition; and the result was the founding of Wachovia and the beginning of the Southern Province of the Moravian Church in North America.

Spangenberg led his companions safely through Virginia and set their course westward for the Catawba River. On September 21st the fever forced them to rest for a fortnight in Granville County. But Spangenberg was eager to press on. He was so weak that he had to be lifted in and out of the saddle: 'I will have to pass through much weakness,' he told his friends, 'you will have to exercise much patience, but the Lord will help me through.' The frequent hills and valleys of North Carolina poured the heavy rains together in floods, but the small party struggled on. On October 27th they came to the end of the old Trading Path and they moved out into the unknown. Soon they were lost in the dense and almost impenetrable forests. For three days they had no food of any kind; and, as they discovered later, three hundred of the savage Indians stalked them and then retreated. They missed the Mulberry Gap between the head of Mulberry Creek and the Yadkin and they were forced to climb

the steps of Blowing Rock: 'part of the way' Spangenberg wrote 'we climbed on hands and knees, dragging after us the loads we had taken from the backs of the horses, for had we not unsaddled them they would have fallen backwards down the mountain – indeed, this did happen once: part of the way we led the horses, who were trembling like a leaf.' When they had descended and pitched their tent on the other side, the December snows came down; the wind cut through them like a knife; and the water froze beside the fire. At last, turning southeast, they reached the Yadkin River on December 27th, and on the advice of some settlers they set out for a likely stretch of land in the three forks of the Muddy Creek. On January 8, 1753, Spangenberg enshrined for ever the spirit of an *Imperishable Race* (as the Moravians had been called): he wrote in his Diary – 'It is the middle of winter, the ground is covered with snow; but we are camping in the forest, well and content, under the wings of the Almighty.'

By January 25, 1753, Spangenberg had completed the survey of 73,000 acres on the three forks of the Muddy Creek, and he had named it Wachau or Wachovia after Zinzendorf's estate in Austria. By February 12th he was safely back in Bethlehem. On October 8th the first colonist set out for Wachovia, and arrived there on the night of November 17th, and held a Lovefeast in an abandoned hut whilst the wolves howled loudly outside. Another part of the wilderness had been won for the lamb.

The Elder Statesman

From his return to Herrnhut in 1762 until his death in 1792, Spangenberg remained at the center of Moravian affairs. He presided over the General Synods, which determined the Constitution of the Church, restored its finances and planned the policy and progress of the Missions. His help and advice reached every corner of the Moravian endeavor throughout the world. He kept up an endless correspondence, he organized and preached, and for a time was the head of the Theological Seminary at Barby-on-the-Elbe. The official Life of Count Zinzendorf came from his pen, and in his *Information for the Brethren and Sisters who serve the Heathen with the Gospel* (1784) he set out the first Evangelical Theory of Mission.

There was a practical wisdom in Spangenberg's approach to each problem. Whereas Zinzendorf wrote a hymn of praise to the Moravian missionaries who died of fever in St. Croix, Spangenberg applied himself to the prevention of such martyrdoms. When the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel gave its entire attention to the mission in Labrador in 1770, Spangenberg sent a letter from Holland, applauding

the venture, urging that the missionaries should be supplied not with what they wanted but what they needed, and enclosed a subscription amounting to his whole income for one year. Nothing wearied Spangenberg more than pious intentions which yielded no fruit. He was a faithful counselor in spiritual things and spoke his mind without fear: one Christian beginner who boasted much of his faith was soon told by Brother Joseph – ‘You fancy you are sitting in our Savior’s bosom, and you don’t know Him yet.’

Leaders in the State and in the Church consulted Spangenberg. The Emperor Joseph visited him at Herrnhut, and the King of Denmark sought his advice at Zeist. Perhaps his most signal service to the Churches of Europe was his great *Idea Fidei Fratrum* in which he set forth the Moravian doctrine in so clear a biblical fashion that it saved Europe from the infidelity which the Age of Rationalism had ushered in. The book was carried on the journeys by the Moravian evangelists and it was studied in the Universities. With its lucid evangelical emphasis and its absolute allegiance to Christ as the only source of truth and eternal life, the book was translated into all the European languages, and restored the faith of many upon whom the blight of ‘a Proud Reason’ had fallen: ‘if it were possible to combine the capacities of the wisest men in all ages of the world, in order to deliver the human race from their distress and misery, and to lead them to eternal happiness, it would be ineffectual’- thus did Spangenberg roundly declare the Moravian view and the inability of the human mind to contrive man’s redemption. An illustrious University philosopher said at the time: ‘I have just now read Spangenberg’s Idea. Our children will have to learn theology from the Moravian Brethren.’

The Diamond

Zinzendorf once described the Moravianians as ‘the Savior’s happy people’. In all his long and busy and often hazardous life, Spangenberg never lost that happiness. He could not understand how a Christian could entertain dismay and dullness; his constant advice to those who wished to be effective witnesses was to ‘be of good cheer’: ‘Whoever will serve our Savior among the heathen, must engage with cheerfulness,’ he was never tired of asserting.

In the beautiful painting by Anton Graff of Spangenberg in his old age, all the radiance of his quiet persistent happiness shines through: the eyes are bright, the cheeks are red and the locks are snowy; the faithful warrior of the Lamb – no one could look upon the painting and not be stirred to a deeper joy. But it was all the Lord’s doing: the

happiness was not born of man. And Spangenberg knew that truth as intensely as any man whose life was hid in Christ. A famous editor once said to Spangenberg: 'Happy man! Reveal to me your secret! What is it that makes you so strong and so calm? What light illumines you? What power makes you so content? Tell me and make me happy forever.' 'For this', Brother Joseph replied simply but with profound devotion, 'for this, I must thank my Saviour.'

From first to last, the inspiration of his life was the Saviour who had given His life for him: the slaughtered Lamb claimed all his allegiance and provided all his purpose and all his joy. 'The death and blood of Jesus is the *diamond* set in the golden ring of the Gospel,' he told the Moravian missionaries; 'Remember this, and keep it in your heart.'

PREFACE OF THE EDITOR

The wish of many candid inquirers concerning the Church of the UNITAS FRATRUM or UNITED BRETHREN, has been in part obtained by the publication of Crantz's History of the UNITAS FRATRUM, which appeared in English in the year 1780; but as it has been still wished, that the Public might be more fully informed with respect to the doctrine taught in this Church, we are glad of this opportunity to satisfy such inquirers and to lay before them the tenor of the Brethren's doctrine.

As many false opinions of the doctrine and practice of the Church have been received, by means of several writings published in Germany and England some years ago, it may not be reasonable to give the Public a true account of their doctrine, from which may be easily inferred, what is the practice of those who are truly Brethren, in their sense of that appellation.

It may not be improper to observe, on this occasion, that although the Brethren have been very falsely traduced by their adversaries, and by misinformed people, who meant well; and that particularly the writings of the late Count Zinzendorf have been used to prove that the Church, of which he was an eminent and the most distinguished minister, held the errors of the most fanatic, yea wicked heretics, and his writings have been, for this purpose mutilated, falsely quoted and translated; and although the extravagant words and actions of the individuals have been unjustly charged upon the whole body, yet it were to be wished that there had been no occasion given, at a certain period, to accuse the Brethren of improprieties and extravagance in word or practice.

Count Zinzendorf, whom the Brethren and candid observers look upon as the instrument in the hand of God to restore the ancient, and to build up the renewed Church of the Brethren, and by them to propagate the Gospel among Christians and Heathen, was not an ordinary character. He was a nobleman of high rank and education, had an enlarged mind, and a generous heart. He did not bind himself to the trammels of scholastic divinity; but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were his standard of truth, from which he sought for knowledge; and indeed he was so conversant with them that the Bible was written in his memory, and on the table of his heart. But he was a man, and of course liable to mistakes. Having an open and generous mind, and being conversant with various sincere persons and sects in Christendom, he sought for the truth, in each, though more or less covered with rubbish, and was frequently led, either in sentiment or expression, to adopt, for a season, the manner of utterance used by the

party with whom he was at the time engaged: in him this arose from a love to truth and to his fellow creatures. Good as his views were, it exposed him, and the congregations he served, to much censure and severe reproaches. He commonly delivered two or three discourses a day, either publicly or to his family, which was generally large, and what he then uttered, was attended with a striking effect upon those who heard him. He spoke in the strictest sense extempore; and according to the state of the times, and the persons to whom he spoke. These discourses were commonly taken down as he uttered them, and the love and admiration of his Brethren were so great, that they urged publication of them. His avocations were such, that he did not spend time sufficient in the revision: some were not at all revised by him, and some very incorrectly and falsely printed. Hence doctrines, of which he never thought, were deduced from his writings, and some of his transient private opinions laid to the charge of the whole Brethren's Church. I do not, nor can I attempt, to defend such publications, but relate the real state of the case.

The Count was so convinced of the impropriety of the above proceedings, that he requested the reverend Author of this Exposition to extract all the accusations of his antagonists, and the adversaries of the Brethren, and lay them before him. It was done; he answered all; and the charges, and his answers, were published in Germany, in the years 1751 and 1752. He finding positions in the writings under his name which he could not avow, declared in the public papers, that he could not acknowledge any books, which had been published in his name, unless they were revised and corrected in a new edition by himself. He begun this work in German but the Lord took him to himself before he could go through many books.

True it is, that at a certain time, particularly between 1747 and 1753, many of the Brethren, in their public discourses, and in the hymns which were published about that period, used expressions which were indefensible: the Count himself labored to correct both the theory and the language; and he was successful, and they are no more in use among the Brethren. The Brethren's congregations do not take the writings of the Count, or of any man, as their standard of doctrine; the Bible alone is their standard of truth and they agree with the Augustan, or Augsburg confession, as being conformable to it.

Whether what is said above may appear necessary, on presenting this book to the Public, or no, we apprehend it may be useful, as those into whose hands some of the above-mentioned discourses, or of the hymns, which were in peculiar style, and badly translated, or of the false and

mutilated quotations often found in the writings of the adversaries, have fallen, might allege them, as speaking otherwise than the doctrine contained in this book, by making it known that the Brethren do not, and will not receive the said discourses and hymns as an exposition of the doctrines and phraseology of the UNITAS FRATRUM; but that they heartily agree with those contained in this Exposition, and here their sense of the Christian doctrines may be found. The Brethren do not look upon any publication as a symbolic book of their church, yet they cannot but esteem plain and scriptural truth, wherever they find it.

Though this book may with truth be looked upon as a compendium of divinity, containing all the essential truths of the Gospel necessary to salvation, and consequently may be of use to Christians of every denomination, yet the reader will find some peculiarities of the congregations of the Brethren, on account of which they will, however, not disagree with any who hold to the essential truths of Gospel.

The reverend Author speaks for himself in the Preface, and mentions the cause and purpose of this publication, so that nothing more need be said upon these heads.

The first edition of the book was printed in the printing office of the Brethren, at Barby in Saxony, in the year 1779, under the title *Idea Fidei Fratrum*, &c. It met with the approbation not of the members only of the congregations of the Brethren but also of many eminent and worthy divines, and others, in the foreign Protestant churches; and a second edition has been since published. It has also been translated and published in the Danish, Swedish, Dutch and French languages.

The Author has written in a plain and familiar style, intelligible to men of all classes and capacities, being persuaded that divine truth, concerning our salvation stands in no need of the artificial ornaments of rhetoric. The language of the original is, however, nervous, though plain. It has been translated, revised and corrected with care. The aged and venerable Author understands English, and has revised the translation, and made some emendations. Yet we own it is not equal in style to the original, but hope it will convey the Author's ideas, and that the plainness of its dress will be no dishonor to it.

The Author has observed in his Preface, that "the passages of Scripture have been quoted out of Luther's German version, and that nothing has been altered, except where it was necessary for the sake of the true meaning." In this translation the English version has been made use of throughout the whole.

That this book may be useful, and give some satisfaction to many, and be a means of edification to the members of the Church of the Brethren, it is the sincere wish of the Editor.

London, 1784

B. LA TROBE.

GRACE AND PEACE
FROM GOD OUR FATHER,
AND FROM THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,
BE WITH ALL
THAT, IN EVERY PLACE,
CALL UPON
THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OUR
LORD,
BOTH THEIRS AND OURS.

WITH
THE WISH,
THIS BOOK, WRITTEN OUT OF LOVE
TO THE
TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL,
IS PRESENTED
TO THE ELDERS AND TEACHERS
OF THE
CONGREGATIONS OF THE BRETHREN,
TO BE USED BY THEM AS THEY THINK
PROPER,

BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE OF THE AUTHOR

This exposition is not a new Confession of Faith of the Congregations of the Brethren; but the *Augustana Confessio* or *Augsburg Confession*, presented to the Emperor by some of the states, at the diet of the Roman empire, in the year 1530, is and remains their confession of faith. The fundamental truths of the Christian doctrine, taken from the Sacred Scriptures, are delivered in that Confession (with a retrospect to the Articles of Torgau, which were drawn up by Dr. Luther to the same end), in such a brief and plain manner, compiled with such perspicuity, and delivered publicly at the risk of life and fortune, that we know nothing more excellent of the kind.

But some judicious men, for whom we have great respect, intimated to us, that it might be useful if the Brethren would lay before the Public, in a free, clear and unconstrained connection, their insight into the gospel, which Paul calls the mystery of Christ: others went still farther, and told us, that they believed it to be the duty of the Brethren, in this dangerous time – when many did not scruple shamefully to pervert the Bible – to show to all the world, that they are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. The Brethren themselves have been convinced, that it is the more necessary for them to make their mind publicly known, as the perverted tenets, which are charged upon them, are almost innumerable.

This then induced them to weigh the affair before the Lord; and after they were agreed, that it might be, at this period, useful, if such a compendium was drawn up, they committed the compilation of it to me, the least among my brethren.

I was very sensible of the importance of this commission, and did not look upon myself as equal to it: I however, accepted it with joy, out of love to my Lord Jesus Christ, and the faithfulness which I owe to the congregations of the Brethren, whom I, through grace, have been enabled to serve for many years, and in humble confidence that God would kindly assist me in this undertaking.

I have, throughout the whole, made truth my object; I mean the truth which points out the way to eternal life, and which is to be found alone

in Christ, (John 14:6); which makes us free from the service of sin, (John 8:32); and through which we are sanctified by God. (John:17:17.) This truth no man can discover by his own strength, if he even had the understanding of an angel. Nay, If it were possible to combine the capacities of the wisest men in all ages of the world, in order to deliver the human race from their distress and misery, and to lead them to eternal happiness; it would be ineffectual. Our Lord Jesus Christ said to his Father in heaven, "Thy word is truth," (John17: 17); and to the Jews, " I have told you the truth, which I have heard of God," (John 8:40); and to Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." (John 18:37). The Gospel, that is, the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, concerning our salvation, is therefore the truth, which is here spoken of. The Gospel of our salvation, is called expressly, "The word of truth," (Eph. 1:13) and we find this, God be praised, in the Holy Scriptures. I have, for this reason, made it my chief concern, to examine what the Scripture says upon every subject of which I have treated. I know assuredly, that this is agreeable to the mind of my Brethren; for we have often bound ourselves solemnly to each other, to adhere, with all our hearts, to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, as we find it in the Bible.

The different passages of Scripture, which treat of one subject, are collected together, and arranged in a certain plain, simple order, which has not the advantage only of pointing out how excellently one text is illustrated by the other, and how beautifully they all harmonize with each other, but it also serves more particularly to explain the sentiments of the Brethren: and this is the aim of this book.

The same holds good with regard to the subjects here treated of. They have all, it is true, a relation to each other; but in such a manner, that one tends to explain, and consequently to form a more strict connection with the other. They thus follow each other in an unconstrained order; in which, however, it was difficult to prevent the same idea from being mentioned more than once.

The passages of Scripture are quoted out of Luther's German version; and nothing has been altered, except where it was necessary for the sake of the true meaning. Sometimes, by way of illustration, a parenthesis is introduced, to avoid, as much as possible, extensive explanations.

Upon the whole, my wish is, that God may give his blessing to this work, and may accompany his own truth to every reader with divine power.

Written at Barby, on the 19th of May, 1778.

A.G. Spangenberg

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AN EXPOSITION OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE
AS TAUGHT IN THE CHURCH OF
THE UNITAS FRATRUM, or UNITED BRETHREN

INTRODUCTION

¶1

IN the first chapters of the books of Moses we read, that God created the first man, Adam, after his own image; but that he, with Eve his wife, who was given him for a helpmate, proved disobedient to his Creator, and brought sin into the world. The consequences of this lamentable fall were, that they both began to be afraid of God, hid themselves from his face: and instead of confessing their sin, laid the blame one upon the other, and, thus lost the image of God. As God could not, according to his word, which he had spoken to them, allow them to remain unpunished; so by their sin, the curse and death came upon them and their posterity. But God, at the same time, made his mercy known to them; and gave them the comfortable promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, who had seduced the woman; but at the same time, he declared, the serpent would bruise his heel.

¶2

Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve, were very different from each other. They both knew, that they owed their lives and every good gift to God the Lord; and that it was their duty to love, honor and serve him on that account. And they both brought their gifts and offerings to him, as testimonials of their gratitude. But Cain loved wickedness, and was carried away by it; and Abel was faithful, according to his knowledge, suffering himself to be led and governed by the Spirit of God. Wherefore God looked graciously upon Abel and upon his offering which was made by faith (Hebrews 11:4) but not so upon Cain and his offering. This made Cain wroth, and his anger was enkindled against his brother Abel. For this the Lord reprov'd him; yet he afterwards lifted up his hand against Abel, and slew him. And when God questioned him concerning it,

he answered as though he knew nothing of it. But God did not leave him unpunished. Thus the warfare between good and evil, light and darkness, the children of God and the children of men, commenced in the world, and thus it continues.

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¶3

After this, mankind multiplied greatly, and the Lord cared faithfully for them. He manifested to them his loving-kindness, wisdom, and omnipotence, not by the works of creation only, but he also gave them a rich and daily provision of his manifold blessings for the supply of their wants and for their nourishment. How could they have otherwise subsisted? Moreover, he himself condescended to speak immediately with certain persons. For instance, he warned Cain, before he slew his brother, and reproved him for it afterwards. (¶2) And since he spoke personally with this very wicked man, we are not surprised to read, that he conversed in a most cordial and confident manner with an Enoch (of whom it is recorded, that he, for three hundred years, walked with God) and with such other souls, as resigned themselves to his grace? We have a clear instance of this, in what we read concerning God's interview with Noah. (Genesis 6:8.) It is not in our power to ascertain every particular that God revealed to these his children; because so little of it is recorded: but who can doubt, that he gave mankind instructions about sacrifices? How should they else have known, that they could serve him in this manner? (¶2) And because it is expressly said of Abel, that "by faith he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;" it seems very probable, that God himself made known to him the sense and meaning of such sacrifices, according to the degree of knowledge suitable to those times. Enoch moreover had this testimony given of him, that "by faith he was translated and did not see death;" and Noah, that "by faith, being warned of God, he prepared an ark to the saving of his house." Hence it appears very plain, that God, even in those very early times, led mankind chiefly to faith, "it being, without faith, impossible to please God." It can also be proved, that he revealed many other things to them. For how could God have spoken with Noah concerning the clean and unclean beasts, and commanded him to take him into the ark seven male and seven female of the clean and only one male and one female of the unclean, had he not first revealed to mankind, which he would have them esteem clean, and which unclean? And how could Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," have prophesied, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon all" (Jude 14) had it not been revealed to him by God?

With respect to the will of men, the Lord hath put a sense, or feeling, by which they know what they are to do, and what to leave undone. For this internal sense informs them, that certain actions are wrong, that they are displeasing to God, and that he will punish them; and also that

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certain actions are right, that they are pleasing to God, and that he will reward them: and as this sense is common to all men now, it is undoubtedly so in the beginning. In the mean time, the Spirit of God communicated himself to men; and showed unto them, in a more distinct manner, what was good, and what was evil; fought to restrain them from the one, and to incline them to the other. Had this not been the case, God would not have said at length, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he is also flesh" (Genesis 6:3) or, according to Luther's translation, "Men will no more receive the reproof of my Spirit; for they are flesh."

As the Lord, according to his great mercy, did at *that* time commune *immediately* with many persons, revealing himself to them; so did he also treat with them *mediately* by means of those to whom he had disclosed his mind. For it was by his direction, that at the time of the birth of Enos, "Men began to call upon (to preach, Luther's version) the name of the Lord." (Genesis 4:26.) But Noah, who is called a preacher of righteousness, did not only bear his testimony by words, but also by building his ark, that God would punish the sins of men, unless they repented. But most men acted against their conscience, not having God before their eyes, tyrannizing one over another, and living in sins and abominations. The number of those who sought God, walked before him, and served him, was very small. At last the very children of the men of God joined the multitude of the ungodly; so that, excepting Noah, there was scarcely any one who suffered himself to be governed by the Spirit of God. This grieved and provoked God the Lord to such a degree, that he swept away and destroyed all these workers of iniquity, by the deluge, from the face of the earth.

After this dreadful judgment, in which eight souls only were preserved in the ark, God renewed his grace and took again upon himself the care of the human race. He comforted Noah with the promise, that he, for the sake of man, would no more destroy the earth. On the other hand, he promised him, that he would be weary in doing good to mankind. For while "the earth remaineth, feed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Through his blessing they were fruitful, and did multiply and replenish the earth. All the beasts upon earth, all the fowls under

Heaven, all the fishes in the waters, and every creeping thing on the earth, did he give unto them for their use. And whereas he had before appointed the fruits of the field only unto man for his nourishment; he now gave him also every thing that liveth and moveth for his food. Farther, he made known unto them, that the life of each man was dear

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and precious to him; for he had created man in his own image. Wherefore he would avenge the blood of a man, as well upon the beasts as upon man, if they would presume to shed it. In brief, he did every thing to prove, in the most effectual manner to the human race, that he is their gracious, kind, and merciful Lord and God.

But he not only provided thus graciously for their natural life; but fought also, with great earnestness, to draw them into a communion with himself, and thus to bring them to a state of true happiness and preserve them in it. He continued in the same manner, as he had done before the flood, to reveal himself immediately to one or another. Thus he, for instance, declared his good pleasure to Noah, when he built him an altar, and brought all sorts of clean beasts, and all kinds of clean fowls for a burnt-offering. He made known unto him, that he would not have men be like the beasts, which devour a creature, whilst its blood, which is its life, is still warm. He also instructed mankind by *means* of certain men to whom he had revealed himself. Such a one, for instance, was Melchisedec, king of Salem, and priest of the Most High God, that is, of the Eternal and Living God: which not only implies, that he served the Lord for his own person, but that he also sacrificed for others, blessed and instructed them.

Yet all the methods the Lord took with the human race were for the most part in vain. They did not believe his word, but gave themselves up to the slavery of their own lust, and followed their own imaginations and devices. The remembrance of the judgment of God, which, by the deluge, had fallen upon all mankind, did not deter them from evil, and they acted as wickedly as the people who lived before the flood. They wished to render themselves famous, by building a tower, whose top might *reach unto Heaven*; when God, by confounding their language, put a stop to this their proud undertaking, and scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth. They then fell into the most horrid idolatries, with which they combined such dreadful and crying sins, vices, and abominations, that God was constrained, by his justice, to destroy certain cities by fire and brimstone. The Canaanitish nations, bordering upon these cities, were so little moved and deterred by this judgment from their

ungodliness and profligacy, that they even exceeded them in abominations; and therefore God took the just resolution of cutting them off from the face of the earth.

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¶4

Abraham is the most remarkable of those who, at this period, kept God, the Creator of all things, before their eyes, and loved and honoured him. God led him forth out of his native country, and from his kindred and acquaintance, and brought him into the land of Canaan; where he, as a stranger, in the midst of these idolatrous and ungodly people, built up altars unto the Lord his God, confessed and called upon his name, honoured him by an holy walk, and inculcated the fear of God on his whole house. God made a covenant with this beloved man, and gave him the promise, that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed; which signifies nothing less than, that the Saviour of the world should descend from him. He also took the prosperity of Abraham for his own inheritance, and in this respect bestowed special prerogatives upon them above all other people of the earth. After this, he led them with a mighty hand, by Moses his servant, out of Egypt, where they sighed under a grievous bondage; that he might bring them into the land which he had promised to their father Abraham. But, for wise reasons, he did not lead them the most direct road from Egypt to Canaan, but through the Red Sea, into the wilderness of Arabia. Here he gave them his law in so majestic a manner, as to strike the people with great awe. At the same time he declared that he would preserve them in peace, and protect them against their enemies; keep them from evil; and heap every kind of blessing upon them, if they kept his covenant; whereas, on the other hand, if they did not keep it, he would punish them with death, sicknesses, pestilence, and other dreadful judgments. He then took them under his care with incomprehensible grace. He gave them water out of the rock, and supplied all their wants in an unheard of manner. But they were, on their part, so stiff-necked, that he resolved at last to let the whole of this refractory generation, consisting of six hundred thousand persons, die in the wilderness, but to bring their children into the land which he had promised to give to the seed of Abraham. All this *Moses* describes in his *Five Books*, which God has preserved to our times.

¶5

After the death of Moses, the people of Israel were led into the land of Canaan by Joshua, who with Caleb, were the only survivors of the six hundred thousand persons, who, on account of their sin, fell in the

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wilderness—And the Lord God was with him, so that he was able to execute all that which he was appointed to do. Then he divided and distributed the land among the twelve tribes of Israel. And, before his death, renewed the covenant with them, that they would cleave unto the Lord with all their hearts, and abide by his word and commandments. All this we find in the *Book of Joshua*.

But it was not long before they began to give themselves up to the sins of the nations, which were an abomination to God, and to turn away from his commandments. Then God permitted their enemies to become mighty, and oppress them in an intolerable manner. But no sooner did they repent, and return to God, than he had compassion upon them, and raised up judges, who defended and delivered them from the tyranny of their enemies. And this continued till the days of Samuel, who not only filled the office of a judge, but also administered divine worship among them. The *Book of Judges*, and the little *Book of Ruth*, give us the history of these times.

After this the people of Israel in a tumultuous manner, desired a king, choosing rather to be like the heathen nations round about them, than to submit to the government of the Lord alone. God gave them Saul; but he proved disobedient to the word of the Lord, on which account he rejected him, and chose David. This was a man after God's own heart. He punctually performed every thing that the Lord commanded him, and God was with him. He had before, under the reign of Saul, experienced much tribulation, and thereby gained much knowledge. He also loved God with his whole heart; but, becoming mighty, he committed great sins against God, and thus brought many great misfortunes, troubles, and distresses, upon himself, his family, and his whole kingdom. Yet he turned again with his whole heart to the Lord. He was the author of many excellent *Psalms*, which, together with the *Psalms* of other men of God, are still extant in the Bible.

Solomon succeeded him, who had no equal in wisdom. He built a temple for the Lord, and the kingdom of Israel was brought by him into the most flourishing condition. But he suffered himself to be so infatuated by his wives, as to bring idolatry into the land, and thus to provoke God to wrath. However, from his book entitled *Ecclesiastes*, or

the Preacher, we have reason to conclude that, before his death, he repented, and turned again to God. Under his name, we also have the *Book of Proverbs*, and the *Canticles*, or the Song of Songs.

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After his decease, the kingdom was divided. His son Rehoboam retained the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the remaining ten tribes chose Jeroboam for their king. From that time every thing tended to ruin. For though the kingdom of Judah maintained the true divine worship, yet, at the same time, the idolatrous service was continued. But the kingdom of Israel devoted itself to idolatry in the most irrational manner, and to sins and abominations naturally connected with it; which were of so detestable a nature, that they are not fit to be mentioned. On this account God, after having for a long time ineffectually warned and reproved them, was at length moved to destroy their whole constitution by the Assyrians; when a part was cruelly exterminated, and a part carried away captive under the most deplorable circumstances.

The kingdom of Judah maintained itself still some time. But when the same sins, which had plunged Israel into destruction, like a flood overflowed the whole kingdom of Judah, the same judgments of God, which had passed upon Israel, fell likewise upon Judah. The Babylonians desolated the kingdom, burnt the temple, laid Jerusalem waste; and such as were not cut off by famine, pestilence, and the sword, were taken captive and carried away to Babylon. The history of these times we find in the *Books of Samuel*, in the *Books of the Kings*, and in the *Books of the Chronicles*.

In Babylon, the Jews however began to see and confess their heinous transgressions: and after a term of seventy years they returned, under the government of Cyrus, into their own country; and under manifold difficulties and distresses, rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple. To these times the *Books of Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and the *History of Esther* refer. From that time the Jews were upon their guard against idolatry; yet they did not attain to that which was the chief point in the law of God; and on that very account were, in general, in a very deplorable situation.

In the mean time, as among other nations, there were some who, by the grace of God, knew, loved and honoured him; as we learn, for instance, in the *Book of Job*; so God had some, even in the worst of

times, who were his, and devoted to him, among the people of Israel; who, though they had brought themselves into such wretched circumstances, yet were greatly distinguished, and enjoyed many privileges beyond all other nations. From these his peculiar people he chose, from time to time, persons to whom he revealed himself in a particular manner, in whom his Spirit dwelt, and whom he employed,

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according to the counsel of his grace, to make his will known to the rest of mankind. These men therefore wrote, by the command of their Lord and God, and by the impulse of the Holy Ghost, that which was committed unto them, not as a testimony for those who lived at that time only, and with whom they had to do, but also for the sake of those who should come after them. And of such writings, by the providence of God which watched over them that they might not be lost, we have, besides the books already cited, a most excellent collection, which are called the *Prophets*; of whom *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk*, lived before the captivity of the Jewish people in Babylon; *Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Obadiah*, lived at the time of this captivity; and *Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi* prophesied after it.

¶8

Thus God made his will known by the prophets in a very emphatical manner, concerning the people of Israel and the neighbouring nations. Their deviations and transgressions were earnestly set before them; and at the same time, they were told, in the name of God, what heavy judgments he would inflict upon them, if they did not turn from their ungodliness. Moreover, God by his servants the prophets, made the promise which he had given to the first man and woman after the fall (¶1) clearer from time to time. The words which God spake unto Abraham that “in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed” (¶4) were also, by this Spirit, which was in the prophets, more and more unraveled, and more distinctly determined. For after Abraham’s prosperity had multiplied itself to many hundreds of thousands, God gave the promise unto David, that the Saviour of the world should lineally descend from him; and afterwards, not the time only, but the very place of his birth, was by the prophets fixed in the most express manner. Every thing relating to his life, doctrine, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension, was so plainly foretold, as though they had seen it with their own eyes. And when they speak of the times of grace

and blessing, which not the Jews only, but also the heathen, should in due time enjoy under the sceptre of this king, they describe them in as lively a manner, as we now, blessed by God, may; and by his grace actually do, and shall still more abundantly experience in eternity. What more is said of him in the Prophets will be more fully mentioned in (§16).

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¶9

There was among the Jews a general expectation of this King, whom they usually called the Messiah, or the Anointed of the Lord. And as the time of his appearance, mentioned in the Prophets, drew nigh, those in whom the Holy Ghost had his work of grace, were filled with an ardent desire for him. The child Jesus was then born in the city of David, which is Bethlehem, of Mary of the house of David, according to the word of the Lord; and was made known to the shepherds in the field by the holy angels; to the congregation in the temple, by Simeon and Anna; to the wise men in the East, by a miraculous star, but to king Herod and the city of Jerusalem, as the new-born Saviour and Messiah, by the wise men from the East. When, thirty years afterwards, he made his public appearance, God gave him the testimony from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." After which he entered upon his ministry, with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, and his words were the words of eternal life. He made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lepers to be clean, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, the dead to live; he cast out devils, and the like. All these works did God perform by him, and thus acknowledged him and his testimony. And when Christ had, according to the counsel of grace, given himself up unto death for us, God raised him up again the third day. And thus was everything that Jesus had done and said, incontestably confirmed. All which we read in the writings of *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John*.

¶10

But our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught not only the people personally, but likewise chose men, whom he called his Disciples, to be the witnesses of the truth. These were constantly with him, did not hear his public discourses only, but enjoyed also his especial instruction; they saw his walk and his works, took a share in his sufferings, and were particularly beloved by him. These he commanded to go through all the

cities of Judea and Galilee, and to testify every where and to all men, that the time of grace, so long expected, was now come that they should therefore turn to God with all their hearts, and receive this word of grace in faith. At the same time he gave unto them faithful instructions how they were to conduct themselves, and, as a proof of their vocation, power over the unclean spirits, and to cure all manner of diseases. And when, after his resurrection, he had been seen of them forty days, and had spoken with them of the kingdom of God, he commanded them to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to all nations; but to stay so long in Jerusalem till

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the Holy Ghost should, according to the promise of God, be poured out upon them. When this had come to pass, they began to preach at Jerusalem, and thence proceeded with the Gospel to all other parts. Whoever received the faith, they baptized, teaching him to observe all things which the Lord had commanded them. They gathered the baptized together, and formed them into congregations, that they might edify each other, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. All these circumstances are fully related in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and the *Epistles*, which were written by them to the *congregations* at large, and to several *individuals*; which are still extant; as is also that book concerning the circumstances of the church of Christ in the time to come, which we commonly call the *Revelation of John*.

We are now to speak in particular of the scriptures mentioned in ¶4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10. They have been most carefully collected and preserved by faithful hands and this collection is called the *Bible*. That part which was written before the birth of Jesus, refers principally to the covenant of grace made by the Lord God with Abraham and his posterity, the children of Israel; for which reason it is called the *Old Testament*. That which we have from the disciples and witnesses of Jesus, in the time following, refers to the new covenant of grace, promised by the prophets, and established by Jesus Christ, and is called the *New Testament*.

It is usual indeed to reckon the whole time preceding the nativity of Christ as belonging to the old covenant; but if we speak with accuracy, it begins with Abraham, and ends with the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. For in the period before the Flood, which is usually placed in the year of the world 1657, God made no difference among men; that is, did not choose one people preferably to the rest for his inheritance; although he always had a seed which served him, and lived to his glory. God did indeed make a covenant with Noah after the Flood, and with his seed, that he would no more destroy the earth by a flood; and he placed his bow in the cloud, as a token of this covenant (Genesis 9:9-17). But this covenant was not confined to any particular nation, but extended to the whole human race. About five hundred years afterwards, God made a covenant with Abraham (¶4) and appointed the ordinance of circumcision to be practiced by him and his family (Genesis 17: 1). And about five hundred years after that, he entered into a special covenant with the whole people of Israel, as the posterity of Abraham. The aim of this covenant was, to make them, in all respects, a very prosperous and happy people. He loved Abraham; and therefore it was not enough to show love and kindness only to him personally, but made declarations also of grace and mercy to his posterity unto the latest time.

This covenant is in short contained in these words: "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." (Leviticus 26:12.) How can a people be more prosperous and happy than, when they have the almighty, the only wise, the merciful, the gracious, the omniscient, and infinitely rich God,

for their God? Is *he* their shield, what can hurt them? Is *he* their reward, what can they desire more? And what higher honour could be

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conferred upon a people than, to be preferred to all other nations upon the earth, without any merit or worthiness of their own; to be made God's own people, a people consecrated unto himself, and to be owned and declared as such by God himself?

God did, according to the promise made to Abraham, (Genesis 12:7, 13:15, 15:18, 17:8, 24:7) acknowledge this people to be his own, when they were in the most wretched circumstances, and sighed under the most cruel tyranny (§4). He told Pharaoh by his servant Moses to, "let his people go, that they might serve him." and when Pharaoh opposed it, and, contrary to the frequently repeated command of God, refused to set the people of Israel at liberty, although he was often forced to promise, by means of many dreadful, highly merited judgments, that he would let them go, then did God with a mighty arm lead his people out of Egypt, and destroyed their enemies in the Red Sea. By this marvelous deliverance God sought to bring his people to have faith in, and a reliance upon him, and to awaken in them a holy awe for his majesty.

¶13

Upon this he gave them, in the wilderness, from Mount Sinai, the most glorious law. For besides the ten commandments, which he himself wrote on tables of stone, he made known unto them, how they were to act in all circumstances, towards God and towards their neighbour. He told them every thing which was to be done, or not to be done by them, in relation to their own souls and bodies, to their goods and chattels, to their wives and children, to their men servants and maid servants, to their cattle and other creatures, to their parents and relations, to their superiors and teachers; and in brief in relation to every circumstance in life. And these his laws were so replete with wisdom, and so really calculated for their benefit, that they might have become, and remained a very prosperous and happy people, had they received them with child-like obedience, and made their whole walk and conversation conformable to them.

Besides this, he, in his wisdom, regulated their divine service, with a view of bringing them into a confident communion with himself, and keeping them in it; and at the same time, of preserving them from the abominable idolatries, which at that time prevailed among the neighbouring nations. He himself appointed the priests, and their

assistants the Levites; prescribing most minutely where they were to dwell, how they were to be maintained, their vestments, and how they were to deport themselves. He himself signified how every thing was to be conducted among them, in respect to the gifts and offerings they were

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enjoined to bring to God: how a man was to appease his conscience, and purge it from sin and guilt; what steps he should take to express his gratitude for particular benefit, and more of the same kind; all this he made clearly known to them. He gave them the seventh day for a Sabbath and a day of rest, appointing moreover, other days for special days of memorial, thanksgiving, and festivity. He explained to them what beasts they should regard as clean, and make use for food, and for offerings; and which of them must be looked upon as unclean, from which they should abstain. What they were to observe in certain diseases, the leprosy, for instance; in their raiment and other things; and also in regard to the dead: all this, he tells them in his law. The tabernacle, which could be taken to pieces, be carried from one place to another, and be set up again, and in which he was accustomed most gloriously to manifest himself, was so exceedingly beautiful and precious, that nothing could be found equal to it among all the other nations. All this did God regulate in such a manner, in order to preserve his people, for their own good, in his ways, and to cut off all occasion of their seeking any thing more excellent.

There was still something more; the Lord himself condescended even to take the government of this people into his own hands. Whatsoever might have been expected from the most careful, most wise, most gracious, most righteous, and the very best of kings, this, and incomparably more, did the people of Israel possess in the Lord. He gave them laws requisite for the maintenance of peace and quietness; and these were calculated for every thing that concerned the person, property, and other circumstances of each individual. He made his will known in special cases by the priests, who had the urim and thummim, the light and right, and by his servants the prophets. As long as they suffered themselves to be led by his eyes, and to be ruled by his sceptre, they had reason greatly to rejoice in, and highly boast of their King; for under him they were in truth a very prosperous and happy people.

This was the covenant which God made with the people of Israel; and of this, the books written by the men of God before the birth of Jesus, treat; which are part of the Bible, and are commonly called the Old Testament (§11). This covenant was constantly inculcated, renewed, and elucidated; when ever the people forsook it, they plunged themselves into

misery. Did they return to the Lord, he was then graciously found of them: for man's unfaithfulness does not remove, or change the faithfulness of God.

If we should ask on this occasion, But could the people of Israel in general, and each Israelite in particular, keep the law of God? The answer must be made with some distinction; Many of the commandments of God were of such a nature, that, they were by his

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grace undoubtedly able to keep them. They could, for instance, keep from idolatry, taking the name of God in vain, profaning the Sabbath, disobedience towards parents, from murder, fornication and adultery, stealing and cheating, and bearing false witness. They could abstain from the different kinds of food which God had prohibited, observe the festivals appointed by God, give meat to the hungry, attend the sick, lodge a stranger, and more of the same kind.

Yet, according to the deep meaning contained in the commandments of God, which require the outward action to be performed with a heart, which loveth God the Lord above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves; in this respect, every one remained a great debtor. And to this belongs the following passage, "Thou shalt not covet." (Exodus 20:17.) With respect to such commandments, the Israelites were altogether sinners; and it was moreover manifest, by all they did and by all they left undone, that by the works of the Law they were not able to purchase everlasting life. For whoever will be saved by the Law, must keep it perfect, and not offend against any one commandment.

The Law then directed them to appear before God, to confess their sin, and to bring their sacrifices for it. Thus did the Law lead them to Christ, the sole cause of our salvation: for the sacrifices were a type of Christ.

¶14

A great part of the scriptures of the Old Testament refers to the promise given, and frequently repeated by the Lord to Abraham, that "in him should all the families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 12:3.) (¶4, 8). These words were afterwards thus explained to him by the Lord, "*In thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 22:18.) And the same promise was also made to his son Isaac. (Genesis 26:4.) And to his grandson Jacob. (Genesis 28:14.) The Lord doth not speak here of *many*, but of *one seed*, in which all the nations of the earth were to be blessed; and Paul says "that seed is Christ." (Galatians 3:16.)

Abraham was seventy-five years old, when he first received the promise; and believed, that Sarah would bear him a son; but twenty-five years elapsed, before this came to pass. For he was an hundred years old, when Isaac was born to him. Now when Isaac was grown up, God tried Abraham, and said, "Take Isaac, thy only son, whom thou lovest and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of." (Genesis 22:2.) Abraham was willing to do this, although he had the promise, "In Isaac

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shall thy seed be called." (Genesis 21:12.) That is, thy seed, in whom all the nations of the earth are to be blessed, shall descend from Isaac—for he thought, that "God was able to raise him up even from the dead." (Hebrews 11:17.)

¶15

This was an important affair, which constantly engaged the thoughts of true believers, until the appearance of Christ (¶9); and the promise of God, given in Paradise, "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head;" harmonized with it, and from that day until the times of Abraham, was continually in the hearts of the children of God. The meaning then of this promise was, that among those who lineally descended from Abraham, there should be one, through whom all the nations of the earth, that is, the whole world, should be blessed. As Abraham held fast by this promise, and believed assuredly, it would not remain unaccomplished, even though he should make a burnt offering of his son Isaac, from whom he, who was appointed for a blessing to the whole world, should lineally descend, and on this account also, he is called the father of all the faithful; so did those, who from the heart clave unto the Lord, and were his genuine children, follow after him in the same faith.

¶16

It appears also from the books of the Old Testament, if they be read in the order in which they chronologically follow one another, that the Lord did not only renew in the minds of his servants, the remembrance of the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; but that he also, by his Spirit, from time to time, explained it more clearly, determined it more distinctly, and made it the chief article of the testimony and writings of the prophets. See (¶8) and Luke 24:44.

They represent the seed of Abraham as a Teacher of righteousness, filled with the Spirit of God; who is himself holy and righteous, and has the law of God in his heart; who shews men the way to salvation, and in the power of God administers counsel and help to all the miserable, weary, and oppressed, and to such likewise as are under bodily infirmities. They describe him, at the same time, as a man, upon whom God lays the iniquity of us all; who is wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; and executed as a malefactor. The Lord God likewise pointed to this by many sacrifices enjoined the people of Israel; and it could not remain hidden from any one, who was taught by the Spirit of

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God. It was likewise testified, that he is the Lord from Heaven, who after his victory sits down at the right-hand of God, until all his enemies be made his footstool; Nay, they call him the mighty God, the everlasting Father. It is almost impossible to quote all the glorious things that are said of him! The blessings, which the seed of Abraham was to bring to all the nations of the earth, are commonly clothed in such words, as are suitable to the economy of the Old Covenant. But it is quite manifest, that they are very different from those blessings which God, in the Old Covenant, promised to them who keep his commandments. Almost all the blessings of the Old Covenant, turn upon outward prosperity, as may be seen from Leviticus 26:1 and from Deuteronomy 26:1. Whereas the blessings that Christ gives us, bring spiritual, heavenly, and eternal possessions; for instance, the forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit and his manifold gifts, the peace of God, the joy in the Holy Ghost, and the like.

The Old Testament speaks much of the nations of the earth, who are to be blessed in the seed of Abraham; and special promises are given to one and another nation in particular. However, these promises are also often delivered in such expressions, as were usual in the Old Testament, but which are to be taken in a sense, suited to the New Testament.

In short, the scriptures of the Old Testament treat of God, his works, and his will. They speak of the Covenant which God made with the people of Israel; and also of the New Covenant, which was at that time looked for, but is now accomplished through Christ. We find in them the law given by the Lord to the people of Israel, and likewise the great promises made unto them. For when the Prophets at times burned with zeal against the corruption which prevailed amongst the people, God

turned their minds to the future time: and they spake by the Holy Ghost, glorious things concerning it. The history of the Jews gives us a clear insight into the deep depravity of mankind. But are we then better than they were? We thence learn, with what patience, long suffering, faithfulness, compassion, forbearance, mercy; and also, with what earnestness and zeal against sin and wickedness, God deals with mankind. His grace, love, truth, wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, also his mighty arm are every where displayed in this book. There is a treasure of eternal truths of God in the books of the Old Testament.

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¶18

With respect to the New Testament: Whatsoever is said concerning God, his works, and his will in the Old Testament, is fully confirmed in the New Testament. In them we have all, which God hath spoken to us by his Son; and which the Holy Ghost hath revealed unto us by the disciples of Jesus. The New Covenant of Grace has this peculiar, that it is universal, and not confined to one or another nation only. The Old was a special covenant with the people of Israel. See (¶11). Whosoever believeth in Jesus belongeth to the New Covenant. In Jesus Christ we have the substance; therefore, in the New Covenant all those things cease, which in the Old Covenant were a shadow of that which was to come. For instance, since Christ himself is become a sacrifice, having atoned for us with his own blood, we now stand no longer in need of the sacrifices, which God enjoined to the people of Israel. In a word, when the New Covenant began, the Old Covenant ended: and those commandments which properly belong to the special covenant of God with the Israelites, are no longer binding in the New Covenant; for instance, all that belongs to the Divine worship according to the Levitical Law. See (¶13). But we have in the New Testament all the commandments of the Old Testament, which are universal. And all the promises of the Old Testament which allude to the New, are in the New more plain and clear, and we enjoy the accomplishment of them. In the doctrine of Jesus and his disciples, one truth is connected with another, like the links of a chain, and they ought and must not, be separated.

The doctrine of Jesus and his disciples, in its whole connection, is called in the Holy Scripture, *the Gospel*. For thus speaks our Lord and Saviour: "The law and the prophets (were) until John; and *since that time*

the kingdom of God is preached by the Gospel, and every man presseth into it; viz. into the kingdom of God, when they receive the Gospel in faith, with eagerness of heart. (Luke 16:16.) Hence Paul saith, “*God hath promised the Gospel concerning his Son afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.*” (Romans 1:1-3.) Now, in his Gospel, Jesus Christ, and the atonement which is made by his blood, is doubtless the chief point. In this view Paul says, “the god of this world, that is, Satan, hath blinded the minds of men which believe not. Lest the *light of the glorious Gospel of Christ*, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.” (2 Corinthians 4:4.) And therefore doth he also call the Gospel the preaching of the cross, viz. the cross of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18), and says that it is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” (Romans 1:16.) Therefore also on this account it is called “the Gospel of our salvation” (Ephesians 1:13), and “the Gospel of peace.” (Ephesians 6:15.) Thus may we plainly see, that the word Gospel is

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sometimes taken in a special or limited sense. But in most passages of the New Testament, as hath been already observed, by the word *Gospel*, the whole doctrine of Jesus and his disciples is understood; and thus our Saviour’s sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:6-7) is pure gospel.

Should it then be asked, What are the contents of the New Testament? The answer is, the Gospel; for the parts are all connected. When Jesus Christ is preached, then are those who receive him as their Saviour by faith, freed from all guilt and punishment, and their sin is pardoned. They are, at the same time, filled with the love of Jesus; for to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much. God doth, for Christ’s sake, adopt them as his children, and sealeth them with the Holy Spirit. They, through Christ, obtain access to the Father, and are able, with courage and entire confidence to pray unto him, as loving children pray unto their dear father. Because they love Christ, therefore do they also keep his commandments; and this they do with their whole heart. For a new heart is bestowed upon them, and God himself doth write his law in their hearts; that is, he not only makes known unto them what is well pleasing to him, but he bestoweth upon them likewise a desire and power to be obedient to his commandments, and especially to walk in love with every man. Do they err, and are they defective and debtors? They then confess their sins unto the Lord, who doth not only forgive, but also cleanses them from all unrighteousness. They suffer for Christ’s sake with joy, for they carry within themselves a living hope of eternal life; and thus, when they finish their course in this world, they depart full of comfort to their Lord and Saviour, and see his face in everlasting joy and

blessed light. All this, we have said, is thoroughly connected, and must not be separated. Whoever separates it, he is certainly in error, and walks not according to the Gospel. Whoever abideth in simplicity, and will not be moved from it, he certainly experiences every thing, which is laid down in the Gospel.

¶19

Thus much concerning the contents of the Old and New Testament; and whoever duly considers the whole, must value the Bible highly, and bless and praise God with his whole heart, that it has been preserved unto our times. For had this not been done, we should have been at a very great uncertainty, not with respect to the history only, but also with respect to the doctrine concerning God, his works and his will. We should have always had too much reason to think, Who knows, whether that which we hear from our forefathers is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; for we find by daily experience, that a story,

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which has been told by three or four persons only, is commonly very different from what it was in the beginning.

But should any one ask: Has not the Bible a pre-eminence above all other writings of men? Nay, should we not look upon and receive it as a divine book; that is, as a book that has been written by men of God, through the impulse, and with especial assistance of the Holy Ghost; and that, through grace, it has been given unto us by God for our salvation. Such a question must appear as strange to any one, who has tasted the sweetness of the word contained in the Bible, and to whom it has proved itself to be the power of God, who has found, and still daily finds life and nourishment in it; as an attempt to prove to a person that cannot or will not see, that the sun shines? Is it not still more strange to endeavour to prove this, to those, who fully enjoy the light of it. It is however possible, that the answering of this question may be useful to one or another person. But because the question refers as well to the Old as to the New Testament, we will therefore divide it, and consider one part of it, after the other.

¶20

That the New Testament has been written by men of God, by the impulse and peculiar assistance of the Holy Ghost, and graciously given unto us by God for our salvation, may, in the first place, been seen by its

contents. It contains, for instance, the Gospel (§18) which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It has proven itself in this manner to many thousands, yea, millions of men. Through faith they became the children of God; they received the forgiveness of their sins, and consequently enjoyed a quiet and easy conscience; they obtained freedom from the slavery of sin and of the devil; they became new creatures, and partakers of the Holy Ghost; the love of Jesus, and of their neighbour, filled their heart; they became willing and meet for every good work; they were enabled to endure tribulations joyfully, for the sake of Jesus; and God bestowed a living hope of everlasting life upon them, in which they either cheerfully departed this life, or still continue in it. We learn this not from history only, but we have in our own times also many thousands, who with great confidence can bear witness to it. If it be asked, But cannot the same be effected by the writings of pious men? I answer, Yes; but then these must be taken out of the Holy Scriptures: for otherwise it is impossible, nor can it be proved by any one example, that such effects have been produced by human writings, though composed by men of the greatest capacity.

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¶21

If, besides this, we reflect, who the persons were from whom we have the books of the New Testament, we shall be furnished with another striking demonstration of their divine origin. They were mean men, and yet of such good character, that they were esteemed by all as worthy and excellent people; and their very enemies could not call their character in question. The most of them were, at the same time, disciples of Jesus (§10) to whom he afterwards gave the testimony, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” These men he called to be apostles, commanding them to preach the Gospel, not in the land of Judea only, but also to all nations; and they having done this, notwithstanding all the grievous sufferings that befell them on this account, he owned them by many and great signs and wonders. He promised these his witnesses, that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8). And this accordingly came to pass after his ascension (Acts 2). He then, according to the word of our Saviour, was in them, and abode with them (John 14:16). He guided them, as the Spirit of Truth, into all truth (John 16:13). He taught them all things, and brought all things to their remembrance, whatsoever had been said unto them by their Lord and

Master (John 14:26) and what was at that time yet to come, he revealed unto them. Paul was afterwards added to the number of these witnesses and apostles. He had been before a strict Pharisee, and a man of irreproachable character, but a blind prosecutor of the doctrine of Jesus and of its confessors. But when, by grace of God, he was afterwards truly converted, our Lord Jesus Christ himself took him under his own tuition, and revealed his Gospel to him. Hence was he also able to say, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." (1 Corinthians 2:23.)

Thus, he was "an apostle, not of men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father," (Galatians 1:1) and no ways inferior to the other apostles. Nor did the Lord our Saviour by many signs and great wonders, own him less than the rest of the apostles. The Holy Ghost was also in him, so that he could confidently say, "We *speak*, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but *in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth*." (1 Corinthians 2:13; Romans 15:18; 1 Thessalonians 2:13.)

Besides the writings of these men of God which we have but just mentioned, we have also in the New Testament, those of Luke and Mark, who, though not of the number of the apostles, yet their writings have been deemed by the church of Christ of equal authority with the other

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Scriptures of the New Testament, and been taken into the Canon with the other books of the Bible.

The conclusion then of all which hath been now said is this: Did our Lord Jesus Christ, and his Father in heaven, ordain the apostles to go into all the world, and to make the Gospel known to all men?--Was also the Holy Ghost in, and did he abide with them, to the end that he might guide them into all truth, and bring to their remembrance all the words, which our Lord Jesus Christ had said unto them; and also reveal to them those things which were still to come to pass? And were the apostles really obedient to the guidance of the Holy Ghost in such a manner, that they have spoken what the Holy Ghost gave them to utter, with the words which he taught them? (See Matthew 10:20.)—We cannot doubt of these things, because they proved their doctrine to be the power of God unto salvation to all them that received it in faith; and God owned them by so many great signs and wonders.—Therefore they certainly experienced, when writing, the grace and assistance of the Holy Ghost, in such a manner, that we must esteem and receive their writings not as the words of men, but as the words of God to us; for the design of these writings was as extensive, yea much more so than their Discourses,

because they were intended for the instruction of mankind to the end of the world.

¶22

We have the greatest reason to rejoice, and to render sincere thanks to God for the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and particularly because they testify of Jesus, as has himself said. (John 5:39-46; Luke 18:31 and 24:44.) When the two disciples were going to Emmaus, he pointed out what was written concerning him, in order to demonstrate to them, that what he had suffered, he ought to suffer, and thus to enter into his glory; he at the same time opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures—they afterwards confessed.

“Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (Luke 24:13.)

Whoever is in this manner led by Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Ghost, into the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and whose mind he opens to understand it; whoever experiences in his heart a fire, enkindled in it by the word of Jesus’s sufferings, as it happened to the disciples on their way to Emmaus, will not doubt of the divine origin of the Old Testament. Such unhappy men, who seek for the evidence of human reason only, will certainly in that way never arrive at any certainty concerning the divinity of the Holy Scripture. (See 1 Corinthians 2:1.)

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But we find in the Holy Scripture of the New Testament sufficient proof of the divine origin of the Old Testament. We may first mention, that our Lord Jesus Christ refers continually to that which is written in the Old Testament. In his heavy temptation, which is described in Matthew 4:1, he strictly adhered to the words which are found in the Old Testament, and with them overcame the Tempter. He answered the unbelieving Jews, especially the Pharisees and Sadducees, with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and thus put them to silence; yea, from the very beginning of his ministerial office he bore witness to them.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matthew 5:17.)

Moreover, he gives to more than one prophet of the Old Testament the testimony, that he spoke by the Holy Ghost. Could our Saviour have spoken thus concerning the Scriptures of the Old Testament, if he had not looked upon them as being of divine, and not of human origin? His

disciples and apostles, after the Holy Ghost had been poured out upon them, acted as their Lord and Master had done, and appealed constantly to the Scriptures of the Old Testament; as, for instance, Acts 2:14, 3:22 and 4:25. Would they have done this, nay could they have done it, had they not believed that Moses and the prophets spoke and wrote by the Holy Ghost? To which we may further add the express words of the apostles, by which they testify, that God did speak by the prophets (Hebrews 1:1 and Acts 3:21), that “Holy men of God,” whose writings we find in the Old Testament, “spake as they were *moved by the Holy Ghost*” (2 Peter 1:21), and that all “*Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*” (2 Timothy 3:16.) Besides, “whatsoever things were written aforetime,” that is, in the old Testament, for of it the apostle is speaking, “were they not written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope?” (Romans 15:4.) Is not also the Scripture of the Old Testament, according to Paul’s expression “able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (Timothy 3:15.) Is not all this sufficient to convince any person, who is desirous to be taught of God, that we are indebted to the Holy Ghost for the Scriptures of the Old Testament likewise.

¶23

We accordingly find the whole counsel of God concerning our salvation in the Holy Scriptures, which we call the Bible. Timothy,

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during his childhood, had the Scriptures of the Old Testament only; and yet Paul writes to him,

“Since from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which *are able to make thee wise unto Salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.*” (2 Timothy 3:15.) For the Scriptures of the Old Testament “testified of Christ.” (John 5:39.) Nay, “to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins,” and with it everlasting life. (Acts 10:43.) Paul still adds, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (Timothy 3:16-17.)

Can the Holy Scriptures thoroughly furnish a man of God, that is, a man devoted to God; then certainly they contain completely the way of life. As to the Scriptures of the New Testament, it has been shown (¶18) that they contain the Gospel of Christ. But what is the Gospel of Christ?

The “*power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*” (Romans 1:16.) The Holy Scripture directs us to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. To the same purpose John says,

“God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. *He that hath the Son of God, hath life.*” (1 John 5:11-12.)

What John speaks of the writings which we call his Gospel, “These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah), the Son of God, and *that believing ye might have life* through his name.” (John 20:31.) The same may also be confidently maintained of the other Scriptures of the New Testament; although John wrote his Gospel with a very especial view to this end.

What Isaiah writes concerning the word of God, “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, *but the word of our God shall stand for ever*” (Isaiah 11:8), Peter applies, in the most proper sense, to the Gospel, and says, “And *this is the word*, which by the Gospel is preached unto you.” Thus, though men may be enraged, and rave violently against the Gospel, we can nevertheless confidently believe, that “the word of the Lord endureth forever.” (1 Peter 1:25.)

There appears in the style, throughout all of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, a very peculiar simplicity. In none of them are there any traces to be met with of that art of writing, which is taught in the schools of oratory and poetry. Nay, the holy writers have, even when they lived in places where oratory was most in vogue, as in Rome and Greece, guarded with the greatest care against it. Paul attests this; for example, to the Corinthians:

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, *came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom*, declaring unto you the testimony of God,” that is, the Gospel—“and my speech and my preaching *was not with enticing*

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words of man’s wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:1.)

His Epistles, written from Rome to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and to Timothy, are indeed full of wisdom, but also full of simplicity.

But though all the Scriptures in the Holy Bible, are uniform in setting every thing forth in simplicity, void of human art, yet they are nevertheless in expression and style, in certain respects different one from another. For who were the writers of them? Peter, John, and James, were fishermen; Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Ezra, priests; Daniel and Nehemiah, courtiers; David and Solomon, kings; Joshua, an heroic soldier; Moses, a man educated in all the philosophy and literature of the

Egyptians; Paul, a scribe and Pharisee.—Now, as all these men of God had neither the same education, nor the same way of life, nor the same complexion, so their style could not, in the natural course of things, be the same. But God was as little willing to make an alteration in the natural abilities, as in the stature of the servants he employed. If they gave him only their heart, for all the purposes he had with them, he then left all the rest to take its own natural course, as far as there was nothing sinful in it. Thus the same thing is propounded differently by the different holy penmen, and yet all is perfectly harmonious, and ultimately the same.

But we have this further remark to make; that the Holy Scripture, notwithstanding all which hath been said of its simplicity, doth by its style, evince itself to be a divine book. Who, for instance, has related so much, and things of such importance, in so few and such artless words as John? Who has testified, in such an incomparable manner, concerning the Majesty of God, and other subjects relating to it, as Isaiah hath done? But upon this subject alone a volume might be written, if we would treat of it at large.

¶24

That the Holy Scripture is in many places hard to be understood, is sufficiently proved by the numberless commentaries which have been written upon it. For we must either believe, that all who have published this kind of writings, have been doing an unprofitable, fruitless, and superfluous work, or we must grant, that many passages of the Scripture require an illustration and exposition. But now both the Law and the Prophets, and also the Gospel, are called a *light*. Of the Law it is said,

“The commandment of the Lord is *pure, enlightening the eyes.*” (Psalm 19:8.)

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“Thy word is a *lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*” (Psalm 119:105.)

“The Commandment is a *lamp, and the Law is light.*” (Proverbs 6:23.) Paul speaks of “the *light of the glorious gospel of Christ*” (2 Corinthians 4:4), and Peter calls “the word of the prophecy a *light that shineth* in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in the hearts.” (2 Peter 1:19.)

Now, if the Law, the Prophets, the Gospel, and all these together be light, how then can they be obscure? And if they be not obscure, why then are they explained?

There are many passages of the Holy Scripture, which may be illustrated by history, chronology, geography, mathematics, and other sciences. In the prophetic Scriptures many things are yet unaccomplished; and if in this respect we search for the times alluded to by the Holy Ghost, even conjectures and probabilities may not be regarded as quite fruitless, provided only they be not given out for truths of absolute certainty. All these things, and still more, which occur in the Holy Scripture, have their use and advantage; but to salvation they are not necessary.

But there are other passages in the Holy Scripture, which contain the fundamental truths necessary for our salvation. These are either in themselves quite plain; as, for instance, "This is the commandment of God, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another" (1 John 3:23), or they stand in other parts of the Bible in words perfectly plain; and may be illustrated by means of other Scripture passages that treat of the same subject, without much difficulty. For example, when we read,

"The anointing, which ye have received of him, *abideth in you*; and ye need not, that any man teach you, but as the same *anointing teacheth you* of all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, *ye shall abide in him*." (1 John 2:27.) And if by this we are reminded of that which Jesus Christ says concerning the Holy Ghost; then it is no longer obscure. The Lord our Saviour says, for instance, "The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, *abideth with you*, and shall be in you." (John 14:17.) "The Spirit of Truth *will guide you into all truth*." (John 16:13.) "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *he shall teach you all things*, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.) That is the pure truth, *and in it we are to continue*. (John 8:31.)

Whoever therefore by God's grace receives in faith, and simply follows those things that stand plainly in the Bible, will not miss the way to everlasting life.

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But why is that which appertains to salvation, and stands so plainly in the Bible, so hidden and obscure to many? Certainly it is not, because the words are not plain, but because the meaning of the words is not agreeable to them. This I will illustrate by an example. The Lord our Saviour said to his disciples, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets, concerning the Son of Man, shall

be accomplished. For (by the Jews) he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge (him) and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again.”

Now, were not these plain words? Nay, had not our Lord Jesus Christ spoken the same things several times before to them; and yet it is immediately subjoined,

“And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.” (Luke 18:31.) But why were such plain and clear words hid from them? And why could they not understand them? The thing itself, which was thus told them, was not at that time agreeable to them. For Peter had some time before, upon our Lord’s having expressed himself in much the same words, taken him aside, and rebuked him thus, “Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee;” upon which our Saviour rebuking him, called him Satan. (Matthew 16:21.) Thus, because they did not approve of the thing, the words therefore were incomprehensible to them.

The case is now exactly the same with regard to the words of the Holy Scripture, which are otherwise clear and plain respecting the way of Life; that is, concerning Jesus Christ, and the faith in him. This doctrine of Christ, and of the faith in him, was in Paul’s time a stumbling block to the Jews, who would by their own works obtain grace, forgiveness of sins, and everlasting life: but to the Greeks or Heathens, who deemed themselves to be wise, seeking after the wisdom of this world only, the Gospel concerning Christ the crucified, was Foolishness. The latter did therefore despise the counsel of God concerning their salvation, just as the former, and rejected the Gospel. And to all such, as were lost on account of their unbelief, the Gospel was hidden. (2 Corinthians 4:3.) And Paul proceeds,

“The god of this world, that is Satan, hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest *the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them.*”

But this is a righteous judgment of God upon them. For they loved darkness, rather than light, because their deeds were evil (John 3:19),

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and had more pleasure in unrighteousness than the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:12.) Therefore doth our Lord Jesus Christ praise his Father in Heaven, *because he had hid these things from the wise and prudent,* and had revealed them unto babes. (Matthew 11:25.)

This was the state of the Gospel in those days, when it was preached by Christ and his disciples: to them that perished it was foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18) and hidden. (2 Corinthians 4:3.)

What wonder therefore, if in our days the Gospel, which by the grace of God, was committed to writing for our sakes, should have the same effect as it had formerly, that it should be hidden to those that perish. The case is similar with the Jews in their reading the Old Testament, as Paul speaks. (2 Corinthians 3:14.) Oh! That veil, which hangs before their eyes when they read the Scripture, were once taken away! Then would they soon find, that the Scripture testifieth of Jesus. (John 5:39.)

¶26

This gracious promise of God, “as the rain cometh down, and the snow from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but waterth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give feed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth, *it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that, which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it*” (Isaiha 55:10-11), hath been sufficiently proved by the effects of the preaching of the Gospel in all the world. Wherever it meets with good ground, there doth the word bring forth fruit thirty-fold, sixty-fold, yea, an hundred-fold; and our Lord and Saviour shews us the reason why it does not always bring forth fruit. (Mark 4:3.) Paul says,

“The preaching of the Cross of Christ *is to us, which are saved, the power of God.*” (1 Corinthians 1:18. See Romans 1:16.) And thus does the word of God, written by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost prove itself to us.

It is clear from ¶20, that we ought to make the word of God, intrusted to us by the Lord in the Holy Scriptures, the rule and measure of our doctrine and life. Christ and his disciples have shown from the Old Testament, that we should receive such things as are commanded, and reject such as are forbidden. The Scriptures of the New Testament are full of this. They therefore laid the Old Testament, as the foundation of their doctrine, and proved from it, that Jesus is the true Messiah; and that which they deliver is the truth. Ought we not also now to have an high esteem for the Scriptures of the Old Testament as the basis of the New? The Bereans, having heard the Gospel, received it “with all

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readiness of mind, *searched the Scriptures daily* (those of the Old Testament) *whether those things were so?*” (Acts 17:11.) This is men-

tioned as being praise-worthy. We ought to do the same. The awful sentence of Paul ought to convince us, that we should abide by the Gospel, as it has been preached and written by the apostles, without making the least alteration, and that every thing should be proved by it; “though we, or an angel from Heaven, *preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received*, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:8-9.)

Who can therefore doubt, that we ought to make use of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament with all diligence? Are they not given us by God for our salvation, according to (¶20)? And shall this grace be bestowed upon us in vain? Were, those things, which were written aforetime, written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope? (Romans 15:4.) And shall we then not read them? Is the Holy Scripture profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness? (2 Timothy 3:16.) And shall we then not make use of it? Shall the word of God dwell in us richly in all wisdom? (Colossians 3:16.) We ought then certainly to make ourselves well acquainted with it. Did the Lord our Saviour speak words of everlasting life, according to the expression of Peter? (John 6:68.) And should we not be deeply concerned, to have a continual and practical experience with it?

But if we, while we read the Bible, were frequently to put the same question to ourselves, which Philip once put to the treasurer of Ethiopia, when he found him upon the way reading Isaiah, “Understandeth thou what thou readeth?” (Acts 8:30), it would render us so much the more attentive. And then it is good and necessary for us, not only gladly to receive, as the treasurer did, good instruction from those who understand it; but also to do that in particular, which Paul did, in reference to the Ephesians:

“I make mention of you *in my prayers*, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, *may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of him:*” (that you may become acquainted with him;) *the eyes of your understanding being enlightened*, that you may know what is the hope of his calling. (Ephesians 1:16 and 3:14.)

For the Holy Ghost guideth us into all truth, and maketh us wise, rightly to understand the Scripture.

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¶27

Whoever surveys and reflects at all upon the earth, with all that is in and upon it; the sun, and that which lives and moves in it; the Heavens, together with all those great bodies, which perform their regular courses in them, cannot but think, who has made and created all these things? For if we see but a shoe, a pot, or any sort of vessel, we are immediately convinced that there must have been some one who made it. How then should the many thousands, yea millions of things, which can neither exist nor subsist of themselves, be without a creator, from whom they derive their origin, and by whom, as long as it is his good pleasure, they are preserved? Therefore it is said in the Holy Scripture, “That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:19-20.)*

Thus no man in his senses can doubt that there is a Creator of all things, or a God; of whom we cannot think otherwise, than that he exists in, by, and for himself, without having had a source or beginning. Concerning those, who would persuade themselves to the contrary, the Holy Scripture says,

“The Fool hath said in his heart there is no God.” (Psalms 14:1.)

But *when* the world was created, and *how* it was made, we should never have known, if we had not the Bible. So far then it is a matter of faith, as by the grace of God, we steadfastly rely on what he has been pleased to let us know, and do not in the least doubt of it. The following words are very apposite:

“*Through Faith*, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” (Hebrews 11:3.)

¶28

That which we have concerning the Creation (Genesis 1 and 2) is expressed concisely, but with great majesty: for instance,

“God said, let there be light, and there was light.”

The whole description which Moses was given of the creation, is

*In Luther’s version it is thus: “The knowledge of God’s existence is self evident to men, for God hath shewed it unto them. For God’s invisible essence, even his eternal power and Godhead are

from the creation of the world clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, namely, by the creation of the world; so that they are without excuse.”

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suited to the nature of God; and the glory of him revealed in it, is immense.

Moses calls the Creator GOD, and explains himself no further upon this head. But the Holy Scripture gives us in several places some further information. Paul says,

“To us there is but one God, the Father; of whom are all things, and we in or for him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” (Corinthians 8:6.) And,

“God created all things by Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 3:9.)

These words harmonize with what we read in Hebrews 1:2, “God hath spoken unto us by his Son, by whom he also made the worlds.”

We have therefore to observe first, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is, in an especial manner, to be considered as the Creator of all things.

It is declared, in many places of the Old Testament, that God, who revealed himself so graciously to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God, who led the people of Israel out of Egypt, and adopted them for his own people, is none other than He who created all things; of which we may read particularly in Nehemiah 9:6.

But the New Testament says plainly, that it is Christ; God, who manifested himself, as a very man in the flesh. For thus it runs,

“By him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are on earth, visible or invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him.” (Colossians 1:16.)

The same doth John also speak concerning the WORD, which was made flesh, and dwelt among the Jews, whose glory the apostles saw, the glory as of the only-begotten son of the Father, full of grace and truth; who came to his own, the Jewish people, and his own received him not: and of him he expressly testifies that,

“All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.” (John 1:3.)

But if anyone would conclude from this, that Christ is only to be regarded as an instrument in the hand of God, he would err. For the Son of God at the Creation proved himself to be God; and this Scripture testifies emphatically, when speaking of it. For John, bearing a testimony concerning the Word, that is the Son of God, that all things were made by him, and that without him was not any thing made, that was made, said in the words immediately preceding,

“In the beginning” (before any thing had yet been created) “was the Word, and the Word was with God and the word was God.” (John 1:1.)

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The same we see from Hebrews 1:8 when it is said, “Unto the Son he *saith*, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever. –And *thou, Lord, in the beginning hast said the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou remaineth.*”

Christ is therefore, justly and according to the Scriptures, called the Creator of all things. Our old divines also acknowledged this, and proved the Divinity of Christ, by asserting among other arguments, that he was the Creator of all things; and of consequence he must be God. Their mind is likewise to be seen in some ancient Hymns. Where, for instance, it is said, “the whole world’s Maker, Sovereign—assum’d a servant’s body, mean, etc., O Lord, Creator without end!--How could’st thou ever condescend?” “O thou of all things Creator, thou kind paternal power.” Not to mention many other passages to the same purpose.

¶29

But that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things, and is with right so called, is evident from what follows. In the Acts of the Apostles, 4:24, the church, speaking to God, against whose holy Child Jesus, whom he had anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel gathered together, says,

“Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made Heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.”

And although we do not find in the Holy Scripture such clear and plain passages which in the creation is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, as it is to the Father and to the Son; (although Genesis 1:2, Psalm 33:6 and Proverbs 8:22, 27, 29 and 30 may be alleged to this purpose) yet doth the church sing with good reasons, “Come God Creator, Holy Ghost,” forasmuch as Father, Son, and Spirit are one. For there is one God, and of consequence one Creator only of all things. See Isaiah 44:24.

¶30

After the Creator had made all other things, he last of all undertook the creation of man. Him he would create after his own image, that he might be like him. (Genesis 1:26.) He was also to have dominion over

the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Genesis 1:28.)

He made every other thing by his mere word, when he spoke, Let it be! and it was so. But he did more than speak when he made man. As a potter takes a lump of clay, and forms a vessel of it; thus did he form

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man out of a clod of earth; and by means of that breath which he breathed into it, he gave him life. The woman he formed afterwards out of a rib taken from man, and brought her to him. (Genesis 2:7-18.) Thus then God finished the work of creation, and rested upon the seventh day. And Moses says, for this reason "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he had rested from all his work." (Genesis 2:2-3.)

¶31

A heart, that truly knows God, may easily discover what moved him to create the world. He is being the blessed God (1 Timothy 1:11 and 6:15) who is defective in no perfection or blessedness; his motives therefore in creating the world could not be, that he might acquire more. But he is described, Love. (1 John 4:8-16.) Now love is fond of communicating itself, it seeks some one; and this is, in the highest degree, the case with GOD the Lord. With this design of doing good, he brought millions and millions of creatures, and especially man, into existence; and with them also every thing requisite for their support. All this is to the praise of his glorious grace.

¶32

It is as certain, as it is incomprehensible, that God feeds and preserves all the creatures which he has made, and that he not only governs the helm of the great ship, the universe, but also supports each creature, be it ever so inconsiderable, but especially man. We call this the preservation of his creatures, the providential care of them, and the government of God over them: and this is in all respects as great a work of God, as the creation. Indeed every object that strikes our eye, and daily experience, as well as history, especially the Bible, teach us much of this. But yet that knowledge which we either do, or may obtain concerning it, by the testimonies of the prophets and apostles, and by Jesus Christ himself, is by far the most valuable.

There are many and great things, of which we know little more than that they exist. What, for instance, do we know of the fixed stars? We find, however, that all the great heavenly bodies, which are numberless, and we see part of them only, keep constantly in their order; their motions are so regular, that it may be, and really is known, for many years beforehand, upon what day, and at what hour, the Sun and the Moon, and the planets will be in this or that station; and for instance, when there will be an eclipse of the Sun or of the Moon. Who then upholds

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them, so that they not only still subsist, but also continue such order? Who else, but HE, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things. He it is of whom it is written,

“He *upholdeth all things* by the word of his power” (Hebrews 1:3), and “He is before all things, and by him all *things consist.*” (Colossians 1:17.) See also Psalms 74:16-17.

What can this imply, but that the creatures do not subsist of themselves, they must be upheld; and that it is the Son of God, who by his powerful word upholdeth all things. *For him* were all things created, and without him nothing shall subsist, for itself, and barely by its own power. Why this? Would it not be better, if every thing could run its course, to all eternity, like a piece of clock-work, without any attendance or winding up? I answer with Paul,

“Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why has thou made me thus?” (Romans 9:20.)

Is it not a favour sufficient for us creatures, that the Creator gives himself so much concern, and graciously takes so much care of us?

We farther observe, that trees, shrubs, plants and herbs have a life in their kind. They come forth into being, they grow, and having reached their proper age, they decay; yet they come again, propagate themselves, and likewise receive their nourishment. But who is it that keeps all this in order? God the Lord, who is the Lord, as well of the earth, as of heaven. This we may see and read in the whole 104TH and 147TH Psalms, and in many other parts of the Scripture. (Matthew 6:28-30.)

The creatures which live in water, in the earth, or in the air, are innumerable; they propagate their own kind; they increase till they attain their full growth; they have their nourishment and every thing necessary and suitable to their nature; they pass away again, and others supply their places. Who provides them? Who sustains them? God the Lord.

“The eyes of all wait upon thee,” (are the words of the Psalm 145:15-16) “and *thou giveth them their meat in due season: Thou openest thy hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing: and He giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever*” (Psalms 136:25), which is further corroborated by the words of Christ:

“Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet *your Heavenly father feedeth them.*” (Matthew 6:26.)

“*Not a sparrow falleth on the ground without your Father.*” (Matthew 10:29.)

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¶33

If we consider mankind in particular, it may sometimes seem, as if God had left them to take their own course, like the fishes in the sea; but he that believeth the Holy Scriptures cannot think so. For it teacheth us, that “He (the Lord) giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.” (Acts 17:25.) Likewise, that “he hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation,”—Where they shall live upon the earth and how long. (Acts 17:26.) Consequently, it is not the result of chance, but ordered by the hand of God, that a man should live at such a time, and be born in such a place. (Psalms 139:16.)

Paul says, “He has not left himself without witness, *in that he did good, and gave us rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.*” (Acts 14:17.)

God attends to the whole human race: “the eyes of the Lord *are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*” (Proverbs 15:3.)

“He maketh his Sun to rise *on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*” (Matthew 5:45.)

¶34

There is not a people in the world, to whom he has left himself without a witness, and to whom, by numberless proofs of his wise, gracious, and mighty providence, he hath not furnished an opportunity of knowing, honouring, and serving him. When they attain to a regular constitution by the assistance of wise magistrates, it has in general an appearance as if this was derived from natural causes only. But, according to the Scriptures,

“There is no magistrate, or higher powers, but of God; so that the powers that be, are ordained of God.” (Romans 13:1.)

“He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.” (Daniel 2:21.)

Again, it is not the effect of *chance*, and to be ascribed to natural causes only, that one nation becomes more powerful than another. For God says:

“I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed meet unto me.” (Jeremiah 27:5.)

And thus did he at that time, “give all the lands (and nations) into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, and into the hand of his son, and his son’s son.” (Jeremiah 27:6.)

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Thus bloody wars arise from the righteous judgments of God; and he punishes one nation, on account of their sins, by means of another nation that is not much better; and this is again punished, as soon as it exalts itself, by means of other nations. On such occasions we are apt to think, this or the other king has acted in his case wisely; he is become so powerful by such or such measures; on this account he has proved victorious; but in the Holy Scriptures it is said,

“The horse is prepared against the day of battle; *but safety (or victory) is of the Lord.*” (Proverbs 21:31.)

“The Lord looketh from Heaven, he beholdeth all of the sons of men; from the place of his habitation *he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.* There is no king saved by the *multitude of an host*; a mighty man *is not delivered by much strength.* An horse is a vain thing for safety.” (Psalms 33:13.)

And God himself says, “*I make peace and create evil* (as a righteous judge)—I, the Lord do these things.” (Isaiah 45:7.)

By the evil which God creates, we cannot here understand sin, for that is not from God: (¶1) but the punishment of sins, the devastation of whole countries, the extermination of many nations, and the grievous circumstances, which are usually the attendants and consequences of war.

The evil which God brings, according to his righteousness, upon a nation, includes also, his sending them either too much or too little rain; as for instance, in Elias’s time (Luke 4:25 and James 5:17-18), partly by this and partly by other means bringing famine into the land. Now we

look for the reason of such a famine in these or other natural causes, but the true reason of it is apparent from the following words:

“*When the land sinneth against me, by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out my hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it.*” (Ezekiel 14:13.)

When pestilential fogs, and infectious air, or other causes, bring grievous disorders upon man and beast, by means of which thousands are swept off, we must look upon these as the judgments of God, and not the effect of chance.

The same holds good, with regard to devastations occasioned by fire or water, hail or lightning, by earthquakes, locusts, and other epidemical afflictions. We may indeed assign certain causes for all these things; yet nothing befalls man, without God, the just and righteous judge.

Amos says:

“Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?” (Amos 3:6.)

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¶35

On this occasion, however, the following things deserve attention.

1. If we compare the undeniable benefits which accrue to men from the hand of the Lord, with the things which are grievous to them, we shall see that the former inexpressibly outweigh the latter. Likewise, whenever God does punish, doubtless it is done with severity; yet, whether this be inflicted with a view to amendment, or to stop such a course of wickedness in men, as would have aggravated their damnation; such dispensations are in truth love.
2. God does not plague and grieve men willingly; neither is it a pleasure to him, when he must exercise such severity; it is a joy to him when he can shew them mercy.

“At what instant I shall speak (says he) concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: *If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*” (Jeremiah 18:7-8.)

We cannot read the story of the city of Nineveh, as it is described in the prophet Jonah, without emotion: and whoever reads the Old Testament with attention, finds numerous examples of the mercy of God towards men; who when they had contracted the

- most horrible guilt, yet found grace in their wretched condition.
3. Whoever, under such severe afflictions, murmurs against God, does not make his load lighter, but heavier.
“Neither murmur ye (saith Paul) as some of them also murmured (See Numbers 14:2, 36) and were destroyed of the destroyer.”
 (1 Corinthians 10:10.)
 Jeremiah gives the best advice; who, amidst the dreadful judgments which befell the Jews, amongst other things, says,
“Wherefore doth a living man complain? A man, for the punishment of his sins; let us search and try our ways and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the Heavens. We have transgressed and have rebelled.”
 (Lamentations 3:39.)
 4. O might we never forget these words, *“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”* (Psalms 127:1.)

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¶36

God, however, does not take upon himself the care of whole nations and countries only, but his providence extends to all, and even to each person in particular.

Should any one assert, that the benediction pronounced by God before the fall, upon mankind, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28) will operate so powerfully, though all ages of the world, until the judgment, or last great day, as to enable men to be fruitful, to multiply, and to replenish the earth; such an assertion cannot be reasonably contradicted; but, should he hence conclude, that from that day God will concern himself no longer about the propagation of the human race, but rather permit every thing to take its own natural course, we cannot, confidently with the doctrine of the Holy Scripture, agree with him. Abraham complained to God, that he had no son, and obtained the promise, that He would give him a son. (Genesis 15: 2.) This was the consonant to that promise, which God gave him at his going out of his own country, and from his kindred. (Genesis 12, 2-3.) From this time, till Sarah, according to the word of the Lord, conceived and brought forth Isaac, twenty-five years elapsed. (Genesis 21:1.) Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife (after having lived with her in

the matrimonial state above 19 years) because she was barren, and *the Lord was entreated of him*, and Rebekah his wife conceived. (Genesis 25:21.) After Jacob had had Rachel seven years to wife, it is said “God remembered Rachel and *God hearkened to her*, and opened her womb, and she conceived.” (Genesis 30:22-23.) David says to the Lord, “*Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect*,” (that is, “before I was yet formed in my mother’s womb,” for this is implied by the context), “*and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*” (Psalms 139:16.)

The Lord saith to Jeremiah, “*Before I formed thee in the belly*, I knew thee: and *before thou camest forth out of the womb*, I sanctified thee, and ordained thee a prophet.” (Jeremiah 1:5.) From these passages it is evident, that in respect to the procreation and birth of man, God doth not suffer every thing to go, as it could and would go, according to the course of nature, but that he directs the whole with great wisdom. Therefore doth the Scripture say,

“*Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*” (Psalms 127:3.) See also Genesis 29:33, 33:5 and Psalms 48:9.

Now, as God the Lord doth, even in the mother’s womb, take the care of a child upon himself, and provide for it, we ought then to receive

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a child, whether it be male, or female, as by his appointment, and as out of his hand. When a child is born healthy, in its right form, with every sense and faculty of soul, it is an especial blessing of the Creator; but if a child comes into the world infirm, blind, deaf, deformed, sickly, or as an idiot, we are also to receive it, as from his hand. Solomon therefore says,

“Whoso mocketh the poor (for instance, a cripple) *reproaches his Maker.*” (Proverbs 17:5.)

With regard to the circumstances of men, we observe one person of a larger, and another of a smaller stature; to one a more beautiful form is given; one has more understanding; this man is rich, another is poor; with one every thing succeeds according to wish, the other meets with nothing but difficulties; one becomes very eminent, the other is low, mean, and contemptible; one is sprightly and healthy, the other is weak and miserable; one has many and great talents, the other has either none, or in a small degree; the one is strong and courageous, the other infirm and impotent; in the one there is a capacity for every thing, in the

other for little or nothing; one has a singular dexterity and turn for certain arts and employments, which the other is destitute of.

We cannot however but lament, that such who excel are liable to be self-conceited, and to despise others; although they should rather consider, that they are indebted to God, and should thank him for all their gifts; and that they will have the more to answer for, if they do not make the right use of them; and on the other hand, that those who are not possessed of such advantages, are commonly discontented, frequently envy others, and even murmur against God. Whereas, if they would properly consider, they have abundant reason to thank God for the talents with which he has intrusted them, and to admire the wisdom of his providence, which superintends the whole, and so closely connects the concerns of mankind, by a distribution of a variety of gifts blended with necessities.

There are few serious people, who, upon a review of their past life, cannot call to mind some peculiar circumstances which have occurred to them, besides the numberless benefits which they have enjoyed in common with others. One has been involved in this, and another in that distress; the one has laboured under this, another under different severe sickness; the one has been in this, the other in that danger; God has wrought a marvelous deliverance for one, which has left such an impression upon him as can never be defaced. Thus doth God seek to

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draw man to himself, in order to bestow still more benefits upon him, to his everlasting salvation. Yet God doth not stop here, but he addresses himself to the heart of man, and no one is forgotten. But what a misfortune is it that mankind for the most part, either pay no attention to such calls, or do not follow the divine drawing.

A man of understanding will readily allow this, when we are speaking of those, who have an opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus. But how is it with the poor heathen, who have never heard any thing of the Gospel? It is probable, that he deals with them in the same manner, in which he sought after mankind before they had the Holy Scripture. Had Job lived in the time of Moses, or earlier, as is thought by some, and not without ground, then the words of Elihu are applicable to this subject:

“In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed: *then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw men from his purpose, and hide pride from man.* He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing from the sword. He is chastened also with pain upon his

bed. *Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.*" (Job 33:15.)

In a word, the economy of God with every individual man in the world is such, that each, at the great judgment day will be left without excuse.

We have to add this only, that God, in an especial manner, keeps a watchful eye upon his children and servants. Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, "that the very hairs of their head are all numbered, so that not one of them can fall to the ground without their Heavenly Father. For not so much as a sparrow can fall to the ground without the Father's will, of how much more value are they than many sparrows?" (Matthew 10:29-30.) Therefore ought also the children and the servants of God to take every thing which befalleth them, whether it be great or little, sweet or bitter, with contentment and thankfulness, as out of the hand of God, and by no means to murmur or to be angry with things or persons who oppress them.

¶38

Whoever has received grace, to understand the views and ways of God with man, will find, that the aim of God is, in every occurrence, to lead him into the right way, and save him, either by loving-kindness or severity. Yet numberless instances of God's dealings with men in this

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world, remain hidden and inexplicable; especially if we do not recollect at the same time, that we have an eternity before us.

There is one thing, in particular, which seems inconsistent with the providence of God. By far the greatest part of mankind are poor, and many are slaves, or at least vassals, and these are, in general, treated severely; they maintain themselves with great difficulty, and what arises from their hard labour, serves either for their master's avarice, or luxury. If they are guilty of any misdemeanor, they are punished for it unmercifully. If they beget children, they know beforehand, that they will be in the same state of slavery and vassalage with themselves. And where people do not live in such a state of slavery and vassalage, yet the weaker are usually oppressed by the stronger. Now, if God has an eye upon the whole human race, how is it possible that he can allow these things? Ought he not to lift up his arm, and destroy those who thus torment their neighbour?

To this we may answer: The thoughts of God concerning riches and poverty are entirely different from the thoughts of men. For he knows that poverty tends much more to preserve men from many sins than riches. To what then do riches and affluence lead mankind? Should we speak the truth, in respect to the far greater part of men in affluence, it is impossible to say any thing very favourable of their conduct. For the most part they are forgetful of God and of his commandments, little considering themselves to be but stewards of their substance; and that God will one day call them to an account, whether they have conducted themselves in the employment of their riches according to his mind, and according to his word. They are, of all others, the most unfit for the kingdom of God: therefore our Lord says "That sooner may a camel go through the eye of a needle than a rich man enter into the kingdom of God." But the poor have not so many hinderances. The thorns, that is, according to our Lord's exposition, the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, do not choak the word of God in them. Their understanding is not refined by such artful deceits as are common in the education of the rich. Their self-love is not fed by such flatteries as are offered to the rich. They escape an hundred enticements to evil, which the rich seek with eagerness. Their necessity drives them to God: and in eternity it will become still more evident, that many thousands have reason to bless God for their having been poor in this world.

¶39

But what return is made to God for the concern and care which each individual man enjoys in common with every other, even the meanest
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creature? He receives but little thanks from the far greater part of men. There are but few indeed, who are pleased with what he does. Men have always something to object to his government. If a man has enjoyed the good state of health for forty years, and God then visits him with a fit of sickness, which is often for a few weeks only, and may even tend to the prolonging of his life, for which, with a childlike submission he should be thankful; yet this produces, alas! but too often, nothing but discontent. Though God gives a person food and raiment, sufficient for him and his family, yet is he very often dissatisfied, because his neighbour has more. If a misfortune befalls him, though he has even contributed to it himself, he is sure to complain.

But to allege one more example only, which we almost daily meet with; namely, complaints with respect to the weather. God gave Noah, who after the flood, was the ancestor of all mankind, this promise:

“While the earth remaineth, feed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.” (Genesis 8:22.)

But these words do not imply, that he would leave these things to take their own course as they usually do, and as natural causes produce their effects, without his special direction. Jeremiah preaches against Judah,

“This people hath a revolting and rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone; neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, *that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season; he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.*” (Jeremiah 5:23-24.)

“If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them, *then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and trees of the field shall yield their fruit.*” (Leviticus 26:3-4.) See also Deuteronomy 11:13-14 and Isaiah 30:23.

“He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: Who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word and melteth them: He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.” (Psalms 147:16.)

In brief, the Holy Scripture puts thunder and lightning, hail and storm, hoar-frost and snow, thaw and rain, heat and cold, wind and tempest, yea every thing, into the hand of God. Therefore we ought not to murmur, for by so doing, we sin against God, and against his government.

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¶40

What Paul says concerning the creation of the world, that “from it the invisible things of God are clearly seen” (Romans 1:20), the same may be also said concerning the *preservation* of his creatures. The faithful of the Old Testament were frequently and much employed with both these great works of God, and in the contemplation of them; and by these God also revealed himself to them. Moreover God was graciously pleased to appear to some of them, and to speak with them face to face; but he made himself known to others by his Spirit. (¶7) Thus, what they have left us in their writings concerning God, is of great value. In the New Testament, God, by the work of Redemption, has revealed himself in a

much more glorious manner. He has also spoken with us, both by his only-begotten Son, and by the Holy Ghost, who was in the disciples of Jesus. If we therefore keep to that which the Old and the New Testament teach us concerning God, we shall be safe.

¶41

When our dear Lord and Saviour was speaking with a poor woman about the true worship of God, he said,

“God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24.)

This admits of no further explanation; for we know not what a spirit is. This much however, is plain, that “a spirit hath not flesh and bones,” as men have. (Luke 24:39.) But as to the nature of a spirit, we rather choose to confess our ignorance, than to adopt the strange definitions with the inferences deduced from them, which are made use of in some philosophical, and even some theological schools. (1 Timothy 6:15-16.)

In speaking of the attributes of God, we must first observe, that he is *eternal, everlasting*. Abraham, as early as his own time, “called upon (or preached) *the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.*” (Genesis 21:33.) Every created thing has a beginning; but God neither has, nor can have a beginning. See Psalms 90:2. Doubtless our senses are lost whenever we enter into this subject. For though we carry our thoughts as far back as possible, yet eternity goes farther still; and though we look as far forward into futurity as we possibly can, yet we shall never reach the mark. The continuance of the creature depends upon its Creator. He could as easily annihilate as he could make us. But God remains ever the same, and has no end. He is therefore called, “The first and the last.” (Isaiah 44:6.) Concerning our Lord and Saviour, the Son of God, it is said,

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“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” (Psalms 45:6 in combination with the words, Hebrews 1:8 and Psalms 102:26-27.) On this account he also calls himself, “The first and the last.” (Revelation 1:17, 22:13 and Isaiah 44:6.) But when he is called, “The Beginning of the creation of God” (Revelation 3:14), this can by no means mean that he was the first creature, but that the creation took its beginning from him: “He created all things.”* (John 1:3 and Colossians 1:16.)

¶42

The *omnipotence* of God is more plainly described than his eternity.

“Whatsoever the Lord pleaseth, *that* did he, in heaven, and in earth, in the sea, and all deep places.” (Psalms 135:6.)

“Our God is in the heavens, *he hath done whatsoever he pleased.*” (Psalms 115:3.) Hence the bold declarations of the Scripture are ascertained, such as,

“*With God nothing shall be impossible,*” (Luke 1:37); and, “*He spake, and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast.*” (Psalms 33:9.)

For God, who is able to do all things, will however do nothing but what is conformable to his own wisdom, truth, holiness, righteousness, loving-kindness and mercy.

This enables us to solve many doubts, which might otherwise prove injurious; for instance, when a poor heathen hears, that there is an evil spirit, who seduces mankind, and even blinds their eyes, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them, he is apt to say, But is not God greater than this evil spirit, whom you call the devil? Why then cannot he kill him? Cannot he annihilate him? The answer is easy; God is certainly greater than the devil, and could undoubtedly annihilate him, because with him nothing is impossible: but he will not, and has wise reasons for yet sparing him, until the time of judgment, which will certainly take place.

The works of the creation, with its preservation, add a very considerable lustre to the omnipotence of God. The Jews were amazed, when they saw that our Lord Jesus Christ fed so many thousand men with a few loaves; and not without just reason. But they did not know

*Colossians 1:15-17. Our Saviour is called in our version, the *first-born* of every creature; but *Πρωτοτοκος* signifies the first producer, as well as the first produced; and in the connection the first sense seems to be the real meaning: “The first producer, *for by him were all things created.*”

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and reflect, that this Christ, who resided amongst them, was the Son of God; the very same, who for forty years successively had fed the people of Israel in the wilderness, who were so numerous, that exclusive of women and children, they amounted to six hundred thousand. Nay, they understood not, that it was He, who is the Almighty (Revelation 1:8) who had fed and nourished all creatures, which are in the water, on the earth, and in the air, for so many hundred, nay thousands years: “Who hath first given to him?” (Romans 11:35.)

That God is *omnipresent*, he himself declares by the mouth of Jeremiah,

“Am I a *God at hand*, saith the Lord, and not a *God afar off*? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. *Do not I fill heaven and earth?* saith the Lord.” (Jeremiah 23:23.)

Hence says Paul,

“He is not far from every one of us. For *in him we live, and move, and have our being.*” (Acts 27:27-28.)

“*Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right-hand shall uphold me.*” (Psalms 139:7.)

It is therefore certain, that God, who filleth heaven and earth, is not far from every individual person, wherever he may be. Our Saviour makes an especial application of this to himself, and to believers in these words,

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20.) And,

“Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:20.)

Certain it is, therefore, according to the Scripture, that God is omnipresent, and that Christ is ever among such as believe on his name, though they be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. But who is able to comprehend this? Indeed there have not been wanting some, who have endeavoured to make this intelligible both to themselves and others. But since we know not the nature of God’s invisible essence, how is it possible to make that comprehensible, which must spring from it? In the mean time, however, this doctrine is to the faithful, and such as love God, as enlivening and comfortable, as it is dreadful and formidable to others.

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The omnipresence of God is connected with his *omniscience*; by which not only that which is past, but also that which is to come, is, in all its parts, and without exception, as clear to him, as that which is present. On this account, our Lord and Saviour in particular, has eyes ascribed to him, as a flame of fire (Revelation 1:14) because he knows all things.

(John 11:17.) The Holy Scripture speaks every where of the omniscience of God. We may consult 1 Samuel 16:7, 1 Kings 8:39, 1 Chronicles 29:17, Psalms 139:1-4, Proverbs 15:3 and Jeremiah 17: 10 and 22:19 to say nothing of other passages. It is a great consolation to those who love him, that he thoroughly knows their hearts; is acquainted with their inmost wishes, sees their desires, hears their prayer, and is always furnished with the means of helping them: whereas those who do not love him, are on this account afraid of him, and they have just reason. But woe unto such who with unconcern, rashly pursue their wicked ways.

¶45

The *wisdom* of God is so immense, that he for this reason is styled *the only wise God*. (Romans 16:27 and 1 Timothy 1:17.) He always chooses that which is best, and whatsoever he undertaketh, that he gloriously executeth. The wisdom of God is every where displayed; whether we take a view of the creation in general, or of any of its parts in particular: nor is it less evident either in the preservation of all things, which he hath created, or in the government of the whole world. But above all it appeareth in the work of Redemption, which gives occasion to Paul to say, “That now,” namely in the New Testament, “unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places,” that is, to the angels, “may be known by the church of Christ the manifold wisdom of God.” (Ephesians 3:10.) And in another place, treating of this subject, viz. the church of Christ, and the members chosen of God for it, he concludes with these words:

“O the depth of the riches both of the *wisdom* and knowledge of God!” (Romans 11:33.)

¶46

When God is called *holy*, we are instructed, that he is absolutely devoid of all impurity and pollution, and that he is the source of all purity and perfection. In this sense he says,

“Ye shall be holy, for *I am holy*.” (1 Peter 1:16 and Leviticus 19:2.)

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When Isaiah saw the King, the Lord of Hosts, with his eyes (Isaiah 6:5), that is, when he saw the glory of Christ (John 12:41), the seraphims, who were present, cried one to another,

“*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts*, the whole earth is full of his glory.” (Isaiah 6:3.)

The holiness and righteousness of God in the Holy Scripture, are frequently combined one with the other; as, for instance in Psalms 145:17.

“The Lord is *righteous* in all his ways, and *holy* in all his works.”

In this passage is first implied, that his works are irreprehensible, and that every thing he does is right (Deuteronomy 32:4); and then it also indicates, that he will render to every man according to his deeds. (Romans 2:6 and 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7.) The Bible is replete with such histories as are distinguished particularly by this, that, amidst the judgments which God brings upon a whole country, or upon individuals, the reasons are recorded which moved him to it. And when the prophets predict, how God will punish this or the other country, this or the other person, they at the same time specify the sins which have so justly deserved it. See Psalms 5:5. In the New Testament frequent and ample mention is made of that day which God has appointed, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31) and the way is pointed out, by which they may flee from the wrath to come; viz. by faith in Jesus Christ, in whom we have redemption through his blood; even the forgiveness of sins.

¶47

Love and *loving*, are so peculiar to the essence of God, that he is called *Love*. (1 John 4:8 and 16.) When this love refers to the majesty of God and our unworthiness, it obtains the name *Grace*. Does it refer to the kind and tender share he takes in our distress and misery; it is then called *Compassion*. If it has respect to persons suffering under distress and misery, and especially to such as are quite helpless, it is called *Mercy*; If in reference to God, who waits long, before he chastises and punishes, although we had deserved it; then it is called *Long-suffering*. See Romans 9:22.

Moses, having besought the Lord to shew him his glory received this answer from him:

“I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee.” (Exodus 33:18-19.)

And the Lord descended in a cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. (Exodus 34:5.) What then was the

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subject of this Proclamation? As the Lord passed by before Moses, HE, (the Lord) proclaimed:

“The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth: keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” (Exodus 34:6-7.)

And that we might not doubt that the Lord himself spoke these words, we must add Numbers 14:17-18. Where Moses says unto the Lord,

“Thou hast spoken and said, the Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression.”

This proclamation of the Lord, who stood with Moses, concerning the LORD, who passed by Moses, remained ever in remembrance amongst the faithful, both of the Old and of the New Testament; and they very frequently call it to mind. For instance, there are: 2 Samuel 14:14; Psalms 103:8, 106:1, 107:1 and 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Luke 1:50; and Ephesians 2:4. Nay, God himself reminds them of it; for instance Isaiah 54:7-8 and Jeremiah 31:20. (See ¶32 and others.)

¶48

Finally, when we say that it is an attribute of God to speak the truth; we mean, that it is impossible for him to do otherwise. Should a man say in his haste “all men are liars” (Psalms 116:11) or, as it is otherwise expressed, no man can be depended upon; no one would venture to contradict him. The very Angles of God did not all abide in truth. (John 8:44.) But that GOD could err or lie, is impossible. (Hebrews 6:18.)

All the promises of God, by which he has especially engaged himself to have mercy upon men, (and abundance of such there are in the Prophets of the Old Testament) have been fulfilled in Christ, who is himself the Truth. (John 14:6.) And therefore says Paul,

“All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in him, Amen.” (2 Corinthians 1:20.)

It seems however in a few occurrences of the Old Testament, as if the threatenings of God had not taken place. Jonah, for example, preached at Nineveh,

“Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” (Jonah 3:4.)

Elijah said to Ahab, in the name of the Lord,

“Behold I will bring evil upon thee.” (1 Kings 21:21.)

But when the people of Nineveh believed the word of the Lord, proclaimed a fast, cried mightily unto God, and turned every one from his evil way; God also repented of the evil he said he would do unto them, and he did it not. (Jonah 3:5-10.) And when Ahab, having heard the words of Elijah, rent his clothes, put sackcloth upon his flesh, and

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fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly; the word of the Lord came to Elijah,

“I will not bring the evil in his days.” (1 Kings 21:27.)

But we ought to understand the true meaning of this kind of threatening. Although the words, if you do not turn from your evil ways, are not expressly mentioned, yet they are however implied. And so the people of Nineveh took it; and they were not mistaken. Thus also Ahab understood it, and not improperly. If we look upon the threatenings of God in this light, the event perfectly harmonizes with them. (See ¶35.)

Of the IMAGE of GOD.

¶49

But to return to man; who as it hath been said (¶30) was created in the image of God. Moses doth not explain, in what that image and likeness of God consisted. But if we would clearly discover, what man was possessed of before the Fall, and what, by the grace of Jesus Christ, he is to be restored to, we must turn our eyes to Jesus Christ; not properly in the character of the Lamb of God, who made himself an offering to God for us, but in that point of view only, as he was a man. As a man he was in the closest communion with his Father; and the Holy Ghost dwelt in him. The law of God was in his heart; that is, he was full of the love of God and of men. He was filled with wisdom, and was in favour with God and men; that is, he was well pleasing to God, and esteemed by men. He gladly did the will of his Father, and it was his meat; that is, he lived in it, and hungered to do the will of his Father. He had no self complacency, nor did he seek his own glory; for he was lowly in heart. He was also meek of heart; when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to the Father. Nevertheless, he was zealous for his Father's honor, and was provoked to wrath by men, because of the hardness of their hearts. In other respects he was compassionate, and deeply affected when he saw the misery of poor men. Whoever stood in need, him he gladly assisted, without examining whether he was worthy of it or not. Amidst the temptations of Satan, he stood firm and unshaken; keeping to the word and commandments of God. He looked to the Father for every thing, and often spent whole nights in prayer. He sought to live at ease, nor did he covet the treasures of this world. He was always entirely satisfied with the circumstances wherein he found himself, according to the will of his Father. He bore the greatest trials with patience, and with perfect resignation to his Father's will. His conversation was holy; and he was able boldly to stand before his enemies, and say, Which of you can convince me of sin or with justice accuse me? He confessed the truth, even under such circumstances as he knew would cost him his life. Having no sin, he would not have died, had he not given himself up to death for us.

What hath here been said concerning the man Jesus Christ is not conjecture, but every circumstance of it is clear and plain from the Holy Scripture. Now, as Christ is expressly called the *Image of God* (Hebrews 1:3, Colossians 1:15 and 2 Corinthians 4:4) it is thence evident, that this was the condition of Adam before the fall, when he was like unto God,

and bore his image; and that thus we shall also be, as soon as we are reinstated into the Image of God.

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No sooner doth a sinner, by faith in Christ, become a child of God and a new creature, than the Image of God begins to take place in him. And, if he grows in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, we may apply to him that which Paul describes,

“We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, *are changed into the same image, from glory to glory*, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:18.)

If we add the words of Paul;

“Put on the *New Man, which after God is created* in righteousness and true holiness.” (Ephesians 4:24.)

We may then comprize what hath been said in a few words, and confidently assert, That the Image of God, or likeness to God, consists in the knowledge of the truth, and in righteousness and true holiness.

Men, from this happy condition, in which they had been created, fell into the depth of misery by sin. Their sin consisted in disobedience to the only prohibition, which God the Lord hath given them; if they transgressed, they were positively threatened to be punished to death. They ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; although God had told them they should not eat of it. Eve yielded to the seduction of the serpent (as mentioned in ¶57) who caused her to suspect the truth of the prohibition of God; intimating at the same time, that she would become truly wise, and as God; and she need not be afraid of death, for she should not die on that account.

Should any man think upon this occasion; but was it then so great a sin, for man to eat of the fruit of the tree which was in the midst of the garden? And did it merit such a severe sentence of death, as to extend to the whole human race? The answer is, disobedience to God is properly the sin (See Romans 5:19.), and it is a detestable, horrible and dreadful wickedness, whether it shew itself in small or in great matters. (1 Samuel 15:23.) Accordingly to think even: oh, this or that is a mere trifle, and though we act in some measure against the will of God, yet it is of no great significance; can be looked upon in no other light, than as a doctrine which takes its rise from the school of Satan. But if we reflect duly upon the conduct of our first parents, we shall soon discern, how detestable their own transgression against God was. God had created them in his own image, and given them the preference above other creatures. The more he intrusted to them, the more might he justly expect from them, and so much the more heinous was their transgression. Should we take the words of his prohibition in their literal meaning, (and is it not most conformable to the subject to abide by this meaning?) as he then put them in possession of Paradise, and gave them the fruits of all the other trees; it was therefore nothing less than a daring undertaking against God, to eat of the forbidden tree. God had said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:17.) But the serpent said, "Ye shall not surely die." (Genesis 3:4.) Ought they not, according to the grace bestowed upon them, to have believed God rather than the serpent? The serpent endeavours to stir up in them a suspicion of their Creator, and an inclination to be independent of him, by these words, God doth know, that in the day ye eat of this tree, you will be, as he is; and *this forever* he would not have you to enjoy. Ought they not immediately to have been affrighted at a suggestion like this; so as either to have banished it from them, or to

have fled from it? But Eve believed the serpent (2 Corinthians 11:3) and longed to eat of this tree, *because it made wise*. I will however eat of it,

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and thus will my eyes be opened, and I shall become as God. It was a thought, worthy of Lucifer, and this was the dreadful fall.

¶51

The consequences of this fall were in all respects lamentable; but we will here speak only of the deplorable change it made in men. They had been naked hitherto, and were not ashamed; they appeared just as God had created them; and knew nothing of what was perverse, and unbecoming a creature of God, that bears the image of its Creator. But now various things occur, which are incompatible with the Image of God, and of which they have reason to be ashamed; and therefore they make themselves aprons of fig leaves. Their hearts also smite them, and they are conscious of having done wrong; therefore they dread God, and hide themselves, when they hear his voice. Alas! What blindness! Whom do they dread? Their only and gracious Benefactor, from whom they, and all creatures had hitherto received nothing but love and kindness. From whom do they hide themselves? From the Omniscient God, whose eyes are like flames of fire, and in whose sight the most hidden recesses of the heart are disclosed. God then charges them with their sin, and seeks to bring them to know, to be contrite, to confess it. But how little did it affect them! The answer Adam gives God is *The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, hath seduced me*; thus laying the fault upon God. His words admit of no meaning but this; If thou hadst not given me the woman, I should not have fallen into this misfortune. Eve says, *The Serpent beguiled me*. Consequently their understanding was then darkened, and they knew neither themselves, their Creator, nor his will.

¶52

This was the death with which God had threatened them, in these words, *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*. They were deprived of the life, which comes from God, which is connected both with knowledge of the truth, and with holiness and righteousness. The Spirit of God, who dwelt in them, as long as they were like unto God, and in his own image, was withdrawn from them. There was no longer joy in the Lord, fellowship with him, or love to him, and his word. They were now in themselves, and according to the present state of their depraved

nature, unfit for, and dead to all that was good. This state of man is therefore in the Holy Scripture called Death; for instance, Romans 8:6.

“To be carnally minded *is Death*; but to be spiritually minded is Life, and Peace.”

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And when a man is converted, he is said to be passed from Death to Life. And on the other hand, if any one continues in this wretched condition, and especially if he does not love his brother, he abideth in Death. (1 John 3:14.)

James says “Sin, when it is finished, *bringeth forth Death*” (James 1:15) and this was experienced immediately by our first parents, on the very day they had committed sin.

Thus then they forfeited the happiness which God had bestowed upon them, of being in the image and likeness of God. (Genesis 3:22.) Behold, Adam is become as one of us, to “know good and evil;” but, behold, Adam has been-but now is no more-as one of us; the image of God is now gone, and lost by sin; he now knows what is good and evil; that is, he has tasted of sin and its fruits, which he knew nothing of before. Hence his children came into the world in the same condition: on which account it is said (Genesis 5:3.),

“Adam begat a son *in his own likeness, after his image,*” and not after God’s.

Bodily death likewise followed upon his spiritual death; and how must our first parents have been affected at the news of Cain’s having slain his brother Abel! The earth was also cursed for the sake of man; it was only to produce thorns and thistles of itself, and he was to eat his bread with trouble as long as he lived.

¶53

Let us now see, what the Holy Scripture says of the prosperity of the first man and woman; that is, of the whole human race descending from them. When the eyes of the Lord, from which nothing can be hidden, looked upon man, before the deluge, he found, that

“The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” (Genesis 8:21.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he showed Nicodemus, how impossible it was for any one to enter into the kingdom of Heaven, unless he became a new creature, assigns this reason for it:

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” (John 3:6.)

The corrupted sinful nature of both body and soul, is called Flesh in the Bible. Therefore the meaning of the words of Christ is: the whole

human race, who are begotten and born of parents depraved both in soul and body, are likewise in soul and body depraved sinful creatures. As a red hot iron is pervaded by fire, and a wet sponge by water, so are they likewise thoroughly pervaded by sin. And as a piece of ground, which lies under the curse, brings spontaneously forth nothing but thorns and thistles; so do they also, unless they be amended by the grace of God,

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produce nothing but bad fruits. Our Lord Jesus Christ informs us, that the heart of man is the source of all wickedness. For he says,

“From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these things come from within.” (Mark 7:21.) See also Matthew 15:19.

If then all these evil things come from within, and out of the heart, they must certainly have been first there, though concealed.

¶54

Hence it is indisputably plain, that poor man, before he becomes a new creature, doth not resemble his Creator; nor can the image of God be found in him. See Romans 3:23. We need to compare what has been said (¶49) concerning the image of God, with what has been alleged from the Scripture (¶53) and there can be no doubt upon the subject. This corruption of soul and body is called in the Scripture, the Old Man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; as the image of God, whereunto we by Christ are renewed, is called the New Man, which is created by God in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:22.)

Hence it appears, that no man, after the fall, is able to fulfill the law of God by any powers inherent in himself, or to save himself in this way. For, being carnal, he is consequently carnally minded; and

“The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Romans 8:7.)

Therefore says the Scripture,

“There is none righteous, no, not one.” (Romans 3:10.)

But it is not man’s will only, but his understanding is also depraved. What Paul says of the Gentiles,

“Whose understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Ephesians 4:18), is every man’s case, as long as he continues in this deplorable condition, and does not, by the grace of God, which is ready to help him, yield himself up to amendment.

It has been proposed as a question, whether man does not always choose that which he esteems to be the best? Whoever answers this in the affirmative, must also be obliged to allow the understanding of man to be extremely depraved. For men commonly choose the most abominable things, which plunge them into temporary and eternal destruction. Nor if, according to this supposition, they never choose any thing but what they esteem the best, they must necessarily be dreadfully deceived by their understanding.

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¶55

From what has been said of man's depravity, we are not to suppose that he is sunk into such a state, as to be incapable of being any more renewed, or reformed. For although he is become like a field, which spontaneously brings forth nothing but thorns and thistles, he may nevertheless, by Christ, and for Christ's sake, be changed into a soil which produces good fruit. Although his understanding be darkened, as to the things appertaining to salvation, yet he may in arts and sciences, make an astonishing proficiency, and he may be enlightened, and enabled rightly to comprehend and judge of such things as tend to his salvation. His will, which by nature is inclined to evil, and in opposition to that which is well-appealing to the Lord, may be changed, so as to long after that which is good, and to abhor that which is evil. He can again attain to such a state, that sin shall not so reign in his mortal body, that he must obey it in the lusts thereof.

This is the aim of God with all men. For he created them out of love, with a view of communicating himself to them, and by so doing, to make them happy creatures. And after they had lost this happiness, and plunged themselves into unspeakable misery, then did he, through Christ, find out a way to redeem them. How he obtains his aim with such as hear the Gospel, and receive it in faith, hath in some measure been touched upon already. (¶18.) But how is it with those to whom the Gospel of Christ is unknown, and who have no opportunity of hearing or reading it? We are without all doubt to apply these words to them also; "God would not, that any should perish; and God will have all men saved," and thus is God said to be "*the Saviour of all men*, especially of those that believe." (1 Timothy 4:10.) Seeing Christ is the propitiation for the sin of the whole world, they cannot of course be excluded. That God pursues each man, with the aim of bringing him into the right path, has already been mentioned in (¶37.) The way and manner in which he, according to his loving-kindness and wisdom, takes upon himself the care of such people to whom he has not given the Gospel, in order to

bring them into another way, cannot indeed be so precisely determined, because the Bible does not speak much about it, yet we have good ground to form the following ideas on this head:

1. That whoever surveys the things which present themselves to his sight, may conclude, that there must be a great God, who made all these things. See Romans 1:19.
2. That whoever does not consider only how all these things arose, but also how they are all preserved, may, easily see, that he must be an incomprehensibly wise, good, and mighty God, who governs all this.

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3. That whoever will give himself the trouble carefully to consider, may be led to think that we ought in justice to fear, honour, love, serve, thank, praise, and obey, this good, wise, and mighty God, to whom we are all indebted for existence and preservation. See Romans 1:21.
4. That every one may know that he shall not injure men, whom God has created, and who are preserved by him; but that he should shew love and kindness towards them.
5. That every man may see wherein he is deficient in the above points, and what he ought to strive for. See Romans 2:15. Moreover, that he should seek for the pardon, grace, and help of this God.
6. That God doth, partly by means of his loving-kindness, and partly by his severity, incite every man to cease from evil, and to do that which is good: and that by his spirit, and according to his immeasurable grace, he also inclines his heart to it, and enables him so to do. (See ¶37.) For he it is, who “worketh in men both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13 and James 1:17.) Thus a man may, after the fall, be preserved, by the grace of God, from wicked ways; as for instance, from telling lies, stealing, whoring, committing murder; nay, he can practice that which is good; for instance, he can be industrious, live a sober and temperate life, be thankful to God for his benefits, pray for his help, be serviceable to his neighbor, and behave towards him with discretion, tend the sick, relieve the poor, lodge a stranger, confess the truth, defend the innocent, avoid evil company, behave as a good citizen, and the like. In this way even a heathen, who never heard of either the law of Moses, or of the Gospel of Christ, may do the works of the Law, according to Romans 2:14, although his sufficiency for so doing comes from God. (2 Corinthians 3:5.) This does not indeed make him a new creature, because we become such only by faith in Jesus Christ; yet God will also not leave this unrewarded.

Numberless are the sins, which flow from that original corruption, which is treated of in ¶54. For every thing which is opposite to the mind and will of God, in the propensities, desires, passions, thoughts, words, demeanor, and works of man, is sin. Consequently there is no man who can look upon himself as innocent. See ¶53.

Thus, “if we say we have no sin, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” (1 John 1:10.)

Therefore says David,

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“Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for *in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*” (Psalms 143:2.)

And Paul says, “There is no difference, for *all have sinned*, and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:22-23.)

But men do not sin merely by mistake, or out of ignorance; but they do it, alas! even knowingly, and deliberately. Thus it is said, for instance, of the Jews, “Thou that preacheth, a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayeth, a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, dishonoureth thou God?” (Romans 2:21.) To this class belong also such, who, though inwardly full of hypocrisy and iniquity, assume the appearance of virtue and piety; as did the Pharisees and the scribes. (Matthew 23:27-28.) Do men persist in their sins; then, of course, wickedness becomes so habitual, that they are as little capable of doing good, as the Ethiopian is to change his skin, or the leopard his spots. (Jeremiah 13:23.)

And if they do not become obedient to the truth, which God gives them knowledge of, but obstinately persist in evil, they are then punished with sins. This was the very case both with the heathen and with the Jews. For seeing the former knew the existence of a God, and yet did neither glorify him as God, nor were thankful, therefore were they, by the righteous judgment of God, given over to a reprobate mind, and fell into the most detestable sins: it went still worse with the latter, to whom God had intrusted more knowledge; because they did not prize such grace, but trod it, as it were, under their feet. See Romans 1:21, 2:19 and 3:10. I will say nothing at present of men who “being entangled in the snare of the devil, are taken captive by him at his will” (2 Timothy 2:26) because more will soon occur on that head. Thus then are all men, who do not submit to be delivered from their corruption, under the wrath

of God, according to Ephesians 2:3; and forasmuch as they have all sinned (1 Kings 8:46), so hath death also passed upon all men. (Romans 5:20.)

We now pass from men to spirits, and shall confine ourselves to that only, which we find upon this head in the sacred Scripture. For all that hath been imagined, spoken and written besides upon this subject, is so little to be depended upon, that nothing can be built upon it. If mankind were able and willing to consign to perpetual oblivion, those stories concerning the appearance of spirits, which so many are fond of circulating and relating to children, it would prevent a great deal of mischief.

The Holy Scripture speaks of some beings which are, and of others which are not, the objects of sight. When we term the latter invisible, the meaning is only this, that they are not ordinarily seen, although they might even appear and be seen. The nature of spirits is unknown to us, and all we know is, that they have not flesh and bones, as men have. The Holy Scripture teaches us, that there are evil as well as good spirits; and we may learn from it every thing that is necessary for us to know, both of the one and the other.

Since John testifies, that all things were made by the Word, which is God and that without him was not any thing that was made (John 1:3), it is clear, that not the good only, but also the evil spirits, derive their origin from him. This is also corroborated by the following words:

“*By him,*” (the Son of God), “*were all things created,* that are in heaven, *visible* and *invisible.*” (Colossians 1:16.)

No spirit was created evil; for God can create nothing which is in itself evil. But the devil and his adherents abode not in the truth, that is, in the holiness their Creator endued with them. (John 8:44.) For the devil, and his angels, left their own habitation, and their principality, which means their glorious state (Jude 6); and by their sin (1 John 3:8) drew a heavy judgment down upon themselves. (2 Peter 2:4.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 11:18) ascribes a kingdom to Satan, by whom here, as appears by the context, the chief of the evil spirits is meant; declaring, that all that belong to this kingdom have a wicked mind and aim, and it is, in so far, not divided against itself. Therefore the Dragon and his angels, and their war with Michael and his angels, is spoken of (Revelation 12:7); and the Dragon is named directly after the great dragon, the old serpent, called the Devil and Satan. (Revelation 12:9.) His name is *Satan*, because he is an enemy of good; the *Devil*, because he delights in lies, deceit, and accusation; the *old Serpent*, because he beguiled Eve with his subtlety. (2 Corinthians 11:3.)

Therefore also Christ calls him a *murderer* from the beginning, for he plunged our first parents into death; also the *father of lies*, because he

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imposed a lie upon our first parents, telling them, that they should not surely die, but be like God, if they would eat of the forbidden trees. (John 8:44 and see ¶50.)

He it is that deceiveth the whole world (Revelation 12:9); and the world, that is, those who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, will also do his lusts. (John 8:44.) They are under the power of Satan. (Acts 36:18.) He and his angels are called, "*Principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world.*" (Ephesians 6:12.) Our Saviour himself calls him "*The prince of this world*" (John 14:30 and 26:11); and he is that spirit, who at this time worketh in the children of disobedience, that is, in those who do not stand in the faith of the Son of God. (Ephesians 2:2.) He it is, who soweth the tares, the children of the wicked one, wicked men, among the wheat, namely, the children of the kingdom, the true members of the church of Christ. (Matthew 13:38-39.) Nay, he is the *god of this world*, whom this world serves, and according to whose will it acts, who likewise blinds the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them. (2 Corinthians 4:4.) It is also he who taketh away the word of God, which they have heard, out of the hearts of many, lest they should believe it, and be saved. (Luke 7:11-12.) As long as they continue in their sins, and do not turn to God, they are called his children, and he is their father, according to John 8:44. If men do not recover themselves out of "the snare of the devil, they are then taken captive by him at his will." (2 Timothy 2:26.) Thus, as it is on the one hand certain, that men, who are yet children of the devil, *will* do their father's lusts, so is it likewise, on the other hand, certain, that they often *must* do it. They are his slaves, and he tyrannizes over them, so long as they will not be set free from his yoke.

¶58

Our Lord Jesus Christ did therefore become man,

"That, through death he might destroy him *that had the power of death, that is the devil*; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15); and, "That he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8.)

Thus, when a man finds himself bound to do the will of the devil, and that he is unable to free himself from his slavery, and from sin,

though heartily weary of it, he wishes from the very bottom of his soul to be set free from it, and turns in faith to the Lord our Saviour, who on this very account obtained of God the name of Jesus, because he saveth his people from their sins,--such a person will certainly be delivered. Our Saviour takes such a poor man under his protection, gives him

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power to become a child of God, and Satan must yield, and depart from him. Then is a man delivered from the power and dominion of darkness, that is, from the dominion of the devil and of sin, and translated into the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and then he has “redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 2:15.)

But when a soul has escaped from Satan, he is always contriving, by every possible way, to catch him again in his net, and to entangle him in sin. He not only “goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8), but he also “transformeth himself into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14) seeking by such arts to ensnare men. Thus for instance, it may happen, and it actually is the case, that he induces some to an outward show of holiness, and self-righteousness, that he may thus prevent them from laying hold of their eternal salvation in Christ. Others he deceives, under the pretense of a necessity of examining into the truth, that they may not be obliged to believe every thing so simply as it stands in the Bible; thus he draws them first into a confidence in their own understanding, and then into grievous errors. (2 Corinthians 11:3.) Others he again seduces to sins and shameful practices, thus plunging them into mischief and destruction. As for instance, Achan and Judas, Ananias and Sapphira. Against others, he, by his instruments, stirs up heavy persecutions, with a view of wearying them out by such means, and of drawing them away from the faith. Thus saith our Saviour,

“Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried.” (Revelation 2:10.) But who can recount all the arts by which he endeavours to seduce mankind.

Let no one think himself advanced so far, as to be quite out of Satan’s reach. He desired to have the disciples, that he might sift them like wheat (Luke 22:31); and he even ventured an attack upon our Lord Jesus Christ himself. (Matthew 4:1.) Therefore doth our Saviour teach his disciples to pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” (do not leave us, that he may tempt us) “but deliver us from evil” (the evil one). (Matthew 6:13.) Paul gives the believers of Ephesus full instruction how they should

conduct themselves, so as to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11), saying among other things, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." (Verse 16.) The whole of Paul's advice is worthy of every man's consideration, that he may apply it to his own heart.

But if we, as children, who are insufficient of ourselves and by any power of our own, to encounter the wicked one, lay hold by faith on

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Jesus Christ, who himself has prayed the Father to keep his own from the evil one (John 17:15) and in this manner withstand him, he then flees from us. (James 4:7.) The Scripture says,

"He that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." (1 John 5:18.)

"The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil (the evil one)." (Thessalonians 3:3.)

"Jesus Christ shall confirm you unto the end." (1 Corinthians 7:8.)

But that which Paul said to the church at Rome, is earnestly wished for all those who cleave to the Lord:

"The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Romans 16:20.)

Moreover, the Lord has told us, that an everlasting fire is prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matthew 25:41.) See also Revelation 20:10. But it is evident, from Revelation 12:19 and 10:2 and other texts, that before the devil shall be cast into the lake, heavy judgments will be inflicted upon him.

But when it is said,

"God spared not the angels, that sinned, but cast them down to a hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." (Peter 2:4.) This is clearly explained by the foregoing: they are cast down, go into chains of darkness, and have even now a hell; but shall yet be cast into another place of eternal torment (Luke 8:31), which sentence God will execute upon them in due time. See Jude:6.

Concerning the good Spirits and the holy Angels, or messengers of God, we know from the Holy Scripture in general thus much, that their appearance was not very uncommon before the pouring out of the Holy Ghost. Afterward we meet with fewer traces of it, except what we read in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the *Revelation* which John has left us. John was however *in the Spirit*, as he terms it in Revelation 1:10 and Chapter 4:2, when he saw and heard those things which he has

described, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, in this prophetic book. Therefore he did not see and hear this with his bodily eyes and ears.

We have, blessed be God, the Holy Scripture; and besides this, if we lay hold of Jesus by Faith, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. Now, if we faithfully attend to what the Holy Scripture tells us, and what the Holy Ghost by means thereof teaches; it is not necessary to our salvation, for an Angel to appear to us. The heathen centurion, Cornelius, saw and heard evidently an Angel of God, in the daytime, with his bodily eyes and
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ears. (Acts 10:3.) But He did not preach the Gospel to him, but only told him to send for Peter, who would tell him what he ought to do.

But although the holy angels are not sent of God, to preach the Gospel to us, yet, as genuine friends of mankind, they take great share in our affairs. (1 Peter 1:12.) Peter having testified to the elect strangers, that the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, had first of all been preached to them by the prophets, and then also by the apostles, with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven; he then adds,

“Which things the angels desire to look into.”

They have therefore joy in it, and look into and highly praise the wonder of the love of God, which are displayed in the work of the redemption of man. And as Satan neglects nothing, which can be an hindrance to the servants of Christ in service in the Gospel; (thus, for instance, he twice hindered Paul in making the visit he had intended to the church of Thessalonica) (1 Thessalonians 2:18) so on the other side, the holy angels are ever ready to assist them every where, and to help them upon their way.

As the angels were so instrumental at the promulgation of the law (Hebrews 2:2, Acts 7:53 and Galatians 3:19) who would doubt but that they would likewise employ their faithful service at the propagation of the Gospel? On this account, they are not indifferent about the good consequences attending the preaching of the Gospel, and the successful labour which is spent upon souls. Our Saviour testifies concerning them,

“I say unto you, *there is joy in the presence of Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*” (Luke 15:10.)

But in general they are appointed by God, to serve the members of Christ, and also the little children; which the following passages of Holy Writ do testify:

“The Angels are all *ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation.*” (Hebrews 1:14.)

“The Angel of the Lord *encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*” (Psalms 34:7.)

“*He shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways: they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*” (Psalms 21:11-12.)

The extraordinary cases of Peter (Acts 5:19 and 12:7) and of Daniel (Daniel 6:22) who were delivered by the ministration of Angels; together with many others, for instance in 2 Kings 6:16-17, have been recorded for our consolation. But with respect to children, our Saviour says,

Of the Angels.

“In Heaven, *their Angels* do always behold the face of my Father, which is in Heaven.” (Matthew 18:10.)

God gives his angels to the service of children; and therefore children, who are so much value with God, should likewise be precious and dear to us.

But there are grounds to believe, that the holy Angels are not employed only in averting evil from us, but that they also lend us their assistance in our different occupations. From how many calamities may they, according to the will of God, faithfully preserve us, of which we know nothing! Thus they do us many a kind service, which we little regard, and scarcely perceive.

¶62

Again, we read of the holy Angels, that they in a particular manner make the praises of God their constant employment; and that although they are *many thousand times ten thousand in number* (Revelation 5:11) yet they are all united in this. (Revelation 7:11-12.) To our Lord Jesus Christ are subjected the angels, and authorities, and powers. (1 Peter 3:22.)

“He is far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named.” (Ephesians 1:21.)

Hence we see, that there is, even amongst the angels, a holy subordination, by which one stands under the other, according to the arrangement made by our Lord. But Christ is the Head overall. He it was, whom Isaiah saw in his glory, according to John 12:41; concerning whom the Spheraphims, with covered faces, cried unto one another,

“Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory; so that the posts of the door moved at the voice of Him that cried.” (Isaiah 6:1.) It is HE, whom “*ten thousand times ten thousand, and*

thousands of thousands of angels magnify, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the LAMB that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessings.” (Revelation 5:11-12.)

But as the angels of God thank and praise him, so they also do his will. Therefore the Lord our Saviour enjoins us to pray to the Father, “Thy will be done on earth, *as it is in Heaven.*” (Matthew 6:10.) Daniel says, “Thousand thousands, minister to him” (Daniel 7:10); and David, “Bless the Lord, ye Angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments.” (Psalms 103:20.) They do them with joy, without delay; on which account they are also described as having wings; and the Scripture says,

Of the Angels.

“Thou maketh thy Angels Spirits (winds), and thy Ministers a flaming fire.” (Psalms 104:4.) That is, they go to do that which is commanded, with as much courage, liveliness, and velocity, as the wind, and as lightening.

Of JESUS CHRIST *our* SAVIOUR.

¶63

To whom could the lamentable condition of the human race be better known, than to God the Lord, who knoweth all things? (¶44) Who could possibly find out an expedient for man's deliverance from his misery and wretchedness, but the all-wise God? (¶45) Who was so compassionate towards men, and so full of ardent desire of helping them as the most gracious and merciful God? (¶47) Who was able to redeem man by right from the bondage of Satan, and from the shackles of sin, but the Almighty and righteous GOD? (¶42 and 46) From whom could the accomplishments of the divine promises given to men, that a Saviour and Redeemer would come, be expected, but from the true and faithful GOD? (¶48) and of this we are now to treat.

That God gave very special promises and revelations concerning the Messiah, or the Saviour of the world, in the Old Testament, has been taken notice of in (¶8 and (¶14). How he did truly appear in the flesh, and enter upon, and conduct his ministerial office, something has already been mentioned in (¶9). Oh that we might be enabled, by grace, to express that which is yet to be said of our Lord Jesus Christ, in a manner suitable to his worth!

We begin, as is fitting, with the *incarnation* of our Lord Jesus Christ; and here we will not omit to mention first of all, that the holy Scripture, in speaking of his incarnation, doth at the same time make mention of his divinity: for instance,

“When the fullness of the time was come, *GOD sent forth his Son, made of a woman;*” or, as others render it, formed, or prepared in a woman. (Galatians 4:4.)

“Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; *GOD was manifest in the flesh.*” (1 Timothy 3:16.)

“The Word *was GOD*, and the ‘very same’ Word was made *flesh* and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14.)

Of consequence we are not to speak of Jesus Christ as man only, but also of Jesus Christ, who is over all, GOD blessed forever. See Romans 9:5.

¶64

Christ was in all the parts that constitute a man, a very man, and of the male sex; which is rendered indisputable by his being circumcised on the eighth day, and called *Jesus*. (Luke 1:31.) See Matthew 1:21.

“Forasmuch as the children are partakers of *flesh and blood*, *HE* also himself likewise took part of the same.” (Hebrews 2:14.)

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He was born like any other child, and some weeks after presented in the Temple. (Luke 2:22.) He increased in stature as other children. He was nursed, taught, and educated, and was in subjection to his parents. (Luke 2:51.) He grew in understanding and wisdom from time to time. (Luke 2:52.) He learnt a trade, and was a carpenter. (Mark 6:3.) He used his hands in labour, his feet in walking, his ears in hearing, his eyes in seeing, and his mouth in speaking. He partook of meat and drink; for we find him hungry and thirsty. He was tired and sleepy, and consequently stood in need of rest and sleep. He was seen at one time rejoicing, at another grieving; and again exceeding sorrowful. (John 11:33 and Matthew 26:37-38.) He was now and then of good cheer, sometimes sympathizing, at other times full of zeal (John 2:17); and even in anger. (Mark 3:5.) In short,

“He was made in the likeness of (other) men, and found in fashion as (another) Man;” that is, in his deportment. (Philippians 2:7.)

But he chose poverty; and took upon him the form of a servant (Philippians 2:7); and thus it necessarily followed, he was obliged to endure many difficulties.

He became a man, that he might die; and that “through *death*, *he might destroy him* that had the power of death, that is the Devil; *and deliver them*, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:14-15); and he submitted to such wretched circumstances; for “*In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren*, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” (Hebrews 2:17.)

However, although he was very man; yet he was, in certain respects, different from all other men, When God created man and woman, “he blessed them, and said to them, be fruitful and multiply.” (Genesis 1:28.) Thus God appointed that the husband and wife should beget children; neither is any woman pregnant without the concurrence of a man. But it was otherwise with Mary, the mother of Jesus. She was a Virgin, and knew no man; but was espoused to Joseph, a man of the house of David. The Angel Gabriel was sent of God unto Mary, who

informed her in the name of God, that she should conceive and bring forth a son, whose name should be called JESUS; she being affrighted, and wondering at his words, as she could not conceive how this could

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be; the Angel answered her, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.” (Luke 1:26.)

Being afterwards with child, and Joseph being scrupulous about her, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said,

“Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; (he had been espoused to her) for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 1:18.)

Whoever, by the Grace of God, considers aright the entire history of the Virgin Mary, of whom Christ is born (Luke 2:6-7, Matthew 1:22-23, Luke 2:10-11 and Isaiah 9:6) will, with the most profound awe and veneration, adore God on that account.

This is the first point wherein our Lord Jesus Christ is different from all other men.

The second point is, all men are, in consequence of the fall, sinners; there is no man guiltless in the sight of God, in his sight there is no man living that is righteous; as has been shown. (§54) But our Lord Jesus Christ was no sinful man.

“*HE was a LAMB without blemish, and without spot.*” (1 Peter 1:19.)
And,

“*In Him was no sin.*” (1 John 3:5.)

“*HE knew no sin.*” (1 Peter 2:22.)

The same is evident from Hebrews 7:26; and from that which hath been alleged. (§49)

Moreover, how much depends upon this divine truth, that Jesus Christ is a true and real man, and how strenuously we ought to maintain it; appears hence, that John, with great emphasis, declares him, who is not found in this point, to be a false prophet.

“*Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, (or, that he did become a true and real man) is not of God; and this is that spirit of Anti-Christ.*” (1 John 4:3.)

Now as our Lord Jesus Christ is a true and real man, so is he also the true and real GOD. At the time of his walking upon earth, in such a poor condition, this was hard to be comprehended. And therefore our

dear Lord did not speak of it, either to his own disciples, or to the Jews of those days, so plainly, as was done in the time following by his disciples, after the pouring out of the Holy Ghost. He says to his disciples,

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when HE, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, and glorify me, or testify of me.” (John 16:12.)

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Our Savior did not seek his own glory. (John 8:50.) That is, he did not seek to magnify himself, but the Father, that sent him. (John 7:18.)

He, however, from the very beginning of his ministry, did confess that he was the Son of GOD. And to Nicodemus he said,

“*God so loved the world, that he gave us his only begotten son.*” (John 3:16.)

And this he avowed, when he knew that he should be sentenced to death on account of his confession. (Mark 14:61-62.) His Father also gave him this testimony from Heaven, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17 and 17:5.) See also Peter 1:17 and John 1:13-14. And what is further said about it in (§99).

Of how great consequence it is, to know and confess Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, may be seen from 1 John 4:15, where it is said,

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”

Is our Lord Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, then is he also truly God. This conclusion may indisputably be drawn, not only from divine attributes ascribed to him; where he, for instance, is called “The First and the Last.” (Revelation 1:17.) See (§41), but also from the works of Creation and of Preservation; of which mention hath been made in (§28 and 32) when our Lord Jesus Christ says,

“If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28.) We must always then connect with it that which he says in another place:

“All men shall *honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*” (that is, in the very same manner, and no otherwise). (John 5:23.)

It would be impossible to make this declaration harmonize with other very precious words of the Scripture, in which we are so strictly and earnestly forbidden to pay divine honour to any, but to the one only true God, if our Saviour were not the true God. But moreover, the Scripture expressly says, that He is God, not in the quotations alleged only (§63), but also Romans 9:5 and 1 John 5:20. In the former place it is said,

“Christ commeth from the fathers, according to the flesh, *who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen.*”

And in the latter,

“This, Jesus Christ, is the true God, and eternal life.”

On this account Thomas also called him *his Lord and his God* (John 20:28-29); which were not mere words of astonishment, but were words of faith, agreeable to the testimony given him by our Saviour immediately upon his confession,

“Thomas, because thou has seen me, thou hast believed.”

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¶67

Why then did the Son of God come into the world? The Scripture says plainly,

“God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” (1 John 4:9-10.)

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” (1 Timothy 1:15.)

Also,

“The Son of Man (that is, Christ) is come, to seek and to save that which was left.” (Luke 19:10.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ chose, for the accomplishment of these great designs, the way of lowliness and obedience. He was, as hath been said, sent by his Father, as his only begotten Son of God, into the world (John 10:36) that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:17.) Here then we are to remark, how on the one hand, the Father acted towards this his Son; and on the other, how the Son acted towards his Father, during the days of his walking here upon the earth. I will only allege the following:

The Father confessed the Son, immediately upon his entry into his ministerial function, by a voice from heaven,

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17.) See (¶66).

He also repeated this testimony from heaven more than once. (John 10:28 and Matthew 17:5.)

Moreover, the Father remained in the most close union with his Son, which is expressed by our Saviour:

“The Father is in me, and I in him.” (John 10:38 and 14:11.)

And therefore, he saith,

“He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.” (John 12:45 and 14:19):
and;

“*He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone.*” (John 8:29.)

To this we may still add, that the Father fixed with him precisely all those things, which our Lord Jesus Christ was to do, and to deliver, as well publicly to the people, as particularly to his disciples. Hence our Saviour says,

“The Father loveth the son, *and sheweth him all things that himself doth.*” (John 5:20.)

“*My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.*” (John 7:16.)

“He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world *those things which I have heard of him.*” (John 7:26.)

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“I have not spoken of myself; but *the Father* which sent me, he *gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak.* Whatsoever I speak, therefore, *even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.*” (John 12:49-50.)

“The words I speak unto you, *I speak not of myself.*” (John 14:10.)

“That the world may know, that I love the Father; *and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.*” (John 14:31.)

“I have given unto them (my disciples) or, (I have delivered unto them), *the words which thou (Father) gavest me.*” (John 17:8.)

It is also no less clear, that the Father strictly attended to the prayer of his Son; whence the Lord our Saviour gives him this testimony:

“*I know that thou hearest me always.*” (John 11:42.) See Hebrews 5:7.

Finally, we must add, that the Father, both confessed him and gave a sanction to his doctrine, by the great signs and wonders which he himself did through Christ. No one can doubt of this, who considers the following words of Christ:

“The works *which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works, that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent to me.*” (John 5:36.)

“The Father, that dwelleth in me, *he doeth the works.* Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works sake.” (John 14:10.)

We will now take a view of the manner in which the Son of God acted towards his dear Father, during the days of his walking upon the earth. He demeaned himself towards him, as became a man that bore the image

of God, in the most submissive manner. By his own free will and inclination, he divested himself of all glories, and great preeminence which he, as the Son of God, had with his Father, before the world was. (John 12:5.) On the other hand, being lowly in heart, he so much humbled and abased himself, as not only to appear as a poor honest handicraft, but even in the form of a servant, a state connected with still meaner circumstances. Of which Paul speaks (Philippians 2:6) and says, “though being indeed in *the form of God* (being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, according to Hebrews 1:3), *and he thought it no robbery* to be equal with God;” yet “he made himself of no reputation,” (*he emptied himself*) that is, he resigned his divine attributes, or those, which he possessed as God, his knowledge, his power, and chose to be and appear in the world, just like any other man, sin excepted, and take everything from the hand of his Father. “He also
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humbled himself, and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Accordingly,

He laid down as a fixed rule, that he was not come to do his own will. This is proved by the words,

“I seek *not mine own will*, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” (John 5:30.) And, “I came down from heaven, *not to do my own will*, but the will of him that sent me.” (John 6:38.)

He continued of the same mind to his end. For when he prayed in the greatest extremity,

“O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;”

He immediately added,

“*Nevertheless, not as I will*, but as thou wilt.” (Matthew 26:39.)

My Saviour! Thou never willeth any thing amiss; and yet dost thou offer up thy will to thy Father? Ought not then we much more to do it, considering how very much our will is corrupted!

2. He submitted to the law, like any other Jew. (Galatians 4:4.) “Think not,” he says, “that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but *to fulfill*.” (Matthew 5:17.)

But he condemned the additions made by the scribes and Pharisees; as, for instance, their exploitations concerning the Sabbath, and the like. Why? Because God had, in respect of his law, most expressly commanded,

“*Ye shall not add thereto*, nor diminish from it.” (Deuteronomy 12:32.)

3. Whenever he was in distress, he would not help himself, but resigned himself to his Father, expecting help from him alone. Having

eaten nothing in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights, and being an hungered (for he was in this as any other man) the temptor then said to him, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." This doubtless he could have done, and infinitely more but he rather chose to have no help than to help himself. See Matthew 4:3. O how few reflect duly upon this!

4. When he stood in need of strength of body, soul and spirit, for the great work intrusted to him, to show men the way of life; he (if we may be allowed the expression) forgot that he was himself God, and that he could take out of his own fullness; but cast himself, like a poor man, at his Father's feet, with supplication and prayer for his grace and assistance. For example, he remained on a mountain all night in prayer to God (Luke 6:12) before he chose twelve of his disciples to be apostles, and delivered that incomparable sermon on the Mount.

And it was very usual with him to proceed in this manner. Have we not abundant more reason to do so?

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5. When people came before him, who besought his assistance in their distress, he might by his own power (for he was God) have made them whole; but he turned in prayer to his Father, and took out of his treasury what was requisite for that purpose. Frequently he did it publicly, before all men that were around him; as for instance, at the raising up of Lazarus (John 11:41); at another time with silent sighing, as at the cure of the deaf man, who had also an impediment in his speech. (Mark 7:32.) But usually by looking up to his dear Father.

6. For all temporal and spiritual gifts he thanked and praised his Father with joy; receiving them from him as any other poor and necessitous person. For instance, Matthew 11:25. His obedience towards his Father did never admit of the least exception. He was not forced to suffer death for us.

He says,

"No man taketh it (my life) from me, *but I lay it down of myself.*" (John 10:18.)

But, because he knew it was the good pleasure of his Father, that he should give himself up as a sacrifice for mankind, therefore was he "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:8.) Though even at the very hour of his being seized and found, if he had prayed to the Father for twelve legions of angels to defend him against his enemies, he could then have rescued himself (Matthew 26:53); but he would not do it.

"Although he were the Son of God, *yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.*" (Hebrews 5:8.)

How—learned obedience? Was he not already obedient? Certainly. It was his meat and drink to do the will of his Father. But by constant habit, it became as natural to him, as those things in general are to such, who have taken much pains about them.

Now, though our Lord Jesus Christ did not seek his own glory in the world, nor choose to discover himself as the great God over all, blessed for evermore, but only as sent of God to be the Saviour of the world, and the Messiah, yet he was sometimes manifested to his own disciples in his Godhead. When they, for instance, heard him pray,

“O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, *with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*” (John 17:5.) How could they then entertain any other thoughts, but that he must be the true God? And when at times he was in a manner compelled to say something about himself; for instance, in such words as these: “They shall honour the Son *even as they honour the Father,*” what could they otherwise conceive, but that he must needs be the true God? John says, “He dwelt among us, and *we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” (John 1:14.) See also 2 Peter 1:16. And yet, they

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(the disciples of Jesus) did not obtain a clear insight into his eternal divinity till after his resurrection and ascension, and the pouring out of the Holy Ghost.

¶69

When we consider that the Son of God, of his own free motion, humbled himself, and chose a state of poverty, it instantly occurs, that the thoughts of God are not as the thoughts of men, nor his ways like their ways. However, this earnest admonition is given to all those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ:

“*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who humbled himself.*” (Philippians 2:5.)

But we must likewise attend to what relates further to him.

As the Father was in Christ, and dwelt in him (John 14:10-11) and see (¶68), so did also the Holy Ghost dwell in him, according to promise. “*Upon him shall the Spirit of the Lord rest, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.*” (Isaiah 11:2.)

As even our Lord and Saviour himself expressly applies the words,

“*The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me.*” (Isaiah 61:1 to himself, and Luke 4:17-21.)

Thus then Christ was sent by the Lord to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19.) And for this reason he is also called the Apostle, or the Messenger of the Lord. (Hebrews 3:1.) Before he entered upon his public ministry, he was baptized by that great man of God, John (Luke 3:21 and John 1:32) and returned from Jordan full of the Holy Ghost (Luke 4:1), and was led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness, “and was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered unto him.” (Mark 1:12-13, Matthew 4:1 and Luke 4:1.)

Upon this John gave a powerful testimony concerning him, calling him “The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world,” saying likewise, “He is preferred before me, for he was before me.” (John 1:29.)

Now John was six months older than Jesus. (Luke 1:36.) The latter therefore came after him, though as the Son of God, he was before John.

The preaching, then, of our Lord and Saviour, comprised in it the whole counsel of God concerning our salvation, viz. that “all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16.)

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“How shall we escape,” (says the Scripture, Hebrews 2:3) “if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?”

He spoke in a particular manner of his dear Father, of himself, and of the Holy Ghost, and so plainly as never had been done before: of which we cannot but be convinced, if we only compare his sayings with the Scriptures of the Old Testament. He also foretold such things as were at that time yet to come, not in reference to the people of the Jews only, but also in respect to the kingdom of God in general. He preached with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power; and therefore he said,

“The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63.) See John 6:68-69.

And by this his doctrine we are to abide (1 Timothy 6:3 and 2 John 5:9); consequently the promise concerning that great Prophet, into whose mouth God would put his words, and who was to speak in his name with the children of Israel (Deuteronomy 28:19), was gloriously accomplished in Christ. For this very promise is in the New Testament expressly applied to him. (Acts 3:23.)

But our Lord Jesus Christ was not the Teacher and the great Prophet only sent from God, of whom the Scripture says,

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18), but he was also the Priest, “who though the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God.” (Hebrews 9:14.)

We have here first to observe, that Jesus Christ took our sins and debts upon himself.

He is that “Lamb of God, *which taketh away the sins of the world.*” (John 1:29.)

He is not here styled the Lamb of God, so much on account of his being meek and patient (for that he certainly was); but rather, because he bore our sin, and atoned for it. It was therefore as much as if he had committed the sins of the whole world. But could this be the case? Yes. All this was done according to the will of God; more of which will occur. (¶79.)

Secondly, upon this is grounded, that having taken our sins and debts upon himself, therefore did he also suffer the punishment which we deserved.

“He was *wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.*” (Isaiah 53:5.)

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“Christ hath once *suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.*” (1 Peter 3:18.)

“His own self *bare our sins* in his own body on the tree.” (1 Peter 2:24.)

“Christ *died for our sins*, according to the Scripture.” (1 Corinthians 15:3.) And,

“God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, *Christ died for us.*” (Romans 5:8.)

Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens: who needeth not daily, as those high priests (in the Old Testament), to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people. For this he did once, when he offered up himself.” (Hebrews 7:26-27.) And,

“By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:14.) See (¶79).

What these texts declare in general, the evangelists relate very minutely; and whoever gives them due consideration, receives assuredly an inestimable blessing from them. The whole life of Christ was a series of heavy sufferings. Not wicked men only, but the unclean spirits also tormented our dear Lord and Saviour. The temptations, of which we have the description (Matthew 4:1) were not all, which he suffered; for it is expressly said, that,

“When the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him *for a season.*” (Luke 4:13.)

Hence it appears, that he came and was audacious enough to attack him again; whence the Scripture says, that “*he was in all points tempted, like as we are, yet without sin.*” (Hebrews 4:15.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ foresaw all that he should suffer, but was immoveably determined to endure it; and when Peter objected, earnestly dissuading him from it, he reprov'd him severely, and called him Satan. (Matthew 26:23.) But as Christ was in the world, like another man, sin excepted, he could not but be sensibly affected by it. For who can be ignorant, that the idea of an impending misfortune, is frequently worse than the misfortune itself? See Luke 12:50.

¶72

The inward sufferings of our dear Lord and Saviour were beyond all measure grievous. Of this the Scripture speaks thus:

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“*He began to be sorrowful and very heavy, and said unto his disciples, ‘My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.’*” (Matthew 26:37-38.)

“*And, being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*” (Luke 22:44.)

Whoever considers this, with a view to his own improvement, must regard sin with horror and detestation, because it occasioned the man Christ Jesus, who was notwithstanding the Son of God, to suffer much anguish.

He was soon after taken prisoner, and bound, as were he a murderer and robber; and in the night brought before judges, who were his enemies. He was then, in a shocking manner, set at nought, mocked, spit upon, stricken, smitten, and cruelly abused. That he was not insensible to this, the prophetic Psalm testifies, in which, amongst other things, it is said,

“Reproach hath broken my heart.” (Psalms 69:20.)

Then was he delivered over into the hands of the Gentiles, and accused as a promoter of sedition, and as a rebel; but the judge pronounced him innocent. They led him to Harrod; and he treats him in no other manner, than as though he had a madman before him. Then Pilate delivered him up to the wantonness of malicious people, who scourge him, crown him with thorns, and most shamefully abuse him. At length they sentence him to death, and bring him to the place where malefactors were usually executed; and they even made him bear his own cross. He was crucified, and in the midst of his distress cruelly mocked and taunted. But of all the dreadful sufferings, which he endured on the cross, nothing so painful to him, as to be deprived of the comfort of the precious presence of his Father; which made him cry out, *“My God! My God! Why has thou forsaken me?”* (Matthew 27:46.) At length he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost; when one of the soldiers with a spear, pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. Well may we here say, O man! all this hath he done for thee; what doest thou for him?

¶73

It being thus, beyond all doubt, evident that our Lord Jesus Christ truly died, we have, thirdly, to observe, That God looks upon this cruel punishment of death, which Christ suffered for us (See 1 Corinthians 15:3, Romans 5:8, Hebrews 2:9 and John 10:15) just as if we had suffered it. The words of the Scripture are plain,

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“If one died for all, then were all dead” (2 Corinthians 5:14); that is, it is the very same as if all men, as they justly deserved, had been executed on account of their sin.

Whoever now cometh to Christ, the Saviour of the world, by faith, obtains remission of all his sins, on account of that death which Christ suffered for him, and of that blood which he shed for us poor sinful men (Matthew 26:28); and, provided he abides with him, needs not be afraid of punishment in time or in eternity. Oh, what consolation is to be found in the sufferings of Jesus for poor and lost sinners, for not only the mercy of God, and his faithfulness to his promises, but also his righteousness, implies the forgiveness of our sins, if we with true repentance, and with faith in him, acknowledge and confess them. For so says the Scripture:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and *just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” (1 John 1:9.)

This is to be particularly attended to by those who truly believe in Christ; for, to such did John write. Hence it is plain, that even our trespasses and (have we not daily to pray, Forgive us our trespasses?) are also pardoned for the sake of the blood and death of Christ.-How? Doth then the righteousness of God require this? Certainly. For Christ having paid our debt, atoned for our sin, and borne our punishment, God neither can nor will punish us for them, if we lay hold of Christ by faith.

¶74

By this occasion it is necessary that we obviate a mistake. Our Savior says:

“The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom *for many.*” (Matthew 20:28.) And,

“My blood, the blood of the New Testament, is shed *for many, for the remission of sins.*” (Matthew 21:28.)

What, did he not die for all? Yes. “He gave himself for a ransom *for all.*” (1 Timothy 2:5-6.) He by the grace of God tasted death *for every man.* (Hebrews 2:9.)

“He is the propitiation for our sins; (that is, for the believers) and not for ours only, but also for the sins *of the whole world.*” (1 John 2:2.)

“It pleased the Father, by him to reconcile *all things* unto himself.” (Corinthians 1:19-20.)

All men! That is indeed many: and by this expression our Saviour points out to us the importance of his death and his blood; which are of avail and benefit to so many millions of men, who either lived in the beginning of the world, now exist, or who shall remain to the end of it.

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We may refer on this account to what Paul says (Romans 5) by way of explanation. He says,

“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed *upon all men, for that all have sinned.*” (Romans 5:12.)

And farther,

“And by the offense of one, judgment came *upon all men* unto condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came *upon all men* unto justification of life.” (Romans 5:18.)

The same Apostle mentions it again in verse 15.

“For if through the offense of one *many* be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”

Hence it is very evident, that the term *many*, which is here employed in contradiction to *one*, does not mean one part of mankind only, but *all* men. See 1 Corinthians 15:22. Oh what a depth of the wisdom, goodness, truth, and righteousness of God, is to be found in the sufferings, the death, and the blood of Jesus! Which also is solemnized even in Heaven; for instance, Revelation 1:5, and we shall thank and praise God and the Lamb for it to all eternity.

¶75

The account which the Evangelists give us of the burial of Jesus, of his Resurrection upon the third day, of his appearances amongst his disciples after he was risen from the dead, and of his ascension, is full of consolation.

When we have finished our course in this world in the faith of Jesus Christ, and he shall receive our spirit in grace, and our body shall be laid in the grave; then it will be to our benefit that HE also lay in the grave. Who would not rejoice in expectation of his resting-place, if he only knows that he is sown in Hope! See 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

As to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is not the least doubt, that our Lord and Saviour, who was not only a true man, but also the Son of God, was able to raise himself up again. His word is plain,

“No man taketh it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down, and *I have power to take it again.*” (John 10:18.)

We may also take the words,

“*He is risen from the dead*” (Matthew 28:7), in such a sense, as if by his own power he resumed life. Yea, the words of Jesus,

“Destroy this temple, and in three days *I will raise it up*” (John 2:19) point to the very same thing. For as the Evangelist adds, “But he spake of the Temple of his body.” (John 2:21.)

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“Now when he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.” (John 2:22.)

Moreover, the Apostles expressed themselves concerning the Resurrection of Jesus in the following manner:

“This Jesus *hath God raised up*, whereof we are witnesses.” (Acts 2:32.) Likewise: “The Prince of Life have ye killed, *whom God has raised*

from the dead: whereof we are witnesses.” (Acts 3:15.) Again: “Him (the same Jesus whom they slew) *God raised up the third day*, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses, chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.” (Acts 10:40-41.)

Paul particularly testifies, “that *God the Father raised him up from the dead.*” (Galatians 1:1, Thessalonians 1:10 and Romans 6:4.)

In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said, “*The God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus*, that great Shepherd of the sheep (who is eminently great); through the blood of the everlasting Covenant.” (Hebrews 13:20.)

The witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ have not only sacrificed their substance, blood, and lives, and every other consideration on account of this testimony; but God has also owned them by many great signs and wonders, and accompanied their testimony with such a power, as was undoubtedly divine. For instance, Acts 2:37 and 10:44.

It cannot but be of very great importance to us, that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. The Scripture says,

“God hath begotten us again into a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:3.)

“Christ was delivered for our offenses, and was *raised again for our justification.*” (Romans 4:25.)

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again.” (Romans 8:34.)

That God raised Christ from the dead, is the most powerful proof that the sacrifice of his dear Son, who gave himself up unto death for us, was perfectly acceptable and well-pleasing to him. At the same time he thus confirmed all that Jesus did and taught during the time of his walking upon earth. He also set his seal to our obtaining the forgiveness of sins by the blood of Jesus, and that righteousness, which is of avail in the sight of God. There is now nothing which can condemn a sinner, who builds upon Christ in faith; for Christ has not only died, but been raised up also for him; and thus hath God himself proclaimed, that our debts have been paid, and our sins atoned for.

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Thus then did our dear Lord again show himself alive, after his sufferings, unto his disciples, by many demonstrations, in various ways: for instance, by showing them the prints of the nails in his hands

and feet, and his side opened by the spear (John 20:20); also by his eating and drinking with them (Acts 10:41); in order fully to convince them that it was HE himself; and was seen of them frequently during forty days, speaking with them concerning the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3.)

The church of Christ richly enjoyed the fruits of his conversations with his disciples, in the sermons they afterwards preached, and we, to this very day, reap the blessings of them from their writings, But he afterwards appeared separately to Paul, who was at that time an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:8); and instructed him in such a manner, that he could say,

“I received from the Lord, that which also I delivered unto, or taught to you.” (1 Corinthians 11:23, 15:3 and Galatians 1:12.) See (¶21).

After the forty days were elapsed, he led his disciples out as far as to Bethany: and,

“He lifted up his hands, and blessed them: and it came to pass, while he was blessing them, that he parted from them, and before their eyes carried up into Heaven, and sat at the right hand of God.” (Acts 1:9, Mark 11:19 and Luke 24:50-51.)

Then were the words fulfilled, which he had said to his disciples:

“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father.” (John 26:28.)

And now it is said, that

“Christ is entered, (as High Priest) not into the holy places made with hands—but into Heaven itself.” (Hebrews 9:24.) And verily,

“He is entered in once into the holy place by his own blood (which he shed for us, for the forgiveness of sins) having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Hebrews 9:12.)

Being now seated at the right hand of God, what he said to his Father, is truly come to pass,

“And now, O Father! Glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” (John 17:5.)

“He now sitteth on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Hebrews 1:3.) *“Angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject to him.”* (Peter 3:22.)

Now is the world of the Lord fulfilled which is addressed to the Son,

“Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” (Hebrews 1:8.)

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“He is the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings.” (Revelation 17:14 and 19:16.) And, *“At the name of JESUS every knee shall bow, of things in*

Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.” (Philippians 2:10.) And,

“*All the Angels of God shall worship him.*” (Hebrews 1:6.) And *We*, also! (1 Corinthians 1:2.)

¶77

Before our Lord Jesus Christ’s ascension into Heaven, he testified to his disciples,

“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.” (Acts 1:8.)

Now the Holy Ghost having been, according to the word of our Saviour, poured out upon them, they began immediately to preach, and to testify to every one, that the same Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews had crucified by the hands of the Gentiles, is the Messiah, the anointed one of God, the Saviour of the whole world; who had been promised by God unto the Fathers, and for whom they had hitherto been waiting with such a longing desire. Indeed our Saviour had, upon particular occasions, owned, that HE was the Messiah; or the Christ. For upon the woman of Sychar’s saying, “I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ,” he said to her, “I, that speak unto thee, am HE.” (John 4:26 and 9:37.) To the disciples of John, who asked him, “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?” He answered:

“Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up; and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.” (Matthew 11:3-6.)

Which implies this, the works I do, testify of me, that I am the Messiah, anointed of God. To the High Priest, who said to him, “I adjure thee by the Living God, that thou tell us, Whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?” He answered,

“Thou hath said,” or, “I am He.” (Matthew 26:63-64.) His disciples owned, and also confessed, that they believed him to be the Messiah. For upon his once asking them, “But whom do ye say that I am?” Peter made answer, “Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God.” (Matthew 16:15-16.)

Our Saviour did indeed forbid his disciples, at that time, to tell any man, that he, Jesus, was the Christ. (Matthew 16:15-16.) The reason was probably this, because he knew, that as soon as he should speak plainly that he was the Messiah, the Jews would put him to death; as it

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actually came afterwards to pass: for the hour of his death and sufferings was not yet to come. But now the Disciples spoke boldly and confidently, "Therefore let all the House of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, *both Lord and Christ.*" (Acts 2:36.)

"Neither is there salvation *in any other*; for there is *none other name under Heaven* given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.)

"To him give all the prophets witness, that through *his Name*, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43.)

This was therefore the Apostles first business, to testify, "that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, or the Messiah." (1 John 5:14.) See 1 Timothy 4:10.

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What hath been said of Jesus Christ (¶70) that he is the Priest, who through the Holy Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, is founded upon his being the Mediator between God and man. The Scripture speaks thus on this head:

"There is one God, and *one Mediator between God and man* the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Timothy 2:5-6.)

When any one undertakes to reconcile different parties, who are at variance with one another, and to make peace among them he is called a Mediator. But he is called a mediator also, who stands between two unequal parties, through whom, both these parties treat with each other. In both these respects is our Lord Jesus Christ the Mediator between God and man.

It has been shown (¶50), that man, from the happy condition in which he was created, had plunged himself by sin into the deepest misery. All men are now carnal by nature, and of consequence also carnally minded, according to Romans 8:5. Therefore all men by nature, and before they are converted, are enemies of God. They also show themselves to be such; for they do not that which is well pleasing to God; but they love and do that which he hates. It therefore follows, that they are in fellowship with the Evil Spirit, the enemy of God, who do his will, and are governed by him, as hath been proved (¶57).

This is the fate of one of the parties, whom Christ, as Mediator, is to reconcile; that is, of man. But how was it then with God? How was HE disposed towards men? Was there an enmity in him against them? O no! He loved his ungrateful and ungodly creatures. The wretched condition into which they had plunged themselves, he deeply compassionated; it grieved him to inflict the severe punishment upon

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them which they deserved. But he could have no more fellowship with them, than they with him. For sin made a wall of partition between the holy and just, on the one side, and the impure and apostate, on the other. See (§46). And yet no man, who is not in fellowship with God, can be happy. With God however, the love towards his poor creatures, and the desire arising from it to deliver them out of their most calamitous situation, and bring them to a participation of all that good which he had at the creation of man designed for them, remained unchangeably the same.

But the more God loved man, and sought to save him, the greater was his wrath against *sin*, which separated him from God, and plunged him into such misery, that as a slave of Satan he run to destruction; as was likewise his displeasure *against those men*, who gave themselves up to the service of sin and Satan. We here premise, that such a wrath as is common in men, who are carried away by their own corrupt nature, is incompatible with the nature of God. For *this* wrath is (Galatians 5:20) specified amongst the notorious works of the flesh, classed with idolatry, witchcraft, and such like sins. But God is holy in all his works (§46), and therefore it is impossible that it should take place in him. What then is the wrath of God? If we take a view of all the passages of Scripture which speak of the wrath of God successively, we find, first, that by God's wrath we are to understand his dissatisfaction with certain things, his dislike to them, his disgust and abhorrence of them, his zealous determination to root them out, and his displeasure at them. In this sense David says, "O Lord, rebuke me not in *thine anger*." (Psalms 6:1.) And Jeremiah; "O Lord, correct me, but with judgment, (with moderation) and *not in thine anger*, lest thou bring me to nothing." (Jeremiah 10:24.) And the Prophet Nahum: "Who can stand before *his indignation!* And who can abide in the fierceness of *his anger?*" (Jeremiah 1:6.) And John: "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, but *the wrath of God abideth on him.*" (John 3:36.)

But secondly, by the wrath of God, we must understand also, the divine judgments consequent upon sin. So says Paul, for instance: "*The wrath of God* is revealed from heaven *against all ungodliness* and unrighteousness." (Romans 1:18.) "Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things (sins) *cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience,*" or, upon unbelieving man. (Ephesians 5:6.)

Sometimes also the term, "Wrath of God," is made use in both these senses.

Now, if we speak of the wrath of God, in the sense first mentioned, by which is meant God's dissatisfaction with evil things, his dislike to them,

his disgust and abhorrence of them, his zealous determination to root them out, and his displeasure at them; we may be assured, that this

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wrath flows as well from his love, as from his holiness and righteousness. Can a father or mother be indifferent about any thing that is likely to hurt their child, or actually hurts it? Doth not their love exasperate them against it? Can it be otherwise with God? How could indifference, or even a simple acquiescence in respect to evil, agree with the holiness and righteousness of God? And if it should still be difficult for any one to conceive, that God should be angry with wickedness, yea, and even with men, in so far as they are wicked, and the servants of sin, let him only look at our Lord Jesus, who is the express image of God; for when he would heal a man who had a withered hand, on a Sabbath day, he asked the Jews, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil; to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace, because they were not willing to avow the truth;--*“he looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.”* (Mark 3:4-5.) *“Did not the zeal of the house of God eat him up, when he found those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money,”* in the outer court of the Temple; *“so that having made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the Temple, and the sheep, and the oxen, and he poured out the changers money, and overthrew the tables.”* (John 2:14-17.) Shall not hereafter such wretched men, as do not belong to Christ, *“say to the mountain and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us—from the wrath of the Lamb?”* (Revelation 6:16); and yet our Lord and Saviour wept over Jerusalem, and died for these wicked men.

But if, by the wrath of God, we, according to the second meaning, understand the judgments of God consequent upon sin; we must place in this class,

1. All those sins which fall upon mankind as the judgments of God, and such are those which Paul speaks of. (Romans 1:21.) For he there tells us, that, because the heathen knew there was a God, and glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful, God therefore gave them up unto the most abominable practices, a number of which Paul enumerates.
2. Death; under which expression we understand all the dreadful things that according to Scripture are connected with it, as soon as man is deprived of the life which is from God. See (§51).
3. The power of the devil, which he obtained over mankind, as soon as they had rent themselves from God, and given themselves up to sin. From that time they are under the most cruel yoke of the devil. See (§57).

4. Eternal damnation, and the torments of hell, where indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, are upon every soul of man that doth evil (Romans 2:8-9) and which is therefore in the Scripture styled, “The wrath that is to come.”

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To what then did the Mediator between God and man submit, in order to appease the aforesaid wrath, to reconcile man with God and to restore peace? He was made a sacrifice for men; that is, he submitted to be executed in a cruel manner for men, and in their stead (the innocent for the guilty) in order to render them acceptable to God, and to deliver them from that punishment, which they otherwise must have endured for their sins, from the power of the devil, and from all their misery. Though this sacrifice of Jesus has already been treated of in general, yet we cannot forbear adding the following remarks:

1. That our Lord Jesus Christ gave himself up a sacrifice for men, was the effect of an eternal decree of God, as may be seen in Acts 2:23, Luke 22:22 and 1 Peter 1:20. God also made it frequently known to men by the prophets, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, for instance, Isaiah 53. Moreover, from the death of Abel (¶2) until the death of Christ, the sacrifice of Jesus was constantly prefigured by the offerings made in blood, especially among the people of Israel (¶16). For in this case, the transgressor was to bring an ox, or some other clean beast, to the priest, and at the same time to confess his sin. The beast was then slain, his blood shed, and it was offered unto the Lord; and thus was an atonement made for the guilty person in presence of the Lord, and then every thing was forgiven that he had done, by which he had contracted guilt. See Leviticus 6:7, 4:26 and 35, 5:13 and 18, Numbers 15:28 and Samuel 24:25. Thus, the blood of the sacrifice made the atonement for the soul (Leviticus 22:11); yet not in and of itself: for these offerings could not, according to the testimony of the Scripture, by any means take away sins, it being impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins (Hebrews 10 and 11:14); but all this pointed to the sacrifice of Christ for us.
2. Here we ought duly to reflect who it was that made himself an offering for man. It was Jesus, who was not a man only, but likewise God. He was put to death in the flesh, for as God he could not die. Let us, however, when we consider his sacrifice, not forget, that he was God the Lord. Thus also the apostles understood it; and therefore Paul says,

“The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers to feed *the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*” (Acts 20:28.) See John 3:16.

3. It is this which makes the sacrifice of Christ for us of such great weight, that nothing can possibly be more important. This sacrifice was offered to God the Lord, against whom mankind had so greatly sinned, and his whole Majesty had been so highly

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offended. God did also accept in grace, and it was well pleasing to him. Of this doth the Scripture plainly speak:

“Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, *an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling favour.*” (Ephesians 5:2.)

“Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, *offered himself* without spot to God.” (Hebrews 9:14.)

Thus then are we reconciled to God by the death and by the sacrifice of his Son; that is, an expiation has been made in the sight of God, and our sin has by this sacrifice been atoned for; Christ by this sacrifice has paid a ransom for our debt; Christ has borne the chastisement deserved by us; we, by this sacrifice, have not only been rendered capable of God’s favour, but even pleasing to him; and when we now, through Christ, come to God, we are accepted in the Beloved.

4. By this sacrifice of Christ for us, our sins, as has already been said, have been atoned for. “*He, his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree,*” (that is, he has borne our sins, and made an atonement for them, when he gave his life for us upon the cross.) (1 Peter 2:24.) See (¶70).

5. All this hath been done according to the will of God. God himself chose and prepared his Son for this, that he should become a sacrifice for man; yea, co-operated in this offering. (Isaiah 53:10.)

“God made him *to be sin* for us, who knew no sin,” (that is, to be the perfect sin-offering.) (2 Corinthians 5:21.)

“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” (He rather laid them upon Christ.) (2 Corinthians 5:19.) This is explained by the words in Isaiah 53:6, “*The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all.*” He was “the Lamb of God which taketh away (bore) the sin of the world.” (John 1:29.) Yea, it is said, “*It pleased God, that in Him—Christ—should all fullness dwell, and by him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven; in that by himself he made peace, through the blood he shed upon the cross.*” (Colossians 1:19-20.)

Let us now consider (¶6). What blessings are comprised in the sacrifice of Jesus, or (which in the language of Scripture has the same sense) in his death and blood. In the first place, we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son, though we were enemies, according to Romans 5:10. That is, God is now ready, for Christ's sake, and for the sake of his offering, to forgive all men their sins, who receive Jesus in faith. He will

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damn no man, because he came into the world as a sinful man; neither will he damn any one on account of the sin he has actually committed, provided, when he hears the Gospel, he receives it in faith, and comes to Christ; but he will forgive him all his sins: neither shall the wretched system of sin, in which he was born, and which dwelleth in him, that is, in his flesh, hurt him. Thus Paul says, "as by the offense of one (namely Adam), judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so *by the righteousness of one* (namely Christ) *the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*" (Romans 5:18.)

The dam is now broken down by Christ, which prevented the stream of the loving-kindness and grace of God from being poured out upon us. But if a man hears the Gospel, or becomes in any other way acquainted with it, and does not receive it in faith, and will not come to Christ, he is condemned on account of his unbelief. As Christ says "*He that believeth not shall be damned;* and the wrath of God abideth on him." (Mark 26:16 and John 3:36.) We may also add "To this Jesus give all the prophets witness, *that through his name whosoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins.*" (Acts 10:43.) "God has now made us accepted in the Beloved, that is, in his dear Son, in whom we have redemption *through his blood*, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Ephesians 1:6.)

Secondly, By the sacrifice of Jesus, or by his blood and death, we are rescued from the yoke of Satan, and from death. Thus is said, "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; *that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil;* and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Hebrews 2:14-15.) Our Saviour Jesus Christ *hath* (by his own death) *abolished death*, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." (2 Timothy 1:10.) See (¶58).

Thirdly, We have also by the sacrifice, or by the blood and death of Jesus, all the power requisite for a godly life and conversation. For, "*The*

blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purges our conscience from dead work, *to serve the living God.*" (Hebrews 9:14.) "Jesus Christ hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and *hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.*" (Revelation 1:5-6.) "Christ hath reconciled us in the body of his flesh, *to present us holy, and unblameable, and irreproveable in his sight.*" (Colossians 1:21-22.) "He gave himself for us, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*" (Titus 2:14.) See 1 Corinthians 5:7 and 1 Peter 1:18-19.

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Fourthly, By the blood and death of Jesus, or by his sacrifice, we have the certain hope of being for ever secured against all those punishments which, in the day of wrath, will light upon those who do not know God, and are not obedient to the Gospel; and that Christ will be the author of our salvation.

God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, "being justified by his blood, *we shall be saved from wrath through him.*" (Romans 5:8-9.) "Christ, being made perfect (*viz.* by his sufferings and death, Hebrews 2:10) *became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*" (Hebrews 5:9.) "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10.) "We wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, *who delivered us from the wrath to come.*" (1 Thessalonians 1:10.)

We therefore with the utmost gratitude, will adore him in the dust, for this stupendous deliverance of so many millions from eternal perdition, by the sacrifice of Jesus.

It is in vain to dispute with those who wish to call God, as it were, to an account, for having punished his own Son, who was innocent, with death, and for pardoning those, who have deserved it. The day will come, when men are to give an account of every idle word that they have spoken. How then will those stand, who despise this wise and incomprehensibly good decree of God concerning our salvation, and who presumptuously reject it?

Oh! How gloriously doth the wisdom, loving-kindness, truth and righteousness of God, shine forth in the sacrifice of Christ. But of this more in (§144).

But what is to be said concerning the reconciliation of men? How are they to be induced to lay aside their enmity to God? How does the Saviour act in this respect as Mediator? Whilst he walked upon earth, he never ceased preaching the Gospel; and now he is taken up into heaven, and seated at the right hand of his Father, he sends his servants forth to preach it. If you ask: In what does it consist? Paul says, "God who was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation; therefore we now pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." (Corinthians 5:19-20.)

O ye servants of Jesus! Learn by the apostles what your office particularly requires of you. Ye are, in Christ's stead, thus to beseech

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sinner; "Be ye reconciled to God." God would thus exhort men through you: "I have and do love you: come ye to Christ! Receive him in faith! In him I will receive you as my children, and as heirs of everlasting life! Why will ye die! Christ died for you! He has suffered the punishment in your stead."

Thus then has our Lord Jesus Christ, by the sacrifice of himself, which is of eternal avail (Hebrews 10: 12, 14, 18) made an atonement for us. "*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*" That is, when he suffered himself to be hung upon the cross, and to be numbered with those of whom it is said, "Cursed is every one who hangeth upon a tree," or who is crucified. (Galatians 3:13.)

Thus (as was said) has Jesus Christ by offering himself up to God for us, and submitting to the death of the cross, made such an all-sufficient propitiation at the judgment-seat of God, that nothing could possibly be more perfect.

We must therefore rank among such as are ignorant of the grace of the New Covenant, every one, who independent of Christ, and of the merits of his blood and death, seeks any other means of being delivered from the curse, which oppresses him on account of sin; every one, who in any measure would atone for his own sin, and inflict upon himself this or that punishment or penance, in order to appease the wrath of God, and to reconcile himself to him; and lastly, every one, who does this and the other supposed good works, for example, fasting, giving alms, leading a rigorous life, with more of the same kind, with a view of meriting and

purchasing forgiveness of sins from God. Nay, if we consider the matter right, he thus derogates from the merits, death, blood and sacrifice of Christ, as if they were not sufficient and efficacious enough for the atonement of our sins, and for redemption. (Galatians 2:21.) Whereas he that receives it by faith, and relies confidently upon it, honours God's holy counsel of grace for our salvation, and he will certainly not miss the way to it. But, on the other hand, all those who seek a propitiation out of Christ, let them mean ever so well, certainly deceive themselves, and are miserably deceived. They choose for themselves a way of salvation, in

which they can find no rest for their souls, and which can administer to them no living hope of eternal Life; nay, in this pursuit they perish infallibly. (John 3:36.) Now, inasmuch as the atonement has been made by the sacrifice of Jesus once for all, and by this an eternal redemption is obtained; so with respect to mankind doth the work of reconciliation, of the one and only Mediator, the Man Jesus Christ, continue, till the time

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that is described (1 Corinthians 14:24), when God shall have put all his enemies under his feet (the Mediator's) and when all that died in Adam shall be made alive in him. (1 Corinthians 14:22.) Then shall he deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and put down all rule, and all authority and power. Till then he is constantly employed in the work of the reconciliation of mankind to God.

¶83

As Christ thus proves himself to be the only Mediator between God and Man, so is also the whole work of our salvation entirely wrought by him. Our Lord and Saviour says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but *by me*." (John 14:6.) Farther it is said, "God hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children *by Jesus Christ*." (Ephesians 1:5 and John 1:12.) "God hath in these last days spoken unto us *by his Son*." (Hebrews 1:2.) "*By Christ* we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." (Romans 5:2.) And "*In Christ* we have boldness and access with confidence (to God) by faith in him." (Ephesians 3:12 and 2:18 and Hebrews 7:25.) "God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings *in Christ*." (Ephesians 1:3.) "*In Christ* we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated." (Ephesians 1:11.) "Being now justified through his blood, we shall be saved from wrath, *through him*." (Romans 5:9.) And, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation *by our Lord Jesus Christ*." (1 Thessalonians 5:9.)

“We have peace with God *through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (Romans 5:1.) “*In Christ* also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise.” (Ephesians 1:13, Acts 2:33, Titus 3:6 and John 16:7.)

“We also joy in God *through our Lord Jesus Christ*, by whom we have now received the atonement.” (Romans 5:11.)

“God doth richly comfort us *by Christ* in all our tribulations.” (2 Corinthians 1:3-5.)

“God maketh us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight *through Jesus Christ.*” (Hebrews 13:21.)

“God giveth us the victory *through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (1 Corinthians 15:57.) And Paul says, “I can do all things *through Christ*, which strengenth me.” (Philippians 4:13.)

“He, which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also *by Jesus.*” (2 Corinthians 4:14.)

“God will in his day judge the secrets of men *by Jesus Christ.*” (Romans 2:16.)

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Now, as it indisputably appears from all these passages of Scripture, that we come unto God through Christ, and that every thing God bestows upon us by grace, and transacts with men, goes through the hand of the Mediator;--He is the channel, through which every good thing passes from God to us, poor miserable creatures—so it is also thence apparent, why our Lord Jesus Christ, in particular (in contradistinction to Moses, who was the mediator of the old covenant, made by God with the people of Israel (Gallatians 3:19), is called the Mediator of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15.); which covenant is called “a better testament,” because “it is established upon better promises.” (Hebrews 8:6.) For all that appertaineth to it is accomplished *by him.*

Thence also it is as evident, that whoever will preach the Gospel, according to the mind of God, must direct all men to the Mediator Jesus Christ. Whoever does not do this, errs himself, and leads others astray. Whoever will lead men to God any other way than by the Mediator, is no preacher of the Gospel, nor does he direct men to the way of life.

“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son

hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” (1 John 5:9-12.)

Of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST.

¶84

The existence of a God is indeed manifest by the words of creation; but of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we should have known nothing, if we had not the Holy Scripture. This subject is not spoken of so plainly in the Old Testament as in the New. Yet he that knows it by means of the New Testament, finds likewise traces of it in the Old. For instance, when David says in spirit, "The LORD said unto my LORD, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Psalms 60:1.) There is then in this passage the LORD, who sits upon the divine throne, and the LORD, who seateth himself upon the very same throne. Concerning the Jews, Isaiah says, "They rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit;" that is, the Spirit of God. (Isaiah 63:10.) Now he, who by the New Testament is acquainted with the doctrine of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, doth also find in the Old Testament, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

This mystery was made known to man, at the very baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ. For then John saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and behold a voice from Heaven, which said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

There was the Father, who spoke from Heaven; and the Son, who was baptized and who prayed; and the Holy Ghost; who hovered over him. (Matthew 3:16-17 and Luke 3:21.) Afterwards our Saviour said to his disciples, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." (John 14:16.) Here is the Father, who is prayed to; and the Son, who prays; and the Holy Ghost, who was promised to the disciples. When the Lord sent out his disciples, he said unto them, "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 28:19.)

The words of the Apostle Paul refer to this; "Now there are diversities of gifts, but *the same Spirit*; and there are differences of administrations, but *the same Lord*; and there are diversities of operations, but it is *the same God*, which worketh all in all." (1 Corinthians 12:4-6.) Likewise, "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen." (2 Corinthians 13:14.)

Peter writes, "Grace and peace be multiplied to the Elect of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Ephesians 1:1-2.)

And John, “There are three that bear records in Heaven, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One.*” (1 Ephesians 5:7.)

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In all these passages the subjects spoken of are the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We should receive that which the Scripture says on this head, as is fitting, in faith, and in all humility. To enter with our speculations into the depths of the Deity, and into the incomprehensible Eternity, of which nothing has been revealed to us, is not only fruitless and foolish, but even dangerous; (for we are as little capable of compassing it, as a child is to discharge the whole ocean with its hand into a hole which, it has made in the sand.) Consequently, it would be better in our opinion to leave such things as belong to the depths of the Godhead untouched, than to endeavour to define what the Holy Scripture hath not defined. Hence we see evidently, that God hath one-only Son, and him he hath delivered up for us; and there is one-only Spirit, which hath not been created, but proceedeth from the Father, and is through Christ sent unto us.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the express image of his Father (¶49); therefore, “he that seeth him, seeth the Father also; and he that knoweth him, the Father also.” (John 14:9.) The Scripture says of the Father, that no man hath seen him at any time. (John 1:18 and 6:46 and 1 John 4:12 and 1 Timothy 6:16.)

But the Son of God appeared to Adam (Genesis 3:8-9 and 13 and 21); to Abraham (Genesis 27:1); to Isaac (Genesis 26:2); to Jacob (Genesis 32:24); to Moses (Exodus 3:4 and Acts 7:30); to the Elders of Israel (Exodus 26:9); to Isaiah (Isaiah 6:5 and John 12:41); and to others. It was HE also, of whom it is said (Numbers 21:5), “And the people spake against GOD, and against Moses, wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the Wilderness?” And the LORD sent fiery Serpents among the people. For this is so expressed by Paul: “Neither let us tempt *Christ, as some of them also tempted him, and were destroyed by Serpents.*” (1 Corinthians 10:9.) But in the fullness of time he clothed himself in our flesh and blood, and lived on earth upwards of thirty years. Then did he not only honour his Father by his preaching, and glorify him on the earth (John 17:4); but also shewed in himself, what we possess in the Father. For all the representations which we can make to ourselves of the Father, give us no such impression of his invisible essence, as doth the mind, the life, and the conversation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whosoever therefore enjoys the grace of knowing Christ truly, to such the Father doth not remain an unknown GOD. But as “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them, which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (2 Corinthians 4:4.) So saith the Saviour, “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee.” (John 17:25 and 8:54-55.)

The most exalted character we can give of the Father is, that he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:31, Ephesians 1:3 and 1 Peter 1:3.) “Blessed be God, even *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all comfort,” says Paul. (2 Corinthians 1:3.)

God has indeed made a glorious display of himself, for he, by the Son, made the world. (Hebrews 1:2.) He also approves himself as the Father of Mercy by his loving-kindness towards all creatures. For, “He

maketh his Sun to rise on the evil, and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:45.) He also “feedeth the fowls
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of the air, which neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns.” (Matthew 6:26.) Nay, he takes such care of each creature that without him not a sparrow falls on the ground. (Matthew 10:29.) But his love towards us is especially manifested in that “he sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” (1 John 4:9 and John 3:16.) His Son, his only, the beloved, who was dearer and more precious to him than heaven and earth, and every thing that is in heaven and earth,— Him hath he delivered up for us men, who had revolted from him, and were in bondage and slavery to sin, that he might become a man, and enter into death for us.

“God spared not his *own* Son, but delivered him up for us all.” (Romans 8:32.)

Oh how great must his love for men be, when we consider, how much he has bestowed upon them!

¶87

Paul says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: *according as he hath chosen us in him*, before the foundation of the world.” (Ephesians 1:3-4.)

It is very suitable to our design, to say something on the very important subject of Election. God made a covenant with Abraham and his posterity, and had chosen the people of Israel from all the other nations of the earth, to be his peculiar people; an holy people, that is, a people entirely separated from all others. This election did not arise from this people being better, or greater, than all other nations; but he adopted and chose them, because he loved them for their father’s sake. See Genesis 17:2, Exodus 19:5 and Deuteronomy 7:6. By this election they enjoyed uncommonly great privileges, beyond all other nations upon the earth, which Paul briefly recites (Romans 9:4); and they were the priestly kingdom of God, who himself governed them as their king. The condition of this covenant, which God made with them, was, that they should hearken to his voice, and keep his commandments. This covenant likewise extended to all the bodily posterity of Abraham, which he had by his son Isaac, and by his grandson Jacob. See (¶4) and (¶11). In the New Testament God did not confine himself to the people of Israel, but the Lord our Saviour sent his Apostles into all the world, commanding them to preach the Gospel unto all nations; which Gospel

was briefly and roundly this: “He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.”

Now they, who heard the word of the Gospel, received it in Faith, and were baptized according to his Word, became by faith in Christ Jesus,
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children of God, and heirs of Eternal Life; they received forgiveness of their sins, were sealed by the Holy Ghost, and had the grace and favour to serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. All these, whether they were Israelites or Heathens, by descent, are in the Scriptures of the New Testament from that time denominated. The Saints, and beloved, and Elect of God. As, for instance, Colossians 1:2 and Titus 1:1. This election had not principally for its object, the wise, according to the flesh, nor the mighty and noble; but as Paul says, “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are; that no flesh should glory in his presence.” (1 Corinthians 1:26.)

¶88

It was a great stumbling block to the Jews in the days of the Apostles, that God made, in the New Testament, no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles. They said, Did not God choose the people of Israel for his inheritance? Did he not make a covenant with them, and ordain circumcision as a seal of this covenant? Did he not say, Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God? Did he not intrust them with his law, and his holy word? Can he then repent of his Call and Election? Will he cast away his people, to whom he hath given such great promises?

Now when the Apostles reply to these and such like objections, they first premise, that the special covenant which God made with the people of Israel, and which is described in the Books of Moses, is not to be looked upon as intended to continue without end, in the very same form and manner as it had been established by means of Moses. For God made known unto them beforehand, plainly by his prophets, that he would make an end of this covenant, as to the form and manner of it, and enter upon a new and a much more glorious covenant with them. Of this it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “Behold the days come, saith the LORD (Jeremiah 31:31) that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah: not according to the

covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them, by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel, after those days, saith the LORD, I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a

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people. 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, saith the LORD; For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Hebrews 8:8.)

Hence it is quite evident, that with the commencement of the new, the old covenant ends. See (¶18).

Secondly, The Apostles, in answering these objections of the Jews, premise, that the faith in Jesus Christ is indispensably necessary to every man that would have an interest in this new covenant. For wherever faith in Christ is, there is also the forgiveness of sins, then we become children of God; then God becomes our God; we become new creatures; we know God; the love of God takes place in the heart; then we also love our neighbour; and this is to have the law written in our mind and in our heart. But when a man hears the Gospel concerning Christ, and doth not receive him as his Saviour and Redeemer, the wrath of God abides upon him; he hath not the forgiveness of sins; he is no child of God; he neither knoweth nor loveth God; he is also defective in his love towards his neighbor; and, according to the word of Jesus (Mark 16:16), he is damned.

Upon this the Apostles ground the position, that a man doth not, because of his descent from Abraham according to the flesh, of course belong to the New Covenant; but he then enters first into it, when he believes on Christ. Nay, Paul goes so far as to assert, that those are not the genuine children of Abraham, who are descended from him according to the flesh; but all those who believe in Christ, are the genuine children of Abraham, and Abraham is their father, whether they be descended from the people of Israel, or from the Gentiles, according to the flesh. See Romans 9:6 and Galatians 3:6-7. This our Lord Jesus Christ declared to the Jews some time before. (John 8:39.)

Thirdly, the Apostles previously lay this down, that God has by no means excluded the Houses of Israel and of Juda from the New Covenant, because he would show mercy also to the Gentiles, and by faith in Jesus Christ adopt them for his children. God may surely have mercy upon whom he will have mercy; and no creature has any right to

remonstrate with him. He had, long before, made known to the people of Israel and of Juda, that he would call the Gentiles by the Gospel, and number them with his own people. See Romans 10:24. And now, he makes no difference between Jews and Greeks (Heathens). He is the Lord over all, and rich unto all, that call upon him. For whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord—that is, Jesus Christ (See 1 Corinthians 8:6)—shall be saved. (Romans 10:12, 13.)

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These points being premised, Paul puts the question, “Hath God then cast away his people?” He replies, God “forbid!” (Romans 10:1.) But to understand this aright, we are to observe:

1. The Gospel was every where first preached to the Jews. In Judea it was first preached by John, the forerunner of Christ, and then by our Lord Jesus Christ himself; and at last by the Apostles, who had the first fruits of the Spirit. Whenever the Apostles came to other places, out of Judea, they first of all visited the synagogues of the Jews, and preached the Gospel to them first; as we see in the Acts of the Apostles.
2. The preaching of the Gospel was not without fruit among the Jews. For, before our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven, after his Resurrection, he appeared at once to five hundred brethren—that is, to people who believed on him. See (¶231). Upon the pouring of the Holy Ghost, by means of Peter’s first sermon, about three thousand souls were converted. More than twenty years afterwards, the elders at Jerusalem said to Paul, “Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are, which believe.” (Acts 21:20.) All these Jews, who became believers in Jesus Christ, are called the Election, or the chosen of God from the Jewish people: and there is no doubt, but that the many of the ten tribes of Israel, who had been carried away captive into Assyria, and dispersed into different countries, were of that number. For James writes to the “*twelve tribes*, which were scattered abroad.” (James 1:1.) Peter calls them “*strangers*, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, *elect*, according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father.” (1 Peter 1:1-2.) Therefore Paul also expresses himself thus (Romans 11:2), “God hath not cast away his people, *which he fore-knew*; or those who belong to the Elect.” And this was the proper answer to the objections of the Jews mentioned above.

3. Yet numberless were the Jews and Israelites, who were not obedient to the Gospel of Christ. On this account did our Saviour weep over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41), and said afterwards in the audience of all the people, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them, which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *and ye would not.*” (Matthew 23:37.) For this reason Stephen said to them (Acts 7:51), “Ye *stiff-necked*, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, *ye do always resist the Holy Ghost*; as your fathers did, so do ye.”

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Moreover, Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, saying to the Jews at Antioch publickly, “It was necessary, that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; *But seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting Life*; Lord, we turn to the Gentiles.” (Acts 13:46.)

4. Now because the Jews, although Christ would have gathered them under his wings, *would not*, because they *put the Gospel from them, and judged themselves unworthy of everlasting Life*; they therefore destroyed themselves, according to Hosea 13:9. The King, by his servants, had bidden them to the marriage of his Son; but *they would not come*. (Matthew 22:3.) They belonged to those people of whom Paul says, “If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them, *that are lost.*” (2 Corinthians 4:3.) Then followed those judgments, concerning which Paul speaketh, “The rest (who do not belong to the Election, or to the chosen of God) *are blinded*; according as it is written: God hath given them the spirit of slumber (or an unfeeling spirit). Eyes, that they should not see, and ears, that they should not hear unto this day.” (Romans 11:7.)
5. Paul, who in the ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, treats at large upon this subject of the reprobation of the Jews, who put the Gospel from them, and would not receive it; and of the election of the Gentiles, who embracing it with joy, became believers in Jesus; mentions likewise the reasons, which by this occasion he had taken notice of. He says, “The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness; even the righteousness which is of the faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they fought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the words of the law. For they stumbled at the stumbling stone.” (Romans 9:30.)

The meaning of the Apostle is this: The people of Israel would help themselves. They thought, we will keep the law, which God gave us by Moses; by doing which, we shall obtain forgiveness of sins, and salvation. But as they are disobedient to the Gospel, not considering, that it is the commandment of God, that we should believe on Jesus Christ; therefore they remain still under the wrath of God, and have no forgiveness of sins; and thus miss the way to salvation. But the Gentiles, who could find nothing good in themselves, came to Christ, as men thoroughly sinful and forlorn, received him as their Lord and Redeemer, and thus their sins were forgiven; as is the case of all, who come in faith to

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Jesus; they are adopted as children of God, sealed with the Holy Ghost; and, without merit or worthiness of their own, partake of all that grace and blessing which is contained in the New Covenant.

¶90

Hitherto we have spoken to those persons, who in the Scripture are called Elect, or the Chosen. We are very liable to err, if we do not keep punctually to the Scripture, in our thoughts and expressions concerning Election, or that gracious resolution of God, in favour of one or more persons, by which he grants him or them some special prerogatives in preference to others. Therefore we will only make the following observations:

1. It is very evident, that God does permit the Gospel to be preached to a particular nation, in a particular place, to a particular family, and even to an individual; and again, that he does not allow the same privilege to another nation, in another place, to another family, and to another individual. The reason of this is known only to himself; all we know is, that it doth not depend upon the merits of works; for “Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?” (Romans 11:35.) That many make a bad use of this distinguishing grace, appears particularly from the parable of the sower. (Matthew 13:3.) For how much of this seed fell upon the wayside, and was trodden under foot? How much of it fell upon stony places, where it had not much earth, forthwith sprang up, and soon withered away again? How much was choked by the thorns among which it fell? We moreover see, many thousands who hear the Gospel, and do not become

obedient to it. But will such be able to stand in the day of judgment? For to whom much is given, of him will much be required.

2. We call this also an election of grace, when God selects certain persons for some particular purpose. Thus, for instance, was David, among all his brethren, chosen by the Lord to be king of Israel. (1 Samuel 16:1.) Thus it is said of Jeremiah: “Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and (in my eternal decree) ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5.) See Romans 1:1.

Our Lord and Saviour says unto his disciples, “Ye have not chosen me, but *I have chosen you*, and ordained you, that you should

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go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” (John 15:16.)

To this purpose are also the words of our Saviour (Matthew 7:22), “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you (as mine); depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

This is a subject worthy of the most serious consideration for all those whom the Lord hath honoured by calling them to serve in the Gospel, “lest they having preached to others, should be themselves cast-aways.”

Concerning the election of grace unto salvation, we read (Ephesians 1:3-4), “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called, *according to his purpose.*” (Romans 8:28.) And, “He hath saved us, and called us an holy calling, *not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace*, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” (2 Timothy 1:9.) “The manifold wisdom of God is made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places by the church; *according to the eternal purpose*, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 10:11.) “Whom he did *fore-know*, he also did *predestinate*, to be conformed to the image of his Son.” (Romans 8:29.) “God hath from the beginning *chosen you to salvation*, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.” (2 Thessalonians 2:13.)

From these, and other texts of Scripture mentioned before, the following positions are deduced; namely,

That God, who before the beginning of the world, saw that mankind, created after his own image, would fall, had from eternity formed the purpose of helping them by his beloved Son. This purpose of his is also called, the *counsel of God concerning our salvation*; which, by our Lord and Saviour is, after his appearance in the flesh, thus expressed: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16.) See Acts 2:23, Luke 22:22, Acts 4:28 and 1 Peter 1:20.

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2. That God, to whom all things are known before they come to pass, did, before the beginning of the world, foresee all those who receive his grace in Christ; and did, according to his purpose, in and through Christ choose, appoint and ordain them to be his children, and the heirs of everlasting life.
3. He also determined to do all that was necessary, in them all, and in each, for the attainment of this purpose: that is, he determined to call them by the Gospel, to enlighten them by his grace, to reveal his Son in them, to sanctify them in the faith, and to keep and preserve them unto their end; and all this through Christ.
4. We indeed represent this his purpose, his fore-knowledge, and his election of grace, in such a manner, as if the one followed the other; neither doth the Holy Scripture speak otherwise of it, for it hath pleased God, in grace, to treat with us in an human way. When we make use of the faculties of our souls, one thought follows another: consequently it requires time, if we are to think upon a subject, and to take it under our consideration. But God on the contrary sees the whole at once: the very moment he turns his eye towards an object, in the same instant he clearly perceives its source, the state of it, and every thing connected with it. Therefore, it is in no wise good to dispute with others about what the first, second, and third thought of God might have been, when the salvation and redemption of fallen man became the object of his attention.

God, at the period which he in his wisdom had fore-ordained, according to his eternal purpose, sent his Son into the world, and by him accomplished every thing that was requisite for the reconciliation of the world unto himself. He hath moreover testified in the Gospel, his own counsel and will concerning our salvation; that we, for instance, should obtain forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, though Jesus Christ alone, and by faith in him. And now he commandeth all men to whom the Gospel cometh, every where, to repent, and to believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, according to Acts 17:30 and 1 John 3:23. Neither doth he cease to reprove or convince every one who hears or reads the Gospel, by his Holy Spirit, and give such a portion of his grace to him as is necessary for his conversion. But here we perceive how much some men differ from others, for some receive the love of the truth, and are saved, and

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others do not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved, according to 2 Thessalonians 2:10.

As to those who do not receive the love of the truth, that they may be saved, they do, by rejecting it, bring upon themselves the judgment of God. For, “Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly; but *whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath.*” (Matthew 13:12.)

The meaning of these words is clear from Matthew 25:14. *Every one that hath*, is one who makes a due use and improvement of the grace and gift bestowed upon him by God, he receives more. But *he that hath not*, is one who doth not value, nor improve the grace and gift he receives of the Lord, and for that very reason forfeits it. These are they, “who love darkness rather than light;” nay, who hate the light, according to John 3:19-20.

This being premised, namely, that such persons draw down the judgments of God upon themselves, we may then easily understand the following words: “*God hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.*” (John 12:40.)

In like manner, what our Saviour says is plain, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because *thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*” (Matthew 11:25.)

As also the words of Paul: "*Because* they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; and *for this cause* God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth." (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11) See Romans 1:21.

These perish according to the purpose of God, which our Saviour has expressed: "All that believe on the Son of God, shall not perish, but have everlasting life; but *he that believeth not shall be damned.*" But it is their own fault; they will not; neither, at the last day, will they be able to say, We would gladly have been converted, but God refused us.

But although these are the cause of their own destruction, yet on the other hand, we cannot say of those who are saved, that the good which they have experienced is owing to their own endeavors, nor can they ascribe it to themselves. But it is the grace of God in Christ Jesus alone to which they are indebted for their salvation. By grace are they saved. It is by the grace of God that they believe in Jesus Christ, and through faith obtain forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. It is by grace that the Father hath drawn them to the Son:

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and that our Lord Jesus Christ has drawn them to him; and that the Holy Ghost hath enkindled and maintained in them the love of God, and of their neighbour. That they come to a right knowledge of themselves, and of Jesus Christ, and of the Father in heaven, and of the Holy Ghost, as also of the words of God, and of his will, all this is a free gift. It is merely by grace they become children of God, members of the body of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, when they put off the old man, and put on the new man, and are filled with the fruits of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22.) What is all this but grace? Their abiding steadfast in the truth, and their perseverance unto the end, is not of themselves, but of Christ, in whom every thing is richly bestowed upon them.

Now all this is a comfortable and joyful doctrine; especially if we add the words of Christ. (John 10:27.) "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life and *they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* I and my Father are one."

Likewise the confession of Paul: *“I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 8:38-39.) *“The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”* (Romans 11:29.)

Comfortable as this is for the souls who believe in Christ, and submit to the government of his Spirit, the holy Scripture nevertheless has wisely guarded against the abuse of this above doctrine. For if any man should presume to think, I am now a sheep of Christ, and therefore I cannot fail, I shall certainly be saved; and if at the same time he should be light-minded, indulging himself in such things as are not agreeable to the mind of Christ; such a one would deceive himself. For whoever belongs to the sheep which the Father hath given to his Son, that is, such as are chosen in Christ, *they also hear the good Shepherd’s voice, and follow him.*” (John 10:27.) Therefore Paul writes (2 Timothy 2:19) *“The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his;”* and *let every one that nameth the name of Christ* (or whoever has his Christian name from Christ) *depart from iniquity.*

Whoever therefore will apply these words, which stand on one side of the seal of God, to himself; *The Lord knoweth them that are his,* and whoever believes, My name is written in heaven; let him also consider what stands upon the reverse of the seal of God, and *“Let*

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every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” Therefore also it is said in the Scripture, *“He that endureth to the end shall be saved.”* (Matthew 10:22.) *“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”* (Revelation 2:10.) See Hebrews 3:14 and Revelation 2:25-26 and 3:11.

Furthermore, the Scripture testifies, that *“for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, the days of affliction shall be shortened.”* (Mark 13:20.) That *“they cry day and night to God;”* and that *“they are delivered by him.”* (Luke 23:7.) Moreover, that *“they, when the Son of Man shall be seen coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory, shall by the holy angels be gathered together from the four winds (or quarters of the world) and from one end of heaven unto the other.”* (Matthew 24:30-31.) Paul says, *“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of*

God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth (them)? It is Christ that died, yea farther, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Romans 8:33-34.)

Peter testifies to the believers in general, "*Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*" (Epistle 2:9.)

What shall we say further on this head? We will conclude the subject with the words of Paul. (Romans 11:33.) "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out—To him be glory for ever. Amen."

Let us likewise take notice of the exhortation of St. Peter (2 Epistles 1:10) "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence, to make your calling and election sure;" that according to 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, ye may be sure of your point.

¶96

Our Savior says to his disciples, "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20.) And Paul says the same concerning other brethren. (Philippians 4:3.) That these names were written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the beginning of the world, stands plainly in Revelation 13:8 compared with 17:8, where it is asserted in express words. Also 10:12, the book of life is opened,

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and the dead then standing before God are judged, according to what is written in that book, and according to their works. Hence we infer, that God from the beginning of the world knoweth and hath written down the names of all the Lamb's property. O how dear to the Father must the souls be, who belong to his beloved Son, and are members of his body; seeing that he hath even from eternity, not only thought of, but also paid particular attention to them!

Yea, he adopts them as his children, and heirs of everlasting life, even here in this world, for the sake of his beloved Son, and he is their Father. (John 1:12, Galatians 3:26, 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 and Romans 8:16-17.) Who can but be astonished at the thought, when he reflects who we are, and who he is that adopts us for his children, and heirs of everlasting life? We are poor necessitous creatures, thoroughly corrupted by sin both in body and soul. He is the Most High, the Lord of

heaven and earth: “Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him:” and these are all holy and blessed angels. Were a great king to adopt some poor worthless beggar, for his son and heir, it would be looked upon as unprecedented. But what is the greatest king in comparison with God? If all the nations of the earth are as nothing, as a drop of a bucket before him, then the greatest monarch compared with God, must be less than the smallest particle of dust. Therefore says John, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called *the sons of God!*” (1 Epistles 3:1.)

But the Lord our Saviour testifies to his disciples before his ascension, “I ascend unto my Father and *your Father*, and unto my God and your God.” (John 10:17.)

¶97

A person who doth not closely attend to the Scripture, may on this occasion easily think, I will indeed believe, that God will adopt me for his child, when I am first sanctified throughout; when, every kind of evil that dwelleth in soul and body shall be mortified in me, and the image of Christ be quite restored in me. But the Scripture saith, “*As many as received him* (the Savior), *to them gave the he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*” (John 1:12.) And, “*Ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*” (Galatians 3:26.)

Thus, if the most depraved heathen, who has lived in all the sins that reigned amongst the Gentiles, according to Romans 1:18; if the most obdurate Jew, who in his blindness has blasphemed Christ, and passed his days in sins and abominations; if the most haughty

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Turk, who plumes himself with the imagined rectitude of his faith, but at the same time is a wretched slave of sin and of the devil, and a most cruel tyrant towards his fellow creatures; if a man who has been baptized into the name of Jesus, but who afterwards proving unfaithful towards his Saviour, has devoted himself to the service of sin and of the devil, and sunk into the most horrible abominations;--if (I say) such a heathen, Jew, or Turk, or so called Christian, is conscious of his deep corruption and sin, is grieved and distressed on account of it, looks upon himself as the lost and condemned man, trembles at the judgment of God, and cries out, from the very bottom of his heart, Who shall deliver me from the punishment I have many thousand times deserved? Who shall set me free from the cruel bondage and tyranny of sin and devil?--there is ground to hope that he will be soon relieved. For if Jesus Christ be

preached to such a person, as the salvation of the world, who submitted to a most cruel death, and now lives again, and reigns to eternity, and who for this reason came into the world, to save sinners, and to destroy the works of the devil, viz. sin and death, through whom all such as believe on him obtain forgiveness of sins; and he, through the grace of God, which is given him for this purpose, lays hold of it, by faith falls down at his Saviour's feet, cleaves with all his heart to him, and implores his grace, mercy, and deliverance from his sins;--such a one certainly finds grace, his sins are forgiven him, and through faith in Christ Jesus he becomes a child of God. Thus the murderer, who was crucified at the same time with Christ, but who turned in faith to him, was made a child of God and an heir of salvation that very day. Saul, who was one of the most cruel and blood thirsty persecutors of Christ and of his disciples, after three days and three nights which he spent in prayer, and weeping over his sins, became a child of God, and a witness of Christ. See (¶21).

Under this head we are further to observe, that a man may be fully assured that he is a child of God, and an heir of everlasting life; and who would not wish to be certain in a matter of such great consequence? But where do we find this written? In Romans 8:16-17. "*The Spirit itself* (that is, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, for of him doth the context speak) *beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God:* and, if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

¶98

Seeing then that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ adopts as his children, and becomes a kind father even to the most wretched

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and depraved sinners, when they come as such to his beloved Son Jesus Christ, receive him in faith as their Lord and Saviour,

are willing to be delivered by him from the curse and power of sin;--it is impossible that he should do otherwise than love them preferably to other men, and faithfully care for them. See John 16:27, 12:26 and 14:21. See also Luke 21:18 and Romans 8:38-39. Yea, this love of our heavenly Father towards his children is so tender, that he numbers the very hairs of their head. (Matthew 10:30 and Luke 12:7.)

But if any one should think that the Father, because he is so rich, and loves his children so much, will certainly give them an abundance of every thing in this world, such an one is greatly mistaken.

The love of God acts with wisdom; and the kingdom of Christ is not of this world; therefore hath God something better for his children than the riches, honours, and enjoyments of this world. See (¶38). He blesses them with spiritual blessings in heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3) and gives them, for example, an inward cheerfulness of heart, which without all doubt, is more to be prized than all the riches, honours and joys of this world. Thus sometimes it really happens, that the children of God suffer hunger and thirst; that they are in want of raiment; that they have no dwelling place; that they are sick, and in prison. All this our Saviour foretold of his brethren. (Matthew 25:35.) But under these circumstances, “the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3) comforts them.” “He comforteth them in all their tribulations, that they may be able to comfort them that are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted of God.” (2 Corinthians 1:4.) “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in them, so their consolation also aboundeth by Christ” (2 Corinthians 1:5); they are directed to be “contented with food and raiment.” (1 Timothy 6:8.) They have, in such a case, the word of our Saviour: “Take no thought, saying: What shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” (Matthew 6:31-32.) They also know, that God “having not spared his own Son, but delivered him for us all, will assuredly *with him also freely give us all things?*” (Romans 8:32.)

They therefore, as is fitting, accept of Paul’s exhortation (Ephesians 6:18), “Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” And their Heavenly Father hears, and helps them assuredly. (Mark 2:24.)

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¶99

The Son of God is also called in the Scripture the WORD (John 1:1), the WORD OF GOD (Revelation 19:13), and the WORD OF LIFE (1 John 1:1).

God himself has given our Lord Jesus Christ the testimony, of his being his “beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased” (Matthew 3:17 and 17:5); and he is the Only, the Only-begotten, his Own, the Beloved. (Mark 12:6, John 3:16, Romans 8:32, Ephesians 1:6.) See (¶66). Indeed our Saviour himself, in the days when he walked upon earth, commonly calls himself the Son of Man; for instance, Luke 5:24. Nevertheless, he also declared himself plainly, and with particular emphasis, in the audience of all the people to be the Son of GOD. (John 5:17.) For when the Jews fought to kill him, because he had made a poor man whole in the Sabbath day (who had an infirmity for eight and thirty years), he gave them this answer, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” By which he would say thus much, As God is ever working for the benefit of his creatures, even on the Sabbath, so I do no wrong by making such a wretched man whole, even on the Sabbath day. The Jews understood the meaning of what he said, viz. that our Lord Jesus Christ by these words made himself equal with God. Neither doth Christ refute them; so far from it, that he goes farther, and declares, that he, as the Son of God, has power both to raise the dead, and to hold the last judgment; for his Father “hath committed all judgment unto the Son, *that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*”

John, the forerunner of Christ, had already testified of him, and said: “the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.” (John 3:35.)

John says of himself, that he “being of the earth, speaking of the earth;” but of Christ he says, that “coming from heaven he is above all; so that he who believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” (John 3:31-36.) The disciples of Jesus, particularly after the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, continued to bear this excellent testimony of Christ the Son of God; their writings are full of it, as are the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which likewise testify of him. (John 5:39.)

¶100

But our Lord Jesus Christ hath clearly explained himself: “No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father.” (Luke 10:22.) “As the

Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father.” (John 10:15.) “No man knoweth the Son but the Father.” (Matthew 11:27.) And, as the

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apostles testify of the Holy Ghost, that “the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God; for the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:10-11.) Thus also saith the Lord our Saviour, “The Spirit of Truth, he shall glorify me.” (John 16:13-14.)

Hear also the words of Jesus: “he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.” (John 16:21.)

Hence it is clear, that when we obtain the knowledge of his Son, it is a work of the grace of God. And thus did the Father who is in heaven reveal his Son to Peter and Paul. (Matthew 16:16-17 and Galatians 1:15-16.) Thus did the Holy Ghost so effectually reveal Jesus Christ to his disciples, that they could testify of him with great joy and confidence, although they were unlearned and laymen (Acts 4:13), as is evident from the Acts of the Apostles, and from the rest of their writings. Thus also did Jesus Christ reveal himself to Thomas (John 15:27), and unto Paul, who counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ his Lord. (Philippians 3:13.)

Seeing then that the Holy Scripture testifieth, that in the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:2-3), and, by the grace of God, we have the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which testify of Christ the Son of God, in our hands, we should press boldly with Paul, toward this mark. (Philippians 3:13.)

¶101

Now as has been already observed, that the Son of God was the Great Author of creation; that “by him were created all things that are in heaven and that are in the earth, visible and invisible,” according to Colossians 1:16. See (¶28). It hath been moreover shown from Scripture that by him all things subsist and consist; and that he, by his powerful word, upholdeth all things (¶32); that “Christ cometh of the fathers according to the flesh, who is over all God blessed for ever,” according to Romans 9:5; or, that “God (that is, the Son of God) was manifested in the flesh,” according to 1 Timothy 3:16, has likewise been treated of (¶63). It has further been fully proved from the Holy Scripture, that the Son of God, as the Creator of men, did begin and carry on the work of their redemption, and by his death finish every thing that was necessary for

their deliverance from sin, death, the devil, and hell; and that he, on the other hand,

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purchased for them, the privilege that through faith in him they might become children of God, temples of the Holy Ghost, and heirs of everlasting salvation (¶67). At the same time it hath likewise been shown, that Jesus Christ humbled himself, and stooped so low, as to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and that after his resurrection he ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Majesty of God (¶70).

Here a question arises, with respect to the Son of God, What was He before the creation of this world? We ground all we know of the Son of God upon the Scripture; for whatsoever is not there revealed to us concerning him, we know nothing of. Paul was in Spirit taken up into Paradise, where he saw and heard things which he durst not utter (2 Corinthians 12:4), and yet he says, "I know in part, but then (when I see him) face to face, I shall know, even as I also am known;" that is, perfectly, for so are we known unto God. (1 Corinthians 13:12.)

What then doth the Scripture say of the Son of God? "Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be the Ruler of Israel (Jesus Christ, Matthew 2:5) *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*" (Micha 5:2.) See Isaiah 43:13. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given (Jesus) and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, *the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*" (Isaiah 9:6.) Of the Son it is said, "*Thy throne, O GOD! is for ever and ever.*" (Hebrews 1:8.) Christ says to John, "Fear not, *I am the First and the Last*" (Revelation 1:17) and, "I am *the Beginning and the Ending*, which is, and which was, and which is to come, *the Almighty.*" (Revelation 1:8 and 22:13.)

Therefore John says, "*In the beginning* (that is, before any thing had been created) *was the WORD*, and the WORD was with God, and *the WORD was GOD.*" (John 1:1.) And Paul, "All things were created by him for him; and *HE is before all things.*" (Colossians 1:16-17.) HE was, as HE is, "*the Brightness of the Glory of GOD*, and the express *image of his Person.*" (Hebrews 1:3.) "*In Him was Life*" (John 1:4); and, "*HE was the true Light.*" (John 1:9.) "HE was in the form of GOD, *equal with GOD*" (Philippians 2:6), and was, *in brightness, or glory* "*with the Father before*

the world was.” (John 17:5.) “*HE was the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.*” (John 1:18.) “*HE was the First-born (the First Producer) of every creature; for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven that are in earth.*” (Colossians 1:15-16.)

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From these Scripture passages it is very evident, that the Son of God, as the Mighty God and Everlasting Father, has been eternity in the closest fellowship with his Father, and in the very same glory as his Father; and this too in such a manner as to authorize our saying, that the Son was as the Father, and the Father as the Son; and as our Lord Jesus Christ could, in a state of the deepest humiliation say, “He that seeth me, seeth Him that sent me” (John 12:45 and 14:9-10); and, “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.” (John 14:7.) “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.” (John 14:11.)

And since Paul testifies, “In Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9), we must therefore say the same of him, he being before the foundation of the world, in the bosom of the Father.

¶102

As the Son of God was the great Author of creation, so he also from that time till his appearance in the flesh, has always made man the special object of his care. The scripture speaks plainly concerning the Father. “*No man hath seen God at any time.*” (John 1:18 and 1 John 4:12.) “*HE dwelleth in the Light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see.*” (1 Timothy 6:16.) “*Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he, that is of God (Christ) He hath seen the Father.*” (John 6:46.)

Therefore whenever God appeared unto men, whenever he spoke with men (which has however been often the case) it was always the Son of God. See (¶85).

But how is it at present, since the accomplishment of those words, which David uttered in spirit, “The Lord said unto my LORD, sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?” (Matthew 22:44, Psalms 110:1.) Jesus Christ, as the Mediator between God and man, has seated himself at the right hand of God; and this mediatorial office of his will continue until all his enemies have been by his Father laid under his feet: and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. (1 Corinthians 15:25-26.) Now though the words of Christ stand firm, “I

and my Father are one" (John 10:30); "and he is over all, God blessed for evermore." (Romans 9:5.) Yet it is also equally certain, that *GOD is the Head* of the Mediator *Christ*, according to 1 Corinthians 11:3. In this sense Paul says also to the Corinthians, "Ye are Christ's and *Christ is GOD's*." (1 Corinthians 3:23.) Therefore says Paul, "*GOD hath highly exalted him*, and given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name

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of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11.) And Peter, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour.*" (Acts 5:30-31.)

By this exaltation we can understand nothing else, but the sitting at God's right-hand: and hence it is very evident, that Jesus, who was slain upon the cross, the Mediator between God and man, hath sat down at the right hand of God. So that when the Lord our Saviour says, "All power is given unto me in Heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18), He then also speaks of himself, as the Mediator between God and man. "He *raised Christ from the dead, and set him at his own right hand*, in the heavenly places," says Paul in Ephesians 1:20. Here we also see, that He, who set himself at the right hand of God is the very same Jesus, the Mediator between God and man, who died for us, and whom He raised up again from the dead. Therefore the Father is called, "*The GOD of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (Ephesians 1:17.) And our Saviour says to Mary, "go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and *to my God*, and your God." (John 20:17.) And it will be clearer still if we add to this the words of Christ, "The Father hath given the Son authority to execute judgment also, *because he is the Son of Man.*" (John 5:26-27.) For is it not here expressly asserted, that the Son of God has the judgment given to him for this very reason, because HE is the Son of Man, who was the Mediator between God and man. From all this it is plain, that the words of the Lord, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28), are to be understood of Jesus Christ in the quality of *Mediator* between God and man. "All enemies must be put under his feet, yet is he expected, that did put all things under him." (1 Corinthians 15:27.) But when all that which God hath spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets, since the world began, shall be restored and effected, concerning times of restitution of all things, according to Acts

3:21, then Jesus the Mediator will lay down his office and “God will be all in all.” (1 Corinthians 15:28.)

¶103

This being premised, we may also understand, that he is our advocate or intercessor with the Father, according to the Scripture. That his blood, which speaketh better things than that of Abel (for that cried for vengeance, according to Genesis 4:10) is our plea (Hebrews 12:24), is a point inexpressibly important to us. For it

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shows that the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus, which he offered for us, when with his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12), remains in perpetual remembrance before God, and incessantly pleads for mercy with a voice which cannot but be heard. But this is not all which is implied here; but that, according to Romans 8:34, he is even at the right hand of God; and “maketh intercession for us.”

Thus, although our Lord Jesus Christ be ascended into Heaven, and has sat down at the right hand of God; yet he has not therefore ceased to be the Head of his Church. In this view he interests himself in all its affairs, whether they respect his church in general, or a part, or an individual only belonging to it. He looks upon both the good and the evil that befalls his church, in the same point of view, as if it were done unto himself. When Saul persecuted the churches which were in Judea, our Lord and Saviour called unto him, “Saul, Saul, *Why persecute thou me?*” (Acts 9:4.) He also says to those who have fed, or given drink, or clothed, or lodged, or visited, either under sickness, or in prison, a poor child of God (Matthew 25:40), “Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, *ye have done it unto me.*”

Thus he interests himself greatly in favour of every one, who by the grace of God, is the least disposed to be converted, according to the words of Scripture in Hebrews 7:25. “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, *that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*”

And if any one of his people commits a fault, and incurs the displeasure of his Heavenly Father, our Saviour is then at hand, and ceases not to intercede in his behalf. Thus John writes, “If any man sin (that is, if a person believing on Christ should be so unhappy as to transgress, which however he ought most faithfully to guard against) *we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*” (1 John

2:1.) In John 27, we see how our Saviour is our advocate and intercedes for us with the Father. "He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15.) And, "He is entered into Heaven itself, *now to appear in the presence of God for us.*" (Hebrews 9:24.) And yet is he ever nigh unto us; according to the Word, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20), and "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 28:20.)

None can feel so sensibly for our weal and woe as our kind Saviour. And whose intercession could be so powerful and effectual, and have such blessed consequences as his?

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We may also converse with him with great openness of heart and confidence, and can pour into his bosom such thoughts, as we dare not trust to any other. There is nothing so great and important, nor any thing so little and trivial, which we may not freely mention to him; and with childlike confidence expect that he will make the matter his own; provided that there be nothing in the nature of it, which would prove hurtful to ourselves or others, or be a dishonour to the Lord.

¶104

Since then we are the work of his hands (¶28), and he has redeemed us forlorn and condemned sinners from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with his own precious blood, and with his innocent sufferings and death (¶80); therefore he is in all respects *our Lord*, and we are his property. Indeed he is in general "the Lord of Glory." (1 Corinthians 2:8.) Yes, "the LORD of all." (Acts 10:36.) Yet he is in an especial manner the Lord of men. *To us* there is *one LORD* Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (1 Corinthians 8:6.) And, "To this end, Christ both died and rose and revived, that *He might be the LORD of both the dead and living.*" (Romans 14:9.) And when the holy Scripture further says, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is LORD*, to the glory of GOD the Father." (Philippians 2:10-11.) This certainly refers in the first place to men; and it will be chiefly accomplished when they shall stand before his judgment seat." (Romans 14:10-11.) But all the angels are likewise enjoined "to worship him." (Hebrews 1:6.) For "God set him at his own right hand in the heavenly

places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet.” (Ephesians 1:20-21.)

When he is also called, “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords” (Revelation 17:4), he is so not with respect to mankind only, but also to the heavenly Hosts. The following passage of Isaiah is in the New Testament (Romans 14:10-11) expressly applied to Christ, and explained as referring to him. “This saith the Lord, that created the heavens, God himself, that formed the earth and made it –I am the LORD and there is none beside me.—Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have

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sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto ME shall every knee bow, every tongue shall swear, and say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” (Romans 45:18-24.) We also obtain in him the true righteousness and forgiveness of sins, together with the peace of God, and the power of the Holy Ghost. Now, if “servants ought in all fear to be subjects to their masters, whose property they are,” not only to be good and gentle, but also to the froward (1 Peter 2:18); if “they ought to please them well in all things, showing all good fidelity” (Titus 2:9-10); if “they ought to be obedient unto them from the heart” (Ephesians 6:5), Oh! How much more ought we to be thus minded towards our kind Lord, who is friendly and gracious beyond all measure; who hath bought us, as his property, not with silver and gold, but with his own blood, and to demean ourselves, not from the principle of fear but of love towards him. (Romans 14:7-9 and 2 Corinthians 5:15.)

¶105

This we shall be enabled to do, as long as we have the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, which has been treated of (¶49), before our eyes. And to this we are exhorted by the word of God. For “He left us an example, that we should follow his steps.” (1 Peter 2:21.)

If we heartily follow this admonition, our ways will then be full of blessing. But such persons only are here spoken of, who are in Christ Jesus, and who abide in him; they ought themselves so to walk even as

he walked (1 John 2:6), and they also can do it, for he gives them the necessary strength.

Yes, it is very plain, that in our endeavors to imitate Christ the Lord, we should not attempt to do what he did in the days of his flesh, in consequence of his mediatorial office, and as the great prophet sent by God into the world. For if any man should think he ought to make the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk, because he would imitate Christ, such a man would be as much mistaken, as if another would, in imitation of Christ, make a cord, and whip such people out of the church, who have as little right to be there, as the sheep and oxen had to be in the outer court of the temple.

Thus the imitation of Jesus Christ, enjoined in the Holy Scripture to all believers, turns upon that only which we find in the Scripture concerning Christ Jesus, in as much as he was a man, like other men, yet without sin: For instance, his humbling himself, rather choosing to be poor, than rich in the world; respecting which the

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Scripture saith, “Let *every man*,” who believes on him—“have in him the same mind which was in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 2:5.) “HE did not please himself,” so neither ought we to please ourselves. (Romans 15:1-3.) “He denied himself, and took up his cross,” which those who would be his followers ought to do likewise. (Mark 8:34.) That which (§68) has been already said upon this subject will elucidate this sufficiently.

In brief, it is the will of God, that “we should be conformed to image of his Son.” (Romans 8:29.) For instance, “we ought to love one another, as Christ hath loved us.” (John 8:34.) “We ought to forgive one another, as Christ hath forgiven us.” (Colossians 3:13.) It is however to be observed that though this conformity to Christ begins in all respects, as soon as we, through faith in him, become new creatures; yet it always increases in proportion as “we grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.” (Ephesians 4:15.) And thus it was of great importance to Paul, that Christ might be formed in the Galatians; that is, that they might become more like unto Christ. (Galatians 4:19.) And in 2 Corinthians 3:18, he says, “We all behold the glory of the Lord” (or the splendor of the Lord is manifest in us), and “*we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.*” There is thus a constant progression, we become continually more like our Saviour, and through grace, more pleasing to him.

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¶106

The Holy Ghost powerfully concurred in all which related to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all men, and especially of those that believe. Before the manifestation of Christ in the Flesh, the Holy Ghost, plainly predicted, by the prophets, the circumstances of his nativity, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection. When the time appointed for the birth of Christ approached, the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, chosen of God, “was with child of the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 1:18-20.) Soon afterwards, she made a visit to her cousin Elizabeth, who being also “filled with the Holy Ghost, blessed Mary, and the fruit of her womb.” (Luke 1:39.) John, the forerunner of Christ, “was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother’s womb” (Luke 1:15); and his father Zacharias, “being filled with the Holy Ghost,” spoke with energy of our Lord and Savior. (Luke 1:67.) To Simeon “it was revealed by the Holy Ghost that, he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ (the Messiah) and he came by the spirit into the Temple, when the child Jesus was presented unto the Lord; he took him up into his arms, and blessed God, with joy.” (Luke 2:22.) When Jesus was baptized by John, “the Holy Ghost descended from heaven like a dove and it abode upon him.” (John 1:32-33.) Immediately after it, “Jesus was led by the Spirit, into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” (Matthew 4:1.) Christ “cast out devils by the Spirit of God.” (Matthew 12:28.) We may hence conclude, that the Holy Ghost was also with him in all the other miracles which he wrought. Christ “offered himself to God without spot, through the eternal Spirit.” (Hebrews 9:14.) And thus was the Holy Ghost in and with Christ during the whole of his life and conversation upon earth. See (¶69).

¶107

It occurs sometimes in the Holy Scripture, that spirit and power are in the same sentence; for instance: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.” (Acts 10:38.) And what the Lord our Saviour said to his disciples, “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 1:5), this, in another place, he expresses thus: “Ye shall be endued with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49.) Hence it is manifest, that wheresoever the Holy Ghost is, there is also power, the power of God. See 1 Corinthians 2:4.

We must not however, infer, that he is an attribute of God, but that he is God with the Father and the Son; which is quite evident

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from the words of Jesus: "Baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 28:19.)

Here the Holy Ghost is named in same manner as the Father and the Son; and such poor sinners as become obedient to the Gospel are to be baptized in his name, even as in the name of the Father and of the Son; in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. See also 2 Corinthians 13:14 and John 15:26.

The words of Peter confirm this, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God." (Acts 5:3-4.) For to whom did Ananias lie? To the Holy Ghost, who had revealed unto Peter that which had passed between Ananias and Sapphira; by whose impulse also Peter put the question to him, and received a lie in answer to it; and upon this Peter says, "Thou hast lied unto God," and ascribes it to a seduction of Satan, whom Ananias had admitted into his heart. The words of Paul to the Corinthians refer likewise to this: "Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." (1 Corinthians 3:6.) Who dwelt in them? The Holy Ghost. What were they then? The temple of God.

Here the words of Christ are not to be forgotten: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." (Matthew 12:31-32.) And in the Gospel of Mark it is said, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." (Mark 3:28-29.)

The occasion of this warning given to the Scribes and Pharisees was this: A person possessed was brought to Jesus, who was blind and dumb; and He healed him, so that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. Upon which they said, "He only casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." This they said contrary to their knowledge and conviction.

Now, our Savior seeing that the Scribes and Pharisees, and the people which adhered to them, would plunge themselves into temporal and eternal perdition, if they obstinately persisted in this wicked disposition, or proceeded further in it, he therefore showed them the danger in which they were. But alas! To little purpose; for although they were afterwards convinced through the preaching of the resurrection of

Christ, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, or the Anointed of God; although they were so silenced by the apostles, and especially by Paul, through the Writings of the

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prophets, which treat of the Messiah, that they could not but see that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah; and although the apostles confirmed their doctrine with as many, and even as great, yea, greater miracles and signs than our Lord Jesus Christ himself had wrought; nay although they saw before their own eyes, how many thousands poor sinners were turned by the Gospel from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;--yet they remained obdurate, blaspheming the Holy Ghost, who was in the apostles, and persecuting the disciples of Jesus, as were they the most abominable miscreants. This sin was therefore not forgiven them; but the judgments of God came upon them; Jerusalem, and the whole country of Judea, were lamentably laid waste, and the most horrible punishments overtook them.

¶108

Concerning the gifts of the Holy Ghost, or the gifts which the Holy Ghost distributeth, we have an excellent account. (Corinthians 12:4.) The Holy Ghost distributes them with profound wisdom, in such a manner as the circumstances of the church at all times require. As the people of the Jews did not believe except they saw signs and wonders, according to the words of Christ in John 4:48, compared with John 2:18, therefore the disciples of Jesus were endowed with many miraculous gifts for the planting of the first church, the gift of healing was so great, that even the shadow of Peter, as he only passed through the streets, healed the sick. (Acts 5:15.) And when from the body of Paul they brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. (Acts 19:12.) This gift of healing and restoring the sick was not peculiar to the apostles only, but even many other believers possessed it. Moreover, the gift of speaking foreign languages was bestowed upon many, as soon as they were converted, who were before no scholars, and did not understand them; and others had the gifts of understanding languages, otherwise unknown to them, and of expounding to others that which had been uttered in such languages. (1 Corinthians 14:27.) The apostles of the Lord had also the gift of punishing such, as were a reproach to the name of Christ, and dangerous to others. Thus did Peter detect the secret

agreement made by Ananias and Sapphira, in order to deceive the apostles, and punished them both with sudden death. (Acts 5:1.) Paul delivered a person over to Satan, who had taken his mother-in-law to wife (a sin esteemed abominable by the very Gentiles themselves) “for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit

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might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (1 Corinthians 5:5.) It was also given to the apostles to do other great wonders; as we read not only of Peter, but also of Paul, that they raised the dead. (Acts 9:36 and 20:9.)

But we see by the Epistles of the apostles, that even in the first period of the church, these extraordinary gifts began to be abused. From St. Paul’s exhortation to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 12:11), we may conclude, that one was jealous of the other’s gifts, comparing it with his own, in order to judge which were the best. Paul therefore advises, that each ought to be contented with his own, for the Holy Ghost hath distributed them wisely. For as in the body there were many members, each having its use, though one differed from the other, so also in the church, there were many members who had various gifts, though differing one from the other. Besides, some spoke in the assemblies of the congregation in such languages as no one understood; which was always at best, very inconsiderate; and others, as appears very probable, fought to obtain of God by prayer, rather such gifts as were striking, and astonishing, than those which, though useful to the church, had nothing extraordinary in them. Therefore Paul exhorts them to covet the best, that is, the most useful gifts, and rather that they might prophesy. But by prophecy he doth not mean here, the foretelling of what is to come, but rather experimental and consolatory doctrines and exhortations, addressed to the congregations, which might go to the heart, and edify others. (Corinthians 14:3.) After he has proved this in a copious manner, he adds, “In the church, I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue,” and tells them, that the gift of speaking in foreign languages was not for the sake of believers, but of unbelievers. (Oh, that such preachers would take notice of this, who frequently deliver sermons which cannot be understood by the greatest part of their hearers, who must consequently think, that they speak in an unknown tongue!) If this be duly considered, we shall soon understand why it pleased the Lord to withdraw, by degrees, such extraordinary gifts from the church. Nevertheless, the apostles made use

of them with advantage and blessing in the beginning, and even among the heathen, for the propagation of the Gospel.

But it may be sufficient for us, that we either have, or may have all the gifts of the Spirit in our times, which are necessary, to obtain either our own salvation, or the salvation of others; for God still heareth prayer. And it is necessary for him, upon whom God bestowed

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gifts, to employ them properly, for he must one day give the Lord an account of them.

¶109

When in the Holy Scripture, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Grace, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Faith, the Spirit of Prayer, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of Fear of the Lord, the Spirit of Revelation, the Spirit of Prophecy and others occur, these are either so many names of the Holy Ghost, or indicate some one or other gift of the Holy Spirit. To him alone our thanks are due for life, grace and truth. And the words of Paul are here applicable: “All these worketh *that one and the self-same Spirit.*” (1 Corinthians 12:11.) *That one and the self-same Spirit*, is called *the Spirit of the Father*, because he proceedeth from the Father; and *the Spirit of Christ*, or of the Son of GOD, because Christ sendeth him.

“*This Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of man, which is in him? So the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*” (1 Corinthians 2:10-11.) Who then can search all things, even the deep things of God? Who can know what is in God, but God himself?

We can however say no more of the work of the Holy Ghost, than we read of in the Scripture. But all that is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, our hearts must experience in the same manner, as it stands in the Scripture.

Before our Saviour withdrew from the sight of his disciples, he made them many great promises, and among others, this:

“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter (Guardian and Advocate) that he may abide with you for ever: Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” (John 14:16-17.)

Hence we see, That the Holy Ghost dwelleth in believers; but not in unbelievers. Nay, our Saviour says, that the world cannot receive the Spirit of Truth. (Now by the world, he means all those whose hearts are full of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and who do not love our Saviour and his dear Father, according to 1 John 2:15-16. He cannot dwell in their hearts; for it is as difficult for them to know him, as it is impossible for them to see him with their eyes. The reason is this; the Spirit of God is holy, and men, as long as they live in sin, submitting to the government of

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the evil spirit, are unholy; and thus there can be no fellowship between them and the Holy Ghost.

¶110

However, from the words of Christ, “When the Comforter (the Holy Ghost) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” (John 16:7-11.) We see, that the Holy Ghost doth not cease to influence, even such men who do not as yet know our Saviour; who have not yet received him in faith; who do not yet cleave unto him with their heart; but are of the world. And this took place from that day, when the Holy Ghost was poured out up the disciples. For when they were filled with the Holy Ghost, they began to preach, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:4.) What then did they preach? They first showed the people of Israel their sin, not having received, and believed in Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among them by miracles, and wonders, and signs, as his own dear Son, and the promised Messiah; but on the contrary of having crucified and slain him by wicked hands, that is, by those of the Gentiles. (Acts 2:22-23.) In the same manner doth the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Peter, convince the Jewish people of their unbelief (Acts 3:13-15), “*Jesus, the Son of God ye delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life.*” Had ye believed on him, ye would not have done this.

The Holy Ghost, who spoke by the disciples of Jesus, did also convince the world of righteousness, and that Jesus was gone to the

Father, for immediately in their very first sermon, it is said, "*This Jesus hath God raised up*, where of we all are witnesses.—Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that *God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ*. Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:32.) Again, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree: *Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour*, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5:30-31.)

This is the righteousness, or the forgiveness of sins, which, since Christ went to the Father, is graciously granted unto all those who

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turn unto Christ. And thus did the Holy Ghost reprove or convince the world of righteousness.

But how did he convince them of judgment; and that the prince of the world is judged, and has lost his fruit? By these means; because Christ was raised up again by God; because he exalted him by his right hand; because he made him both Lord and Christ; because, through him, every one that believeth on him obtains forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Had Christ lost his suit, nothing of all this would have ensued; but "through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil." (§80)

But the Holy Ghost did not convince or reprove the world of sin, of righteousness; and of judgment, by the mouth of the apostles only; but he likewise gave his seal to this testimony of the apostles in the hearts of men. For when they heard the sermon, the hearers were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And thus were three thousand souls converted that very day, receiving Jesus in faith for the Lord and Saviour. Who wrought this in them? The Holy Ghost. For "No man can say, that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Corinthians 12:3.)

And thus the work of the Holy Ghost was carried on, until the number of Jews, who were converted to Christ, increased to many thousands. From that time, the Holy Ghost has constantly carried on his work in the hearts of poor men; and how many thousands are there, who have believed through his means, and are now standing before the throne of the Lamb!

Moreover, the Holy Ghost proceedeth to this very hour, to convince or reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. When they read, or hear the Gospel, he then moves their hearts,

convincing them, for example, of sin, because they do not believe in Jesus. For as he reproveth the Jews of their unbelief, because they had crucified our Saviour, so he continually still reproves mankind, that they do not believe in Christ, because they are constantly crucifying him afresh by their sins. The Holy Ghost doth also still stir up zealous men to call aloud to the poor slaves of sin, to turn to Christ, who sits at the Father's right hand, in heaven, where they would find the forgiveness of sins, and the righteousness which availeth before God. All such, through faith in Christ, and the grace offered unto them, should gladly cast from them the bonds of Satan, the prince of this world: for the enemy is certainly judged; he has lost his right, and can no longer keep any man, who sincerely wishes to be delivered through Christ. The Holy Ghost also bears witness in the hearts of men to this testimony; and how happy is that

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man who is attentive and obedient to it; for life eternal depends upon it. He also continually approves himself to be the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, and testifieth of Jesus. (John 15:26.)

¶111

We shall now further prove, that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in believers, according to the word of our Saviour. The words of Paul, put this beyond all doubt, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that *the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*" (1 Corinthians 3:16), and "Know ye not that your body is *the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?*" (1 Corinthians 6:19.) See 2 Corinthians 1:22 and Ephesians 1:13-14. That we "receive the promise of the Spirit through faith," we plainly see from Galatians 3:14. Thus, when we become "children of God by Faith in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 3:26), the Holy Ghost dwelleth in us, and the unclean spirit must depart; which harmonize with the words of Paul: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son *into your hearts.*" (Galatians 4:6 and Ezekiel 36:27.) This is such a prerogative of the children of God, that Paul says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ (or in whomsoever the Spirit of God doth not dwell), he is none of his;" that is, he is not yet a sheep of his fold, he is not yet a member of the body of Christ. (Romans 8:9.) Thus the communion of the Holy Ghost (2 Corinthians 8:14), commences from the time we receive Christ, and believe in his name.

Moreover, the exhortation which Paul hath grounded upon our being the temples of God, is important; namely, "If any man defile (or destroy)

this temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye.” (1 Corinthians 3:17.)

¶112

The Holy Ghost indeed has always attended to the welfare of mankind: that this was done before the deluge, cannot be doubted, for otherwise the Lord could not have said “Men will *no more* endure reproofs of my Spirit, for they are my flesh.”* (Genesis 6:3.) He must then have reproved them, and have directed them aright, but they would not listen to this voice. “Enoch, the seventh from Ada, has also prophesied that the Lord would come with ten thousands of his

*This is according to the version of Luther; the English version expresses it, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.”

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of saints to execute judgment.” (Jude 14.) By whom did he speak this? By the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21), and God having afterwards established an especial covenant with Abraham and his posterity, he, according to Nehemiah 9:20, “gave them his good Spirit to instruct them.” But Isiaha testifies of them in Chapter 63: 10 that “they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit.” And Stephen says in Acts 7:2-51, “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, *ye always do resist the Holy Ghost*; as your fathers did, so do ye.” Which he also evinces by the whole of the history. The number of those in whom the Holy Ghost found entrance was at that time very inconsiderable. Indeed Moses wished, that “all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.” (Numbers 11:29.) But we cannot say that this was ever the case. That those who cleaved with their hearts to the Lord, and especially the prophets, have been partakers of this Spirit; or, according to the words of Peter, “Holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” is undoubtedly true.

The promise of God has been however fulfilled in the times of the New Testament: “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.” (Joel 2:28.) This promise, which was accomplished on the day of Pentecost, and afterwards, implies according to the meaning given of it by the writings of the apostles, that he, who by faith, receiveth Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour, becomes a child of God, and a temple of the Holy Ghost, whether he be by birth a Jew or a Gentile, a man or a woman, a youth or a maiden, bond or free, poor or rich, young or old. This is the completion

of the promise in Isaiah 54:13, “they shall be all taught of God,” which our Lord Jesus Christ himself alleges. (John 6:45.)

Thus then the Holy Ghost was *poured out* in the time of the New Testament, and according to the promise of God (Isaiah 44:3); that is, so plentifully, powerfully, and fruitfully, upon poor and miserable sinners, as an overflowing rain penetrates a thirsty soil, and renders it fertile. When John led the Jews, who came to him confessing their sins, to Jordan, and dipped them under the water, and poured it upon them (for this was baptism in those days) he then declared unto them, “I baptize you with the water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me (Christ) is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear (that is, to be his menial servant). *He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*” (Matthew 3:11.) In brief, the Holy Ghost, in the time of the New Testament, communicates himself in such a manner, and to so many men, and manifests himself by so many and great gifts, powers, wonders, and glorious operations, that the disciples of Jesus may, in comparison

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to former times, say, that “the Holy Ghost was not yet, (or had not yet been) given.” Thus it is expressed in John 7:37. “In the last day, that great day of the feast (which was the most glorious one), Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me (as the Scripture hath said), out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Here our Saviour applies to his own person the words, “With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3), which implies as much as if he had said, I am the well of salvation, from me flow the streams of living water, of that water in which there is life, and which imparts life: of this each who believeth can and will drink. That is, he will partake of it, if he thirsts after, and pants for it. And that this is the genuine meaning of the words of Jesus, is apparent from the explanation given to them by the evangelist in John 7:39. “But this spake he of the Spirit, *which they, that believe on him, should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given,* (namely, in this manner, and as he afterwards came upon them that believed in Jesus) because that Jesus was not yet glorified.”

Thus then the disciples of Jesus, and all those who through their word believe in Him, partake of this promise of Jesus, “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with

you for ever.” (John 14:16.) If we take a right view of these words, we shall find this meaning to be couched under them: I have been with you hitherto; I have taken care of you; I have taught, warned, reproved, led, guided, comforted, and strengthened you.—Now ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, he will do all that for you, which I have hitherto done. For, “the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*” (John 14:26.) “But when the Comforter is come, whom I shall send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, *HE shall testify of me.*” (John 15:26.) And, “When HE, the Spirit of Truth is come, *He will guide you into all truth—and he will show you things to come.*” (John 16:13.)

Thus the Holy Ghost in the New Testament, since our Lord Jesus Christ has seated himself at the right hand of the Majesty on high, takes the whole church, or congregation of Christ, under his peculiar care. He dwelleth in every one, who by faith cometh to Christ, teaching, leading, reprovng, warning, comforting, admonishing, and strengthening him in that which is good. See 1 Corinthians 6:11, Galatians 18:22, Ephesians 1:13-14 and 1 Corinthians 2:12.

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He preserves all Christendom on earth in one mind;* it is not possible that this should mean the multitude at large, who are called by the name of Christ: but those only who stand in the faith of Christ, who by faith are children of God, and temples of the Holy Ghost; and who in the strictest sense constitute Christendom, the church of Christ, the congregation of God. Of these we can say, that they are brought into points which are indispensably necessary for every child of God, and without which no one can be so called. The servants of Christ, and the ministers of the church, who have a right to bear this name, are also prepared and ordained by the Holy Ghost. For thus saith Paul to the elders and bishops of the church of Ephesus, “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, *over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers*, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” (Acts 11:28.) See also 1 Peter 1:12.

Who doth not perceive the incomprehensible condescension of the Holy, uncreated Spirit, who is God himself, in his transactions with such depraved and sinful creatures? As in all which he has undertaken, he shows evidently that he is the Comforter, who proceedeth from the Father, *and whom the Lord our Saviour sendeth.* This we see by the words of Christ. (John 15:13.) “He shall *not* speak of *himself*, but

whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.—He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you.”

¶114

From the words of our Saviour, just quoted, “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (John 14:26.)

We may ask: How did the Holy Ghost teach the Apostles? They had, (1.) the Scripture of the Old Testament. Then opened he their understanding, as Christ had done already, that they might understand it, and know to make a right use of it; as is evident by their discourse and writings. (2.) They had also heard the discourses of our Saviour, both in his public sermons, and in his familiar conversation with them, when he not only reminded them of what he had said, but explained to them what at first they had not understood. For example, John 2:19. Besides this, he gave them

*These words are out of an ancient German church hymn, and therefore the meaning is explained.

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insight into the whole council of God concerning our salvation, taught them the connection of all the truths of God; and bestowed upon them the gift of expressing it rightly. Moreover HE revealed to them, what would be the state of the church of Christ in future times; what Satan and his party would undertake against; and that at length he would be confounded and destroyed; whereas the kingdom of Christ would stand fast to Eternity. Thus, for instance, Paul says, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, either have entered into the heart of man; the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: but *God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.*” (1 Corinthians 2:9-10.)

But how are believers at this very day taught of the Holy Ghost? They have the Holy Scripture both of the Old and New Testament; and in the latter they find the doctrine of Christ and of his disciples. Upon this doctrine the Apostles stood immoveably, having received it of Christ, the Lord, and of his Spirit. “Though we (says Paul in Galatians 1:8) or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” See John 9.

Thus when we abide in faith, and read or hear the Holy Scripture, in the way appointed, which, through the Holy Ghost, we have received from these men of God; then by means of the Scripture doth the Holy Ghost teach us. But the work of the Holy Ghost is no less real in us, than it was in the Apostles of Jesus Christ, as far as relates to the enlightening our eyes, and opening our minds to understand the Holy Scripture, with a view partly to what is necessary to our salvation in general, and partly to what is necessary for us to understand, according to the circumstances, in which we are for the time being. And as HE brought all things faithfully to the remembrance of the Apostles, which the Lord had said unto them; so doth he also put us in mind of whatever we read or heard, as spoken either by Jesus, the Apostles, or the prophets. The Holy Ghost doth also lead us to the experience of that which the Holy Scripture informs us of: and this produces in us such conceptions, impressions, and sensations, as are both lively and efficacious. As the disciples going to Emmaus said formerly, “Did not our heart burn within us, while He (the Saviour) talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures;” so may we also at present

declare to the praise of the Holy Ghost, that our heart burns while he is opening the Scripture to us, and speaking with us, by means of it. We want no new revelations, as we find all that is necessary for our salvation in the Holy Scripture. But as to the prophecies which refer

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to future times, not in the Old only, but also in the New Testament; we may confidently believe, that God will through the Holy Ghost, give his children, for whose use they were written, the grace not to understand them only, at the right time, but also to make a proper use of them. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear *what the Spirit saith to the Churches.*” (Revelation 2:11.)

¶115

The condition of a person who hath not the Spirit of Christ, and is as yet none of his, is in itself also deplorable; for he fulleth the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and is, at the same time, by nature a child of wrath; that is, he hath not as yet the forgiveness of sins. (Ephesians 2:3.) Whereas he, who through faith in Christ Jesus, is become a child of God, and is made a partaker of the Holy Ghost “Walketh after the Spirit, and is led by him,” according to Romans 8:14. Paul speaks very

emphatically of the guidance of the Holy Ghost (Romans 8 and Galatians 5), and it consists in this; he takes us under his care, and trains us with infinitely more love, pains, fidelity, labour, and patience, than any mother doth or can show towards her child. For when we receive Christ in faith, we are born again of the Holy Ghost, according to the word of Christ (John 3:5-6 and 8); and thus become new creatures. For to be a new creature, and to be possess of that faith which worketh by love, is in the Scripture the same. When in one place it is said, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, *but a new creature.*" (Galatians 6:15.) It is also said in another, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but *Faith, which worketh by Love.*" (Galatians 6:6.) Are we led by the Holy Ghost, we are not then under the Law (Galatians 5:18), but under Grace. If then we would joyfully run our race, free from the curse and constraint of the law, from a principle of love and gratitude towards God; in this case the Spirit of Grace (Hebrews 10:29) helps us, and to this end, reaches out a friendly hand. Are we weary and faint in our race? Then is He the Spirit of Power (2 Timothy 1:7), who strengthens and comforts us anew. Have we the goal in view? but yet often stumble and fall, whilst we are towards it; and on that account, are grieved and distressed; then is the Holy Ghost our Comforter (John 16:7), who kindly encourages us, and always raises us up, when we fall. Are we sometimes offended with others, who are traveling on the same road with us, and are we now and then in each others way; then is He the Spirit of Love (2 Timothy 1:7), who faithfully assists, that our Love may

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remain and abound. When our senses are lost in the contemplation of the love of God in Christ, as it must ever remain incomprehensible to us, that he should interest himself so much for such poor, wretched, and sinful men; then is HE, the Spirit of Faith (2 Corinthians 4:13), who is ever enlightening our eyes, fixing them on the torments and sufferings of God our Saviour, and on the word of the Gospel, and thus replenishing our hearts with the peace of God. Are we by experience sensible of our great want of wisdom and understanding, which are so necessary for us in this wicked world; then doth the spirit of wisdom and of understanding (Isaiah 11:12.), come to our assistance, and bring us however to the goal, notwithstanding all our childish weakness and ignorance. When we find ourselves at a loss under heavy and perplexing circumstances, and incapable of following and executing the good advice

which is given us; HE is also, for our benefit, and service, the Spirit of counsel and might. (Isaiah 11:2.) If we attend to his voice, he will certainly remedy our ignorance and rashness, which are so peculiarly natural to us, even after we are in the way of life; for he is the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:2.) When we also know not what to pray for as we ought; then is HE the Spirit of Prayer (Zacharias 12:10), making intercession for us, in the most effectual manner with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26.) Nay, he is the Spirit of the Son of God, whom God sendeth into our hearts, and who, in us, crieth Abba, Father. (Galatians 4:6.)

¶116

OH! How happy then are poor sinners, who through Faith cleave to Jesus, since the Good Spirit dwelleth in their hearts! Whereas, on the other hand, the wicked Spirit, the prince of the power of the air, worketh in the children of disobedience, or in those who do not believe in Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:2.)

Oh! How careful should we be, not to grieve the Holy Spirit, who out of love to us, and for Christ's sake, has been so amazingly condescending, and still concerns himself so much and so constantly in our behalf! "*Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God* (says Paul, not to the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, but to the church in Ephesus) whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30.) But he is grieved, if we do not pay attention to his admonitions; for instance, if we let corrupt communication proceed out of our mouths. See verse 29.

Thus doth the Holy Ghost rule in those sinners, who through faith are embodied in Christ. And the experience of the children of

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God does not explain this only, but even put it beyond all doubt; although it will ever remain incomprehensible to a natural and unconverted person: For "*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" (1 Corinthians 2:14.) See also Matthew 11:25.

Of the WILL of GOD concerning our SALVATION.

¶117

If we sum up the scriptural doctrine concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we may confidently affirm, that God would have all men to be saved. He has shown the most fervent desire, and the most earnest will that we all should be saved; which is evident from his having given his own and only Son, to endure the greatest distress, and death itself, that we all might live through him. (John 3:17 and Romans 8:32.) It is plain from 1 Timothy 2:6 and 1 John 2:2 that it is the ardent desire of our Lord Jesus Christ to save us all. For he left the throne of his glory, and clothed himself in our poor flesh and blood; and was upwards of thirty years, afflicted and tormented by ungodly men, and tempted by the wicked enemy; His anxiety was so great, that being in an agony, great drops of blood fell from him. He also submitted to be condemned as an ungodly wretch, to be abused most shamefully, and to be executed in the most cruel manner: And all this merely, that he might redeem us from misery, and open unto us the way of Life.—We must therefore be convinced, that his will and endeavours with respect to our salvation, were attended with an earnestness incomprehensible, and a zeal truly divine: for they surpass the powers of nature. The Holy Ghost prepared the Saviour of the world in the womb of the Virgin Mary; and afterward accompanied him and his doctrine, nay even dwelt in him, during his life, sufferings and death. Moreover, he does teach, lead, guide, nurse, comfort, and reprove, not the believers only, in whose heart he dwells, seeking to form them to the joy and honour of their Saviour; but he is unwearied also in reproofing the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, in whose hearts he neither doth, nor can dwell, as long as they are devoted to sin and the devil. Should we not believe, that he, who takes such amazing pains with men to bring them to salvation and happiness, must earnestly desire the salvation of all.

But to this we should add the express testimonies of the Holy Scripture, which declare it in plain and clear terms. “God will have *all men* to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4.) “God,” says Peter, “*is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*” (2 Peter 3:9 and Matthew 18:14.) “As I live, saith the Lord God, *I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked, turn from his ways and live.*” (Ezekiel 33:11). Again, Ezekiel 18:23, “*Have I any pleasure at all, that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not, that he should return from his ways and live?*”

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We may add to this the words of Paul. (Acts 17:20.) “The times of this ignorance (hitherto) God winked at, *but now, commandeth all men every where to repent.*”

Would God command all men every where to repent, and yet would not will that all men should be saved? Who can form such a thought of the God of Holiness and Truth?

Although it is an undoubted truth, that God will have all men to be saved, yet at the same time it must be observed, that God deals with men, according to his wisdom, as with men. We cannot indeed say how an unhappy man becomes happy, if we do not first show what is, according to the Scripture, an unhappy, and what an happy man. If a man has not a cheerful heart; if he is unable to attain any true internal rest; if he lives in fear and anxiety; if his own heart condemns him; if sin has the dominion over him; if he is under the power of Satan; if he is devoid of the peace of God; if he is unacquainted with joy in the Holy Ghost; if he has no hope of eternal Life;--then is he an unhappy man. But does a man know Jesus Christ, as his Saviour and Redeemer; are all his sins through faith in Him forgiven; has he, through him, peace with God; can sin, because he is under Grace, have no more dominion over him; is he delivered from the fear of death, of the Devil, and of Hell; can his body and soul, through the Holy Ghost, rejoice in the Living God; doth he stand in a confident hope of everlasting Life; does he know that he is a member of the body of Christ; has he a free access through Christ to God, so as to able to bring all his requests to him, without any reason to doubt of their being heard; has he a heart replenished with the love of God, and of his neighbour; does the Holy Ghost dwell in his heart, bearing witness that he is a child of God;--then is he even in this world a happy man; and when he dies, his happiness will have no end, but will increase more and more, and he will be an heir of all that glory which God hath prepared for his children in Heaven.

From this description of that which properly constitutes the happiness of man, it follows of course, that no man can be compelled to it; but that the poor slave of sin and of the Devil must become *willing* to receive the Grace of God in Christ, that is offered to him; that is, to believe in Christ. This is the only way to salvation, which he hath appointed, and which therefore is acceptable to him.

Whilst our Lord Jesus Christ walked still upon earth, he testified to every man, "This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting Life." (John 6:40 and 3:16.)

And having finished every thing according to the Scripture, which he was to do and to suffer, after his Resurrection, ascended into Heaven, sat down at the right hand of his Father, and sent his disciples into all the world, to preach the Gospel. The sum of their preaching was shortly

this: “*HE that believeth—shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be damned.*” (Mark 16:16.)

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“This is therefore *the commandment of God, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.*” (1 John 3:23.)

¶119

Hence it is evident, that the sin, for which men are damned, consists in this, that they will not believe this divine and salutary truth;--that God hath so loved them, as even to give his only begotten Son to be the Saviour of the world;--that this Son of God, Jesus Christ, became a sacrifice for them, and shed his blood for the forgiveness of their sins;--that he is now risen again, and sits at the right hand of God, and will come again to judge the quick and the dead;--that now it is incumbent upon them to believe in him, and to receive him as their Lord and Saviour, by which they obtain forgiveness of sins, become God’s children by adoption, are sealed with the Holy Ghost, and enabled to serve God all the days of their life, in that holiness and righteousness which are acceptable to him, and to inherit everlasting life.—But they despise this counsel of God concerning their salvation, rather choosing to remain the slaves of sin and of the Devil, as the Scripture testifies concerning the Jews. See (¶89). The ground of this lies in the words of John 3:19. “This is the condemnation, that light (Jesus Christ) is come into the world, *and men loved darkness* (their sin, shame, and folly), *rather than light.*”

But are there not to this very day, many thousands who do not choose this way of salvation through faith in Christ; and who either will help and save themselves by their own works; or, who have no desire to be freed from sin through Christ? They look upon it as their happiness, if they can live according to the will of the flesh and of the mind.

¶120

We must however say something more of Faith; and first inquire what that faith is, by which we are saved? If a poor wretch should be so infected with sin, as once the Israelites were with the venom of the serpents, which burning like fire in their bodies, killed them; and if such a one were by the grace of God, to be as earnestly desirous of being delivered from sin, as such an Israelite, bitten by the serpents, was to be cured of his painful sickness; and he were to look with as firm a

confidence and hope of salvation upon Jesus Christ, who became a curse for us on the cross, as the Israelites, in their agony, looked

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unto the serpent lifted up by Moses, for the preservation of their life;-- what can we call this, but Faith? Or, if a person were to discover (and such discovery is also grace) that he is blind to divine truths, and cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God; and if he is as desirous of them, as Bartimeus was to recover his sight (Mark 10:46); and has an equal confidence, that Jesus Christ not only could, but was even willing, nay certainly would help him; and then crieth to Jesus, as Bartimeus did, Thou Son of David, thou Saviour of the world, Have mercy on me! have mercy on me!--This again is Faith. Or, if a man painfully feels, that sin defileth him throughout, and spreads, as the leprosy did formerly, and he is as desirous (and this is the effect of the grace of God in us) of being delivered from the curse and dominion of sin, as the leper sought to be made clean, and falls down at the feet of the Lord our Saviour as the leper did (Matthew 8:2), and laments his distress, in that hope, that he *only* could and would help him.—This is also faith.

In brief, we are speaking of such men, whose eyes have been opened, to see and feel that they are sinful and depraved, who are conscious that they are greatly guilty, not on account of the omission of the good only, which God hath commanded, but also by the commission of the evil, which he hath forbidden; and especially of having neither believed in the Saviour, or loved him; and that they deserved nothing but punishment:-- when these hear, or read, or seriously reflect, if they should before have heard and read, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe; and that he came into the world and was made a sacrifice in order to save sinners, and they lay hold if it (which can be done only by the Grace of God) not “conferring with Flesh and blood,” as we read concerning Paul; but cleaving to Jesus, in the confidence that he only can and will help them out of their woe and misery; that he can and will forgive and deliver them from the slavery of sin, and the power of Satan; this is that Faith of which we are here treating, and through which we obtain forgiveness of sins, Life and Salvation. This is the meaning of the words of Jesus in John 3:14-15. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up (on the cross) *that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have eternal Life.*”

The words of Paul (Romans 3:25) should likewise be added. “GOD hath set forth Jesus Christ, to be a propitiation (a Throne of Grace in

Hebrews 4:16) *through Faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past.*” And John says in 10:31, “These are written, that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah) the Son of God; *and that believing, ye might have Life through his Name.*”

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¶121

From the description, just now given, it is evident, that Faith is not so general as is commonly supposed. Therefore Paul says, not to worldly men, but to the members of the church of God in Corinth, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the Faith, prove your ownelves.” (2 Corinthians 8:5.)

Wherever there is Faith in Jesus Christ, there is also knowledge of sin. This follows clearly from the description of Faith. A man, who knows himself to be a poor sinner, cleaves by Faith to Jesus Christ, in order through him, to be freed not from the guilt and punishment only, but also from the dominion of sin. But how could this come to pass, unless he knew that he had deserved punishment, and that he was under the dominion of sin? Hence it is, that the preaching of the Gospel leads men, both to the knowledge of their sins, and to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, who saveth us from them. When Peter, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, preached his first evangelical sermon (for he was sent by Christ to preach the Gospel) he declared to the Jews with energy, that they were murderers, having slain Christ, the Holy and Chosen one of God. (Acts 2:22.) See (¶110). When Christ preached to Saul from heaven, he first pointed out his sin (Acts 9:3); he called unto him “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” And indeed this was our Saviour’s meaning, when he preached the Gospel, and proclaimed to men, “*Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.*” (Mark 1:15.) See Acts 20:21.

And here the word *repent* can have no other meaning than this; Acknowledge and bewail your sins, and desist from them. Thus, for example, did the people at Nineveh repent, after the preaching of Jonas, as Christ testifies. (Matthew 12:41.) And in what did that properly consist? They become sensible of their sin; they confessed it; they bewailed it; they cried to God for grace; they turned from their evil way. (Jonah 3:7-10.) Therefore also repentance and conversion to God are combined (Acts 3:19 and 26:20); and sometimes the word *conversion*, or *turning*, is made use of in the same significance as *repentance*. For example, our Lord Jesus Christ says to Paul (Acts 26:17-18), “I send thee

unto the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to *turn* them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins—through the faith that is in me.”

But the word *repentance* is sometimes taken in a more enlarged sense, so as not to imply, that men ought to own and be sorry for their sins only; but it also includes faith. For instance, when the men, whose hearts were pricked by the words of Peter asked,

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“men and brethren, what shall we do? *Repent* and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.” (Acts 2:37-38.)

And thus is the word also used (Matthew 4:17), as may also be seen in Mark 1:14-15. For it is said in the first of their passages, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, *Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;” and in the other, “Jesus preached the Gospel of the kingdom of God, saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, *repent ye, and believe the Gospel.*”

The words of Christ (Luke 24:46-47) are to be taken in the same way. For when our Saviour there says, “thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and *that repentance and remission of sins* should be preached in his name,” this cannot be understood in any other sense, than that men should be conscious of their sins, and mourn over them, and believe on Christ; that is, should be converted, that they might receive the forgiveness of sins.

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I will make the following observations only upon this head:

(1.) A poor heathen, who has never yet heard or read, either the law of Moses or the Gospel of Christ, may however be conscious of many sins; because in this case his own heart and conscience condemn him. He that has either read or heard the law of Moses, may still more easily find in himself, enough to terrify him, on his own account. For in it he sees not only what is right and wrong, for his heart accuses him of innumerable transgressions; but he may also discover the detestable and abominable nature of it, from the dreadful curses which God hath laid upon sin. But he who hears and reads the Gospel, and by the grace of God duly reflects on it, will in his own eyes, infallibly become the greatest sinner. For the Gospel teaches him, that the Lord laid upon Christ,

the sins of the whole world, which he willingly took upon himself, but which occasioned him such anguish and distress, that "*his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground;*" and that for our sakes, when all divine consolation was withdrawn from him, he was nailed to the cross, as the greatest malefactor, and made a curse for us. Then such a poor sinner thinks, as we sing in one of our hymns:

"Why was thy soul with hellish pain surrounded? Alas! my sins have thee my Saviour wounded."

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My sins have distressed and grieved the Lord of Glory; they have scourged and crowned him with thorns, nay, they have nailed him to the cross and slain him. He thinks still farther, Oh what an abomination must these sins be in the sight of God! How dreadful are the judgments, which on account of our sins, passed upon the innocent and holy Lamb of God, who took them upon himself! If we even allow, that the stony heart of man, may be broken to pieces by the hammer of the law; it is nevertheless certain, that the Gospel exceeds the law; for it melts the heart like wax before the fire.

- (2.) Though a man who turns with his heart to God, may be brought, even in the beginning, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, to acknowledge, repent, confess and weep over his sinful state, and thus falling at the feet of the Lord shall obtain forgiveness of sins, yet we must not imagine that he discovers his total corruption all at once. O no!--for after he has received grace and pardon, he will be more enlightened from time to time, in order to make him better acquainted with himself, both in soul and body; and this is the reason that a person, after being fifty years faithful in our Saviour's ways, is a much greater sinner in his own eyes, than he was at the beginning of his conversion.
- (3.) We cannot ascertain the degree of sorrow and contrition of a heart, which turns to God, on account of its miserable and sinful state. It must not be a work of nature, but of grace, if it shall be well pleasing to God. For what a man effects in this way by his own power, tends always more to his hurt than to his benefit. But it is necessary, that every one should *truly* be sensible of his depravity, of his guilt, and of his sins; that he should repent and be ashamed of them

from his heart, in the sight of God. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." (Psalms 51:17.) See also Isaiah 57:15 and 66:2.

(4.) Whenever we meet with a person, whose eyes have been opened by God to see into his sinful state; and who is, through grace, moved to be heartily sorry for it; we ought to direct him immediately to Jesus, and to encourage him to believe on him. To keep back such persons, and to caution them not to think too soon on faith, may be well meant, but is not according to Scripture: No sooner did

David say to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord," but Nathan said unto David, "the Lord also hath put away thy
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sin, thou shalt not die." (2 Samuel 12:13.) When the jailer, at first drew his sword, and would have killed himself,--and immediately after "came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, brought them out of prison, and said unto them, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? They said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." They then gave him still farther instruction, "and he believed, with his house, and was even in that night baptized, he and all his, straightway." (Acts 15:27.)

Should any one reply; but David was obliged to pass nine months in anxious distress on account of his sin. For he had no rest from the time he committed it, till the wife of Uriah bore him a son. Why he was so long without rest, he tells us himself, "*When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.*" (Psalms 32:3-4.)

He tells us afterwards, when he was of another mind in verse 5, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity I have not hid: I said, *I will confess my transgression unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*" Selah. (Psalms 32:5.)

That faith cometh by hearing the Gospel (for it is of this Paul speaks) stands in express words. (Romans 10:17.) But we may not hear only, but also read the word; and when we become believers in Jesus, through

the word which his disciples have left us in writing, we then enjoy the blessing of his intercession. (John 17:20.) For the disciples (as John says of himself in particular in 10:31) have written, “that we might believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, we might have life through his name.”

But can a man who reads, hears, or meditates upon the word of the Gospel, by his own reason and power, believe in Jesus Christ?--No. Paul writes to the Ephesians, “*By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*” (Ephesians 2:8); to the Philippians, “*Unto you it is given to believe on Christ*” (Philippians 1:29); and to the Colossians, “*You are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*” (Philippians 2:12.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, speaking of the Holy Ghost, who is also called the Spirit of Faith, among other things saith, “He shall glorify me.” (John 16:14.) We may easily understand, that he doth this in an especial

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manner, as often as he represents to those afflicted hearts, who mourn on account of their sin, JESUS, as the propitiation for the sin of the whole world, who is come to seek and to save that which is lost; and thus worketh faith in Him.

This being established, that faith is wrought by God through the Gospel, “which is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.” (Romans 1:16.) What can then be said of children, who can neither read, or hear the Gospel? God, who filled John, the forerunner of Christ, “with the Holy Ghost, even in his mother’s womb” (Luke 1:15), will do all that is necessary for children, although we understand not the manner. Luther looked upon all children, who depart out of time in the infancy, as the property of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he has purchased, earned, and gained with his own blood; over whom the wicked enemy hath neither right nor power, and whom our Saviour claims for himself from the whole human race. Should any one think this is saying too much, let him but grant this only, that God is the righteous Judge; he has to deal with creatures, who by Adam’s fall are involved in sin, and who are sinful because Adam sinned; but who also are atoned for through Christ, and his offering for us. He will therefore deal with children in such a manner, as will be perfectly consistent with his goodness and truth, with his holiness and righteousness.

What Paul says, “To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, *his faith is counted for righteousness*” (Romans

4:5), is in other passages of Scripture thus expressed, “To him (to Jesus, who died for us on the cross, and was by God raised again the third day) give all the prophets witness, *that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins*” (Acts 10:43), and, “I send thee unto the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, *that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*” (Acts 26:18.)

We have still something to add upon this subject.

When a man, by the grace of God, is awakened from the sleep of sin, and his eyes are opened, so as truly to discover not his sin and guilt only, but also the very source of them, that is, his deep depravity in soul and body, his heart then tells him, that he has deserved God’s wrath and the just punishment in consequence of it. Has he, in this situation, no evangelical instruction, directing him immediately, with all his sin and misery to Jesus? Or does he slight such instructions, as not agreeing with his reason? He then endeavours to procure himself rest by his own

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works; and thinks, alas! I have left undone those things which I ought to have done; and have done those things which I ought not to have done; but from this day forward I will exert my utmost endeavour to do good, and avoid evil; nay, I will take God to my assistance. He sets the commandments of God before him; forming good resolutions for his future conduct, and even renews them; hoping in this manner to appease his conscience, to become well pleasing to God, and to inherit everlasting life. This Paul expressed by *working*, and proves in his Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, that the Jews, who were in this way, and fought by this method the forgiveness of sin, and everlasting life, could not by such means possibly obtain it. For, if any one seeks to become righteous before God, and to be saved by the words of the law, he must keep the whole law and fulfill it perfectly, in its utmost extent, and never transgress a single commandment. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all, and is under the curse. But as it is absolutely impossible for man, who is by nature so corrupt and sinful in soul and body, to fulfill the law, and not be guilty of the breach of one commandment, therefore is as little possible, by the works of the law to obtain the grace of God, forgiveness of sins, the righteousness which is of avail before God, and eternal life. See Romans 3:20, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 2:6 and 8, and (¶89).

But when a man finds in himself nothing but sin; is concerned and distressed about it; looks upon himself as a hell-deserving creature; does not know where to turn for counsel and comfort, although he wishes earnestly for them; and then hears the Gospel concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us upon the cross, and rose again the third day, that we might live through him—and thus comes to Jesus Christ, and through the grace of God receives him in faith—he will certainly be relieved. For as Christ took our sin upon himself, and bore the punishment deserved by us; as he suffered and died for us, and for our justification was raised up again, having been obedient unto death;—so now, before the judgment seat of God, every thing that Christ hath done and suffered, is imputed or appropriated to the man who lays hold upon Christ in faith. It is the same, as if this poor sinner, who now believeth in Christ, had himself been crucified, had died, and been buried, to account of his own sin, and undergone the penalty, which he deserved by his sins. For, through this offering, through the death and blood of Jesus the Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot, he hath forgiveness of his sins; and through the obedience of Christ unto death, even the death of the cross, he is made righteous in the sight of God,

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according to Romans 5:19, that is, he is acquitted of all his sin and guilt, and his sins are cast into the bottom of the sea. God is likewise so gracious, as to bestow a firm conviction, an internal consciousness, and a feeling of his grace, of his complacency in him, of the forgiveness of his sin, and of his being now accepted in his beloved Son, upon such a poor creature, that has now an interest in the sufferings, the death, and the blood of Christ, and whom the obedience of Christ maketh righteous before God: this sensation cannot but fill his heart with serenity and peace. Here, however, we must observe, that this sensation, or feeling, which grounded itself upon the Gospel, hath its degrees, and may be stronger in one person, who finds grace in the blood of Jesus, than in another; yet it is not a work of the imagination, but a real operation of the Holy Ghost.

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In order to prove, that all this may be partly elucidated, and partly confirmed, by the following passages of holy writ, we are only to observe previously, that this text, “He that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5), is explained by Paul himself. For immediately afterwards he says, “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying *Blessed are they whose*

iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: Blessed is, the man, to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Romans 4:6-8.)

The words of Paul are therefore to be taken, as if he said, He that believeth in Christ, who by obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, maketh ungodly men righteous; having by this purchased for them forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation; to him, his faith is imputed for righteousness; that is, he hath forgiveness of sin, and has an interest in the sufferings, the sacrifice, the death, and blood of Christ; insomuch that he appears before God in Christ as a righteous person. A special instance of which we find in Corinthians. Paul writes to them, "Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revelers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you." (1 Corinthians 6:9.) But their case was very different, when they laid hold of Christ in faith, and came to him as such ungodly wretches. Paul says in verse 11, "*But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

It is consequently certain, that "God hath set forth Christ, to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for

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the remission of sins that are past." (Romans 3:25.) Thus then, we conclude, that "a man is justified by faith (*alone*) without the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:28.)

When Paul speaks of two ways of becoming righteous before God, the one by works, the other by faith; and as that by works, is an absolute impossibility since the fall; it follows, that faith is the only way by which we can be made righteous and saved. But can any words express this point plainer than those we read in Galatians 2:16, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." See Hebrews 4:16 and John 10:31.

Let no one think that Paul is speaking of those works only which appertained to the Jewish worship, or to the ceremonial law: No, he is speaking of all the works which the law required, as is very evident from the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. And this is clear, as well as from other passages, as from the following: "We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin." (Romans 7:14.) That is, I am so corrupted by nature, that I am not able to keep the law according to its full extent. Paul also says, "For what the law could not do (namely,

make us righteous, and save us) in that it was weak through the flesh (that is, because we are so corrupted after the fall, as not to be able to fulfill it) that doth God.” (Romans 8:3.)

¶127

The forgiveness of sins is always accompanied by peace with God, according to Romans 5:1. “Therefore being justified by faith, *we have peace with God*, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

When through faith in Him we obtain the forgiveness of sins, and through the Holy Ghost we have assurance of it in our hearts, and thus are convinced, that God takes pleasure in us, reconciled sinners; and is become our Father, attached to us with love and grace unspeakably great: then all anxious and tormenting fear is removed, which could either disquiet or torment a poor wretch, conscious of having a load of guilt and sin upon him, and who on that account expects nothing but punishment, from the Lord, the righteous One. Then does all enmity cease both against God, and against his commandments, which are so contrary to the carnal mind, and which condemn the unconverted man, who can pursue his corrupt inclinations, and be happy in the enjoyment of them. He is also delivered, through grace, from that distrust towards God, which has hitherto prevented him from daring to approach him, from a suspicion, that God was angry with him. The deep shame, which
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a man feels, on account of his misery and corruption, is not indeed removed, even when his sins are forgiven him; it not only remains, but increases in proportion to the mercy shown unto him: and so far from preventing, it rather urges him to draw nearer to God, who now is more indispensably necessary to him, than air to a living man. The child-like love towards God, which is enkindled in the heart of a man by the Holy Ghost as soon as his sins are forgiven him, incites him to rejoice and delight in God, to commune with him, to walk before him, and to have pleasure in his commandments.

This is the state, and these the circumstances, of the man who is reconciled to God, according to the words of Paul: “We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20.)

This is the peace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, which flows from the forgiveness of sins, which we obtain through faith in Christ. See Matthew 11:28-29. Are not these then, matters of pure experience, which the children of God possess through faith, according to the Scripture? Whoever is without this knowledge, has much more reason to be grieved, than ignorantly to deny its reality. It is however impossible to

express by words all which is implied by the peace of God. Therefore Paul says (Philippians 4:7), “the peace of God *passeth all understanding.*”

Consequently neither angels, nor men are capable by their own power, to comprehend the importance of this truth, that the supremely holy God could condescend to enter into such a covenant, of love and peace, with his sinful and wretched creatures. Oh! That the words of Jesus, which he spake to his disciples (John 14:27), may resound in the hearts of all readers: “*Peace* I leave with you, *my peace* I give unto you.”

(¶128)

That through faith we become children of God, has been treated of already in (¶97): and it follows, that through faith we become heirs also to everlasting life. This is quite evident from the words of Paul: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, *then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.*” (Romans 8:16-17.)

Inheritance in general, does not take place, till after the death of him who left it. Now, because God cannot die, therefore believers are, for this reason only, called heirs of God; because the kingdom of God, and everlasting life, are given without any merit on their own, and purely for this reason, that through faith they are become children of God. Seeing that God hath made that same Jesus, whom the Jews did crucify, both Lord and Christ, and said to him, “Sit thou at the right hand” (Acts 2:34), therefore did he also “make him heir of all things.” (Hebrews 1:2.)

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And he who by faith is a child of God, the same becomes a joint heir with Christ, or “an heir of God through Christ.” (Galatians 4:7.) Peter calls it “an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven.” (1 Peter 1:4.) And Paul says, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9.) Yet he adds in verse 10, “But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit.” And to the Ephesians, he wishes, that “the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” (Ephesians 1:18.) The Holy Ghost, with whom, after we have believed, we are sealed, is called “the earnest of our inheritance” (Ephesians 1:14), for HE is also given unto us for an assurance of the future and promised glory. Thus the hope of everlasting life issues like a spring from faith in Jesus Christ; and when that is truly alive in us, Oh! What a rich consolation doth it afford unto us, both in death and in life! The holy

Scriptures will assure us of this; and therefore, among other things, it is said, "He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life.*" (John 3:36.)

To him, it is as certain, as if he possessed it already: and indeed he has even here a foretaste of it.

(¶129)

OUR Lord Jesus Christ said to the woman of Canaan, who, in her distress, ran and cried unto him, persisting in her supplication and prayer, until he turned himself in grace unto her, "O woman *great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*" (Matthew 15:22.) He said to his disciples, who were with him on the sea, and during the storm, thought in despair, that they should perish, "Why are ye fearful, *O ye of little faith?*" (Matthew 8:23.) His disciples besought him "*to increase their faith.*" (Luke 17:5.) And Paul writes to the Thessalonians (2 Epistles 1:3), "We are bound to thank God always for you—because that *your faith groweth exceedingly.*"

From these and other passages of Scripture it is evident, that although such as even belong to our Saviour, may have little and weak faith; yet it is not the mind of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it remain so, but that it should grow and increase. For if we "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," which according to 2 Peter 3:18, is necessary, it cannot be otherwise, than that we must at the same time grow in faith.

"Watch ye, *stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong,*" are the words of 1 Corinthians 16:13. For although the Lord "will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax" (that is a weak faith, which
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burns and shines but feebly), according to Matthew 12:20 and Isaiah 42:3, it is however not his will that it should continue so.

It is said of Abraham, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but *was strong in faith, giving glory to God: and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able also to perform.*" (Romans 4:20-21.) And therefore he is also called "the Father of all them that believe." (Romans 4:11-12.) See (¶88), and we, as his children, should follow his footsteps.

¶130

We do not speak here of the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, which our Saviour mentions to his disciples. (Luke 17:6.) "*If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked*

up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.” And, “*If ye have faith*, and doubt not, ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done.” (Matthew 21:21.)

This faith, which manifested itself in many great wonders and signs, was at that time necessary; and our Saviour enjoined it upon his disciples in these words: “*Have faith in God.*” (Mark 11:22.)

But God would not suffer this gift to continue in the church, which he had given to the believers at that time, on account of the Jews, who would not believe unless they saw signs and wonders, but for wise reasons withdrew it, and the gift of speaking foreign languages, with some others. See (§108). We however do not mean to say, that he could no longer impart such gifts, or that he would not, even now, if it should be as necessary as it was then; but only, that the ordinary course in the church of Christ in our days doth not require it; and there is no necessity for any proof of this.

We therefore do not speak of miraculous faith, but of that faith which the children of God possess; and which our Saviour means by these words: “Whosoever believeth on him (the son of Man lifted up on the cross) shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:15.)

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Although this faith, which is so peculiar to all the children of God, that whoever has it not, is no child of God, does no outward wonders and signs, raises none from the dead, removes no mountains, yet it does and performs other things, which are of much greater importance. But what are those things? Through faith we attain to the enjoyment of that which Christ hath by his sacrifice purchased for us. See (§80). We are, (1.) Through faith in Jesus Christ made free from the dominion of sin. Paul

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says, “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” (Romans 6:14.)

All those who believe in Jesus Christ, are freed from the curse and compulsion of the law; they obtain forgiveness of sins, become the adopted children of God, and are sealed with the Holy Ghost. These then are they, who are made free from the dominion of sin, because they are under grace. Now when they are thus exhorted, “Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin” (Romans 6:12-13), they can no longer say, Oh! That is impossible for us—we are sinful men—the flesh is weak, and the like. For they have Jesus Christ, who saveth his people from their sins; they have a Father in heaven, who

heareth their prayer and supplication. The Holy Ghost dwells in their hearts, and strengthens them in all that is good. If they therefore do but rightly make use of the grace in which through faith they stand, then sin can have no dominion over them. This is exactly what John says. (1 Epistles 3:9.) “Whosoever is born of God, *doth not commit sin* (he doth not let sin reign, or have the dominion in his mortal body, that he should obey it in the lusts thereof), for his seed remaineth in him, and *he cannot sin*, because he is born of God.” That is, his heart will not comply with it; for he loves our Saviour, being a child of God, and a partaker of the Holy Ghost.

(2.) Our faith is the victory, says John, which overcometh the world. “*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*” (1 John 5:4-5.)

All men without exception, as long as they are without Christ, and do not believe on him, love the world, and are under its dominion (that is, they love every thing that is not of God, and contrary to him) and all that is in the world, namely, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Whereas he who through faith is become a child of God, and a new creature, is set free from this discovery, and delivered from this wretched condition, which constrained him to serve the world, and its ways: (because before this he had neither will nor power to rend himself from it.) When agreeably to this, it is said to such as believe in Christ, “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.* If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in them. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world: and the world would passeth away, and the lust thereof.” (1 John 2:15.)

Here nothing impossible is required of such persons; for they, through faith in Christ, have power to overcome the world; and when they did forsake it with its corrupt nature and ways, and were converted to Christ, they obtained victory, and through faith overcame the world.

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(3.) Faith in Christ sets us free from the power of the devil, and enables us strongly to resist his attacks and temptations. When our eyes are opened, so as to get a true knowledge of ourselves and our wretched condition, and at the same time by faith to see Jesus Christ, who can and will deliver us; we then are “turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.” (Acts 24:18.) Thus Satan must retreat, and give us up, as soon as we believe in Christ, and fly in our distress to him. But as afterwards “he walketh about, as our adversary, and as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter 5:9.) And Paul exhorts the Ephesians “Above all, take ye the *shield of faith, wherewith ye*

shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." (Ephesians 6:16.) All this hath been proved in (§58) and (§59).

Oh! Of how great importance is it, to be delivered from the cruel tyranny of the devil, who now worketh in the children of disobedience, that is, in all unbelievers (Ephesians 2:2) and to be put in such a state of security against his craft, wrath, rage, and power! This is done by faith, or more properly by our Lord Jesus Christ, who is apprehended by faith.

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(4.) To this we may still add, what Paul says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law." (Romans 3:31.)

There have ever been some, who have laboured for the reformation of mankind; and we entertain a due respect for their good meaning and design. But if they pass over faith in Jesus Christ, they can however, with all their labour, do nothing more, than occasion one or another to demean themselves outwardly more rationally than the rest of mankind. But how is the heart? Is that cured of self-love, of avarice, of pride, of fleshly lusts, and the like? Is it filled with the love of God, with confidence in him, and obedience to him, with love to our neighbour, and even to our enemies. In these we are always deficient. And if any one who has not before experienced Jesus Christ to be his Saviour, becomes rightly acquainted with himself, he, by the grace of God, is as much ashamed of his former state, before the eyes of the Lord Jesus, as the most profligate are.

But when we, by faith, receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, then, for the sake of the death, which he endured for us, our sins are cast into the depth of the sea. This occasions in us an ardent love towards him: "For to *whomsoever much is forgiven, the same loveth much,*" according to Christ's own words (Luke 7:37), particularly when the Holy Ghost has made it clear to his heart, how much it cost our Saviour to bear the chastisement due to us, that we might have peace.

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And when we love him, we wish to be a joy to him. And this agrees with the words of our Saviour, "*If a man love me, he will keep my words.*" (John 14:23.)

The Holy Ghost, who through faith dwelleth in the heart, gives us also inclination and power to do whatsoever God hath commanded; and renders, on the other hand, sins not only odious to us, but assists us to resist it. Thus is the only law of God established through faith in Christ; to believers it is no longer a burden, but a pleasure; they meditate upon

it day and night, and are desirous to be obedient to it; they weep, and pray to God for the assistance of his grace; and they are “able to do all things through Christ, who strengthens them;” if they only like Paul, cleave to him, and hold him fast by faith. (Philippians 4:12-13.) Hence the Scripture speaks of a “faith that worketh by love.” (Galatians 5:6.) Where this is wanted, there is no faith. Which John thus roundly expresses: “He that saith, I know him (which is as much to say, I believe on him) and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” And “He that saith he abideth in him (*through faith we put on Christ, and persevering in faith, we abide in him*) ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” (1 John 2:4-6.)

(¶133)

We may here ask: How can we ascribe all the before-mentioned properties to Faith? Ought we not rather to say, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the cause of our salvation; and that through Him we are not only freed and delivered from all misery and wretchedness, but also brought unto everlasting life, and to perfect felicity? Undoubtedly, but the case is this: The Lord our Saviour giveth, and Faith receiveth. But Faith, which accepteth Grace, is so highly acceptable to the Lord, who is ever more ready to give, than we poor creatures to desire and receive, that he ascribes every thing unto it. When, for example, the poor woman, who had been afflicted for twelve years with a painful disorder, which rendered her unclean, and could be cured by no man, touched the hem of his garment in Faith, “*Virtue went out of him (the Lord) and cured her immediately.*” But what did he say to her? “*Thy faith hath saved thee.*” And this was his manner of speaking to all, whom he helped in their distress. As we can by no means say of a poor sick man (especially when his complaint requires the assistance of another to bring him to the place, where he may receive the gift of being healed which is reached out to him) that by the very act of receiving the gift, he has deserved it; so neither can we allow the least merit in faith. For man is so corrupted, as even to be unwilling to be helped by Christ; and whensoever he is

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willing to receive the help offered him by the hand of the Lord, that is, when he believes; even then this faith is a gift of God. See (¶123).

¶134

Faith lays hold of the word of God, or the Gospel, “for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.” (Romans 1:16.) It is, for instance, said of Abraham’s faith—“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and *being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able also to perform.*” (Romans 4:20-21.) Thus he held fast the promise of God, the Gospel, which he had heard of the Lord.

But as Faith holds fast the word of God, so do we also grow in Faith; if we become conversant with that word and feed upon it. “As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word (the spiritual good of the Gospel) *that ye may grow thereby.*” (1 Peter 2:2.)

The Gospel is in the Scripture called a glorious Light, by means of which God enlightens men, to see the glory of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God. (1 Corinthians 4:4.) For “all the promises of God, in him are yea, and in him, Amen;” that is, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (2 Corinthians 1:20.) Although the glorious words which are spoken by Jesus Christ are very numerous; yet, the mind of a man, whose misery and corruption have been discovered to him by the Holy Ghost, so as to make him anxiously desire to be redeemed and delivered from them, is first of all intent upon the following expression of Paul, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acception, *that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,*” (which includes also those who have committed gross sins.) (1 Timothy 1:15.)

And likewise upon what the angel of the Lord says to Joseph; “She (Mary) shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for *HE shall save* (rescue and redeem) *his people from their sins.*” (Matthew 1:21.)

In this case a poor man, who, in light of the Spirit sees that he is lost, falls down at the feet of Jesus Christ; and even this the Holy Ghost works in him. For “no man can (with truth) say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” (1 Corinthians 12:3.) He lays before our Saviour his distress, and God gives him the grace of believing steadfastly, that Jesus Christ can and will save him from his sins. Thus then “is the power given him to become a child of God.” (John 1:12.) And so such a poor sinner, who lies in Faith at the feet of our Lord and Saviour, John says: “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ (that he is his Saviour, as he is also of the whole world) is born of God.” He is a new creature, a child of God. (1 John 5:1.)

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What Paul writes to the church at Ephesus, “Ye, through Christ, after that ye believed, were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise (Ephesians

1:13), takes place particularly in him, who coming unto Jesus by faith, receives him as his Lord and Saviour. See Galatians 3:14.

When God has enkindled the heart of a poor sinner, who deemed himself lost, by faith in Jesus, from that moment the Holy Ghost never ceases to glorify Christ in him through the Gospel. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Author and finisher of our faith, who said to Peter, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not," attends still, as he did when he walked upon earth, to the faith of his people. (Luke 22:32.)

¶135

If we consider attentively the ways of the Lord with the souls that belong to him (as we ought to do) we shall find in general, that he is pleased to strengthen, exercise, and try their faith; and when it is weak, and infirm, he establishes and preserves it. Many of his commandments in the Old Testament aimed at this. The people of Israel were, for instance in the seventh year, "neither to sow their seed, nor prune their vineyard." (Leviticus 25:4.) They should therefore believe, that, if they kept his commandment, God would in the sixth year give them such plentiful crops, as would be sufficient for their use in the seventh and eighth, until the harvest of the ninth year. In general, the bringing the people out of Egypt, through the wilderness, into the land of Canaan, from first to last, was a continued trial of their faith. His servants and prophets, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, and David experienced in particular, still more trials of their faith, which was by these means more and more strengthened. For a confirmation of this, we may read the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, though the whole Bible is full of it. The church in the New Testament, and the servants of God in the New Covenant, have experienced the same; nay their trials have increased.

But if we take a view of that faith, which makes us happy, and which is the subject of our present discourse, we shall find, that it neither nourished, strengthened, nor preserved, in the same way and manner in all, who are members of the body of Jesus. The difference between man and man, in respect of their education, religion, knowledge, and other circumstances is extremely great; and the Holy Ghost, who is the source of all wisdom (for HE is God) deals with each in such a manner, as to attain his aim with him. Experience teaches us, however, that the Holy Ghost labours incessantly upon the following points; namely,

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- (1.) To show the souls who are come to Christ, more and more, how much they stand in need of a Saviour; and that the element in which we live and subsist, is not so necessary to us, as the Lord our Saviour is to a poor sinner: Whoever rightly considers *this*, will easily understand why, even after our conversion to Christ, God permits us to be still surrounded with so many infirmities.
- (2.) The Holy Ghost directs the souls, who have been embodied into Christ by faith, continually anew to that point, that Christ has died for the ungodly; that he has given himself for our sins, and offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears to God; that he became a curse for us; that he shed his precious blood for us; and all out of pure love to lost men. He preserves us from an indifference to the merits and death of Jesus, and reminds us faithfully of the anguish of his soul, which occasioned his bloody sweat; of the reproach of them, who, by reproaching God, broke his heart; of his cruel torments; of the crown of thorns violently forced upon his brows; of his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross; of his crying out upon the cross, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" and of his pierced side, from which blood and water issued forth. Oh! How powerfully doth all this strengthen our faith! What can more effectually inflame our hearts, with love towards him, than such signal proofs of his love towards us? Especially if we can say with Paul, "Christ hath love *me*, and given himself for *me*." (Galatians 2:20)
- (3.) The Holy Ghost also, through the Gospel, further explains to us, what treasures of grace and salvation are laid up for us in the offering, the blood, the death, and the obedience of Christ. Thereby "hath he redeemed us from the curse of the law." "He hath delivered us from the wrath to come." "All things are reconciled by him unto himself." "By his stripes are we healed." "He gave himself for our sins, *that he might deliver us from this present evil world.*" (Galatians 1:4.) "He gave himself for us, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*" (Titus 2:14.) In Christ, "we have *redemption* through his blood, even the *forgiveness of sins.*" (Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:14.) "He died for us, *that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together*

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with him.” (1 Thessalonians 5:10.) “Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, *that he might bring us to God,*” that is, that he might make us an offering or loving sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God. (1 Peter 3:18.) “*Through death he hath destroyed him that hath the power of death, that is the devil.*” (Hebrews 2:14.) “As by one man’s (Adam’s) disobedience, *many were made sinners;* so *by the obedience of one* (of Christ, who was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross), *many were made righteous.*” (Romans 5:9.) “The blood of Christ *purges our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.*” (Hebrews 9:14.)

When the Holy Ghost leads us to all this, and effectually instructs us concerning the treasure which we have in the offering of Jesus, then faith becomes, according to Luther’s description, living, active, vigorous, powerful; so that it is impossible but that it should constantly work good in us. Faith doth likewise not ask, If good works should be done? But, before the question is put, they are already done, and faith is always busy doing good:--so that it is impossible to separate works from faith; yea, as impossible as to separate heat and light from fire.

(4.) The Holy Ghost, therefore, is principally employed in fixing the poor sinner’s eye of faith steadily upon the offering of Jesus for us. As, in the Old Testament, God commanded a lamb to be offered up twice every day, that is, morning and evening, that the offering of Jesus, which should afterwards be made, might be brought continually into remembrance; so the Holy Ghost never ceases to bring this sacrifice of Jesus, made once for all of us, continually to the remembrance of the hearts of believers. For thus are manifested in a most glorious manner, both the love of God, who gave his only begotten Son for us, and that of our Lord Jesus Christ, who himself became a sacrifice for our sins.

In the meantime, we are not to suppose, that the Holy Ghost does not continue further to explain to those who become believers in Christ, all which is otherwise contained in the Gospel concerning Christ. For faith in

Christ lays hold of all that which is said about him in the Gospel, and adheres firmly to it. For instance, when the Gospel testifies, that God hath spoken to us by his Son,
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and hath taught us through him; in this case, faith lays hold of it, and accepts him with joy, for its teacher. It looks upon all that which Christ has said to be true; because HE hath said it. It receives, with the simplicity of a child, all that which HE has commanded, as profitable, needful, good and wholesome; because HE has commanded it. What he has forbidden, it looks upon as pernicious, foolish, wicked, and destructive; because HE has forbidden it. This is likewise the case in other points. For example, it is said in the Gospel, "Let all the angels of God worship him;" "Grace and peace be on all them who call upon the name of Christ;" "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, he shall be delivered." Now faith receives these words, and it is very pleasing to a faithful soul to approach unto Christ, lie at his feet, and pour out his heart before him. When Christ says concerning himself, "All power is given unto me in heaven and upon earth;" when in the Gospel he is called the "King of Kings; and the Lord of Lords;" faith receives such declarations of joy, and the soul depends confidently upon them. This is the case also, when Christ is called, "the Head of the Church;" "the Bishop of our souls;" "the good Shepherd of his sheep;" "our Advocate with the Father;" "the Light enlightening every man;" "the Maker of every creature;" "the Preserver of all things;" "the Bridegroom of his church;" "the Resurrection and the Life;" "the Judge of all the world;" "our Shield and exceeding great Reward." These names are all, without exception, more precious to faith, than all the treasures and glories of the earth.

(5.) Now as faith cleaves to Jesus Christ, seeking to experience, and to enjoy all which the Gospel testifies concerning him; and as, through faith in Christ, we are brought into the most intimate fellowship with the Holy Ghost, so do we also, through faith, attain to the fellowship with the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel, or the doctrine of Jesus and of his apostles, is full of the most glorious proofs of his love, which is incomprehensible both to angels and to men. This

constrained him to give us his only begotten Son, in whom and through whom we have the most precious promises, that he will deign to be our God and Father, and approve himself as such unto us. All these promises are laid hold

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on by faith, which attains to the enjoyment of them in Christ. Hence we have a child-like and confident access to our dear Father, a tender love to him, a great humiliation before him, power to pray with cheerful confidence unto him, a living hope, which is grounded upon his word, a hearty resignation to his will, and a zealous endeavour to become a joy and honour to him. Concerning these points more shall be said hereafter.

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¶136

When God entered into a covenant with Abraham, he gave him circumcision as the seal of it. (Genesis 17:7 and Romans 4:11.) This ordinance God enforced on the eighth day so strenuously, as to declare, that the “uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his fore-skin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people” (Genesis 17:14); Nay, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself submitted to this ordinance of God, and as our Mediator, was circumcised upon the eighth day. (Luke 2:21.)

According to the intention of God, the people of Israel were, in the first place, to have by means of circumcision, a continual memorial, that they were a covenant people, and that they should observe his commandments. If they did not do this, but turned aside from the commandments of God, and did not attend to his injunctions, then circumcision availed them nothing, nor were they better than uncircumcised, as Paul expressly testifies. (Romans 2:25.) But besides this, God would teach the people of Israel, by circumcision, a doctrine of a more profound nature, namely, that they should put away from them all corruption, which was not according to his mind, although it could not be effected without pain. Hence doth Moses himself speak concerning the foreskin of the heart, and concerning the circumcision of the heart. (Deuteronomy 10:16 and 30:6). And this is frequently repeated in the Prophets; for example, Jeremiah 4:4. But by the foreskin of the heart is meant all that which is opposite to the world of God, to the love of God and our neighbour; and all this must be put away.

Now, as circumcision was a seal of the covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed, so holy baptism was a seal of the New Covenant, which our Lord Jesus Christ himself instituted. “Go ye (says he to his disciples after his resurrection, and before his ascension), and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 28:19.)

In the Gospel according to St. Mark it is said, “Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature” (that is, to all men, not to Jews only, but to the Gentiles also). “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:15-16.)

We are therefore to speak of baptism, as that which Christ hath instituted for a seal of the New Covenant.

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Before our Lord Jesus Christ entered upon his public ministry, John the son of Zacharias began to preach; the design of which was, first, To
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set before the Jews their wicked ways, and to exhort them to repentance. At the same time he told the people to believe on Him who was to come after him, that is, on Jesus, that HE was the Christ or the Messiah. (Acts 19:4 and John 1:6-7.) And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them for the forgiveness of sins, directing them to bring forth the genuine fruits of penance. (Matthew 3:5.) And he testified at the same time to them, that they should be baptized by Jesus with the Holy Ghost, which took place accordingly.

What the baptism of Christ has in common with the baptism of John, and what distinguishes the one from the other, may be easily determined, if we enter into a more minute description of the baptism of Christ.

The preaching of the Gospel was always to precede, and the disciples of Jesus, who were sent out by the Lord into all the world, could now boldly testify of the salvation in Christ to every man. They spoke of the Father, who did not spare his only begotten Son, but gave him up for us all; of the Son, who having taken our sin upon himself, became a sacrifice for us; of the Holy Ghost, who was to come upon those who receive Christ in faith. They declared, that Jesus was truly risen again from the dead, and had sat down at the right hand of God in heaven; and that now all who believe in him receive in his name forgiveness of sins. They afterward took notice of such, in whom the Gospel found entrance, and who received it in faith: and if these desired to be baptized, they were told, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." (Acts 8:37.) Then baptism was administered, and the order was: (1.) "He that believeth;" and, (2.) "is baptized, shall be saved." They then gave them further instructions, "teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever Christ had commanded them," according to Matthew 28:19-20.

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Baptism with water was esteemed by the apostles to be so necessary, on account of the command of Christ, that even Cornelius, with his kinsmen and near friends, whom he had called together into his house, were baptized, after the Holy Ghost had already, during Peter's discourse, been poured out upon them. (Acts 10:24.)

Thus was the baptism an act instituted and enjoined by Christ himself; by means of which, a poor wicked man, burdened with sin, but who knew, bewailed, and confessed his sins, and believed with all his heart that Christ could forgive him, and cleanse him from them, was

made a partaker of the New Covenant, which was established by Christ and by his propitiatory offering. Externally, his body was washed with

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pure water, nay even dipped into it, and as it were buried, by the ministry of a servant of Christ, in the name of the Father, and of Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleansed him at the same time from all sins, and in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and for the sake of the offering made by Jesus, every thing was forgiven him at the same time. (1 John 5:6 and Ephesians 5:25-26.) Baptism was the seal and public confession, that this newly-baptized person was now, through faith, actually become the property of Jesus Christ, a child of God, and a temple of the Holy Ghost, and should also, from the very time of his having been baptized, demean and approved himself as such. For as a man was, by means of circumcision, taken into the covenant, which God had made with Abraham and his seed, and from that day forward had an interest in all the treasures of grace, and special privileges which were contained in the Old Testament, though he at the same time entered into an obligation to keep the entire law belonging to that covenant; so was also a man, who believed in Christ, received by baptism into the New Covenant established by Christ, and confirmed with his own blood: and by it he obtained an interest in all the blessings of salvation, which have been purchased for us poor sinners by the life, sufferings, and death of our Lord Jesus Christ: but he, on the other hand, bound himself to become obedient unto Jesus Christ, as his Lord, and as a child, to follow his commandments.

Whether in all congregations of the primitive church, water were made use of in one and same manner, we cannot say with certainty. It is probable, that the persons to be baptized were dipped under water, where it was deep enough; and that, where there was no sufficient depth of water, they poured it over them, and washed them with it. That in the ages succeeding, the Christian church did not every where keep to one and same mode, with respect to the use of water in baptism, needs no proof, being sufficiently manifest.

The reason of the efficacy of baptism is contained in the words of Paul, “Know ye not, that so many of us, as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.” (Romans 6:3-4.) The dipping, or over-streaming

with water, cannot in itself procure us salvation (see 1 Peter 3:21); but the participation of the death of Jesus, which faith lays hold of, is that upon which all depends in baptism. This death hath atoned for us, and paid our debt; so that now, through faith in him, we find grace, and baptism is a special assurance of it. And thus are the words of Peter to

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be taken, which he speaks to the Jews, “Be baptized every one you in the name of Jesus Christ, *for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*” (Acts 2:38.)

When Ananias says to Saul, “Arise, and *be baptized, and wash away thy sins*” (Acts 22:16), and when Paul writes to the Ephesians, “Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and *cleanse it with the washing of water by the word*” (Ephesians 5:25-26), it must not be understood as if this was to be ascribed to the water. Faith looks to Jesus, who shed his blood for the remission of our sins; HE it is, “who loveth us, and washeth us from our sins in his own blood.” (Revelation 1:5.) “The blood of Christ doth also purge our conscience from dead works.” (Hebrews 9:14.) And baptism is added to it, which is, “the washing of water, by the word.” It is connected with the word of God, sealing and ratifying to us the grace in the blood of Jesus, and the forgiveness by the blood and death of the Lord. The words of Paul (1 Corinthians 6:9), are hence very plain: he is there speaking of fornicators and idolaters, and then says, “Such were some of you; *but ye washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.*” That is, all has been forgiven you. With what were they then washed? With the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in whom they believed, which cleansed them from all sin. But this was ratified and sealed to them, by washing of water, by the word. In this sense is baptism called (Titus 3:4) (the laver) *washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* “After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, *he saved us by the washing of regeneration of the Holy Ghost*, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” Regeneration, which consists in this, that through faith in Jesus Christ we become the children of God, is a work of the Holy Ghost, and is connected with the renewing, by which, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we become new creatures, and which is also a work of the Holy Ghost. When therefore a man is, through faith in Christ, made a child of God, and a new creature, then is he also outwardly bathed and washed, baptism being the *bath*, or *washing* of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. It is by our Lord Jesus Christ, that God abundantly poureth out the Holy Ghost upon us. God saveth us by baptism, that is, by it he

sealeth the pardon or remission of sins, the adoption of God, and the inheritance of everlasting life; all which we attain through Jesus Christ, and through faith in him, without any merit or worthiness of our own. At the same time we see by this passage of Scripture, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are engaged at the baptism of a poor sinner, who believeth in Jesus.

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Something farther is still to be mentioned in reference to the words of Paul and Peter concerning baptism. Paul writes, "*In Christ are ye circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*" (Colossians 2:11.)

But in Peter it is thus expressed (1 Epistles 3:21), "We are saved by water in baptism (not by the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the *answer of a good conscience towards God*), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

For it is evident from these passages, (1.) That God requires the circumcision of the heart (¶136) no less in the New Testament than he did in the Old; and the Colossians were, according to the words of Paul, made partakers of the circumcision of the heart of baptism. (2.) That the meaning implied in baptism was this, As Christ died and was buried for us; and we through faith, have an interest in this offering for us and for our sin; so will we also die to sin, and heartily renounce, and as it were drown all that which he atoned for with so much pain. (3.) That in baptism, we commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and resolve to rise also with Christ, and begin a new life, in righteousness and holiness, that is acceptable to him. This was the covenant of a good conscience with God. A man may say, in respect to this and the other matter, I have a good conscience; that is, I am not conscious that I have sinned; but if he takes a view of his whole life, of all his propensities, desires, affections, and words, of all he has done, or neglected to do, and compares the whole with the word and will of God, then no man can say he has a good conscience; but if we believe in Christ, and are baptized in his name, all our sins are at once forgiven us, and we are adopted as children of God. Thus is our conscience not only appeased and quieted, condemning us no more; but we even obtain a good one. This good conscience we must carefully preserve from the

moment we have obtained it by faith in baptism, which we shall effectually do, if, for instance, we abide in the faith of Jesus, keep his commandments, and faithfully conduct ourselves agreeably to them: if we do not suffer ourselves to be led away from the doctrine of Jesus, if we follow the impulse of his Holy Spirit, are child-like, and obedient to him; and amidst all our imperfection, manifold mistakes, frequent backwardness, and numberless obligations, we lay fast hold of Jesus Christ, who, for the sake of his blood shed for us, richly and daily

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forgiveth us. For where there is remission, or forgiveness of sins, there is also life, salvation, and a good conscience. But he who neglects this, putting away a good conscience, disregarding the commandments of Jesus, refusing to be governed by the Holy Ghost, and does not abide in the doctrines of Jesus, and does not cleave to him, such a one has no longer a cheerful heart, it now condemns him, and he makes shipwreck of the faith; that is, he errs from the truth, the Holy Spirit withdraws from him, he falls from grace, and loses the faith, according to 1 Timothy 1:19.

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Infant baptism, though the manner of administering it is various, is in the Holy Scripture, neither expressly commanded nor forbidden. It is universally practiced in Christendom (unless by those who are generally known by the name of Baptists, and who are divided into several parties). These maintain that children should not be baptized, because Christ commanded his disciples, first of all, to preach the Gospel, and then to baptize such only as believe in it. Therefore a man must first have faith, before he can be a proper subject for baptism. Paul says, "How should they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?" Now as children have not heard the Gospel, so neither can they have faith; and because they do not believe, they ought not to be baptized.

This objection is very plausible; but if we take all circumstances into consideration, it is easy to explain why the practice of infant baptism became nevertheless so universal. At the time when our Lord and Saviour sent his disciples forth into all the world, the Christian church was to be first formed. The Lord therefore told them how they should proceed in collecting his church. They were not to preach the Gospel to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles also; and then to baptize such as believed in the Gospel, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The baptized kept afterwards together, and became

congregations of Christ, and these congregations collectively formed the church of Christ. Thus preaching preceded, faith followed, and then baptism was administered.

But when congregations of Christ were formed, what was then to be done with the children? And how were they to be looked upon? Paul tells us, that the children are holy, if either the father or mother were believers. (1 Corinthians 7:14.) How? Are not the children of believers sinful creatures also by nature? And doth not the Lord our Saviour say, that "What is born of the flesh is flesh?" Certainly; and in this sense they are not holy. How then are they holy? When from their very infancy they belong to the people of the New Covenant, whom the Lord has

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separated unto himself from the rest of the world, to be his property, which he has sanctified for himself. Surely children are a property of our Lord Jesus Christ, he having bought them, not with gold or silver, but with his own holy blood. Children are also capable of receiving the Holy Ghost even in the mother's womb, as we read expressly in the case of John, the son of Zacharias. May not faith take place in very little children? "Jesus took a child, and set him in the midst of them (his disciples), and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me." (Mark 9:36-37.) Doth he not immediately subjoin: "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones *which believe in me*, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6 and Mark 9:42.) Doth not Peter say to the Jews, when speaking of baptism for the remission of sins, and concerning the promised gift of the Holy Ghost, "The promise is unto you, and *to your children?*" (Acts 2:39.) Were not the males circumcised upon the eighth day, and by it received into the covenant which God had made with Abraham and with his posterity? Doth not our Saviour say concerning "the young children whom they brought to him, that he should touch them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God?" (Mark 10:13-14.)

Now if we take all this together, we may thence comprehend how infant baptism became so universal in the Christian church. There is reason to believe that the hand of God hath thus disposed it, and that the Holy Ghost, continued to teach the disciples of Jesus, and led them to baptize their children also. And if a child be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, should not this act convey a blessing to it? If a congregation of Jesus presents such a child with prayer and supplication to the Lord, shall that be in vain? Does not also a child put on Christ by baptism? (Galatians 3:27.) And shall the

Father not receive it as his child, and the Holy Ghost as his habitation, and temple? Most certainly. A child may likewise experience what Paul says, “*God saveth us by the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*” (Titus 3:5-6.)

¶142

But we have still farther to observe: (1.) That infant baptism being a holy transaction, performed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, ought to be administered in a way suitable to its importance.

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(2.) That it is also incumbent upon *us* to show therein all possible fidelity; to train up the children for our Saviour from the very hour of their baptism; to preserve them from all evil, which might be hurtful to their hearts; to excite them to every good thing, which is well pleasing to God; to put them in mind of the covenant of God with us, into which they have been received by baptism; to encourage them to have confidence towards their Father in Heaven, who has adopted them for his children; to paint Jesus Christ before their eyes, who, by his bitter sufferings and death, hath redeemed them; and to make them acquainted with that which Jesus Christ has commanded his disciples; to lead them into a child-like and confident converse with Jesus Christ, especially in prayer; to accustom them to an attention to the voice of the Holy Spirit, who brings all things to our remembrance, whatsoever our Saviour hath said.

(3.) That when children follow after the wicked one, and devote themselves to sin (which, alas! is but too often the case) we, by the grace of God lead them back again out of the error of their way. For when they are converted, they are always sure to find, that God, on his part, keeps covenant inviolably, and most willingly renews it with every one with whom he has once engaged in Holy Baptism.

As many men have no regard for the covenant, which they have entered into with God, by baptism, and as almost all those who have been baptized in their infancy, devote themselves again to the service of sin and Satan; therefore a preacher in Christendom, if he would observe rightly the duties of his function, dares do no otherwise than constantly direct men to return to Christ, beseeching them in Christ’s stead, to be reconciled unto God. See (¶121).

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¶143

God, moved by the cries of the people of Israel, who groaned under cruel bondage, and intending to bring them with a mighty hand out of Egypt, commanded them to slay and eat the Paschal Lamb. Each family, before they went out of Egypt, were commanded to take a lamb without blemish; to kill it between the two evenings, (that is, after three o'clock in the afternoon) to strike the door posts with its blood, to roast the lamb with fire, cut not to break its bones; and then to eat the whole of it, not with leavened but with unleavened bread. Now according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke unto Pharaoh by Moses, the destroying angel passed at midnight through all Egypt, and slew all the first-born both of man and beast; but all the Israelites, whose door posts had been marked with blood, were spared, and no harm befell either man or beast amongst them. From that time they were obliged, once every year, to celebrate the Passover, in commemoration of their departure out of the Egyptian bondage, and to kill the Paschal Lamb, as a memorial of their preservation by its blood, from the destroying angel, to roast it with fire, and eat it with unleavened bread. Yet no uncircumcised person durst eat of it. (Exodus 12:3.)

If we consider all the circumstances, which should be observed touching the Paschal Lamb; it makes it highly probably, that our Lord Jesus Christ was typified by it. But Paul puts it out of all manner of doubt, when he says, "Christ our Passover (or Paschal Lamb) is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Corinthians 5:7-8.)

But to return to the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt; It was certainly an important event, when God brought out a people consisting of six hundred thousand men, and set them at liberty by his servant Moses; who, at that time, stood boldly before Pharaoh, a very mighty king, and told him in the name of God, that he should let them depart with their wives, children, cattle, and all they possessed. On this occasion he signally and conspicuously displayed his truth, goodness, power, and righteousness. His truth—for he had promised Abraham to deliver his seed, whom for four hundred years they should afflict and compel to servitude. (Genesis 15:13-14.) His goodness—for he said to Moses, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reasons of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows." (Exodus 3:7.) His righteousness—for the Egyptians had

tyrannized horribly over the people of Israel, afflicting and tormenting them in a dreadful manner. (Exodus 1 and 2.) His power—for who is not

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affrighted at the judgments with which God, by the hand of Moses, punished the Egyptians, and at his unheard-of wonders.

¶144

But as great as the deliverance of the people of Israel from the bondage of the Egyptians was to the believers of the Old Testament—for in their songs of praise they frequently commemorate it, as may be especially seen in the Psalms of David:--yet the work of redemption, wrought by Jesus Christ is infinitely greater. The former referred to the people of Israel, but the latter extends itself to the whole human race. In the former the Israelites were set free from the bondage of the tyrannical King Pharaoh; but by this, all such as wish for it, are delivered and set free from the tyranny of Satan and of sin:--Oh! What a hard and galling yoke is this! The person, used as the means of deliverance of the Israelites was Moses, a faithful servant in the house of God: The Mediator, by whom redemption was effected, is the Man Christ Jesus, the Lord of heaven and earth, and of every thing that is in them. The deliverance of the Israelites was wrought by many and great signs and wonders, which cost thousands their lives. Redemption was procured by nothing less than the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the first case many lambs were slaughtered, and their blood marked the door-posts, that the destroying angel might pass by them: In the latter, the blood of Jesus Christ, the innocent and unblemished Lamb of God, secures us, if we believe, against the Devil, who hath the power of death, and against all his hosts.

As, in the deliverance of the people of Israel, God eminently displayed his truth, goodness, power and righteousness; so, in the work of redemption, through the death of Christ, were his wisdom, righteousness, mercy, truth, and power, much more gloriously manifested. His wisdom discovers itself by having found out a method, which never could have entered into the thoughts of any creature, of delivering so many millions of men from everlasting death which they had deserved, and of procuring for them eternal life. His righteousness manifests itself, by laying upon Jesus Christ, who took the sin of the world upon himself, all the chastisement which we should have suffered; which, because he was the Son of God, proved before the tribunal of God, of as much efficacy, as if judgment had been executed upon us all. His

mercy in the work of redemption displayed itself, because out of pure love and compassion, he opens the doors of Life to men, who far from deserving it, did not even so much as ask it. His truth is gloriously justified in the work of redemption: For, in Christ he punctually fulfilled all the promises, of which the prophets are full, concerning the seed of

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the woman, who was to bruise the serpent's head; and the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. His power demonstrates itself in a manner much more glorious by the work of redemption, than by the deliverance of the people of Israel from the Egyptian bondage. For "Christ through death destroys him who had the power of death, that is, the Devil; and delivers them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Hebrews 2:14-15.) And as through his death he has laid the foundation of our redemption from the power of darkness, so now, all the bond-slaves of sin and of the Devil, who are tired of their hard yoke, and wish to be freed from it, as soon as they turn to Jesus Christ, and pray him to approve himself as the Saviour of the world to them, are by his power rescued and delivered from the enemy, and preserved and kept into everlasting life.

Now as God saw fit to institute in Egypt the Paschal Lamb as a memorial of the marvelous deliverance of the people of Israel; so has he, in his deep wisdom and love, appointed a remembrance of his death, which has atoned for us, and restored us to life; that is, the Holy Supper of the Lord, which is now the subject of our discourse. In the Holy Scripture we have the following account of it:

"The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup after supper, and when he had blessed it, he gave it unto them, and said Drink ye all of this; this is my blood, and the blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins; this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." (Matthew 27:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.)

Hence then it is clear first, that our Lord and Saviour did himself institute this Holy Supper, and that he left and bequeathed it to his disciples. Also, that he has appointed it in remembrance of himself;

wherefore Paul says, "As often as ye eat this bread and, drink this cup, *ye do show the Lord's Death till he come.*" (1 Corinthians 11:26.)

Even before the Lord our Saviour had instituted this Supper, he at Capernaum spoke concerning the eating of his flesh, and the drinking of his blood. (John 6:51-57.) The people with whom he was engaged, were partly his disciples, and partly a great multitude of the Jews, whom the day before he had taught in the wilderness, nigh unto Tiberias, where he healed their sick and fed them all. (Matthew 14:43 and John 6:5.) Their

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number amounted to five thousand men, besides women and children, all of whom ate and were filled, with five barley loaves, and two small fishes; which the Lord took, blessed, and broke, and gave them to be distributed to the multitude, who were seated in rows, that no one might be forgotten. After they were all filled, and twelve baskets full of fragments were left; the multitude intended to make him a king; because they now began to believe he was the Messiah. This moved the Lord to depart; and returning to Capernaum, many of the same Jews even sought him there. When he saw them, he endeavoured to persuade them to come and believe in him, on account of the miracle which had been wrought by him before them, and not to follow him merely for the sake of the bread with which they had been filled. On this account they were angry, and said, "What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? What doest thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert." (John 6:30-31.) This gave our Saviour an occasion of speaking about himself as the bread of life, which came down from heaven, which we must eat, if we would live in eternity. And on this head he explained himself further: "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51), and added, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." (John 6:55.)

What then doth our Lord say concerning the eating and drinking of his flesh and blood? "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, *hath eternal Life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*" (John 6:54.) And, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, *dwelleth in me, and I in him.*" (John 6:56.)

We must here observe that the same expression, namely, to have eternal life, and to be raised up at the last day, is not used with respect to those only, who eat and drink the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, but likewise to those who believe in him; for in this chapter it is said, "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, *may have everlasting Life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*" (John 6:40.) See also John 3:16 and 36. "Christ dwells in our

hearts by faith" (Ephesians 3:17); and "by faith we put on Christ and *are in Him.*" (Galatians 3:26-27.)

Hence there is no doubt, but that in this place, by the eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, nothing else is meant, but the enjoyment of Jesus Christ by faith; who gave himself a sacrifice for us, in such a manner as to experience for us in his holy body the most dreadful punishment of death, and to shed his blood for the remission of our sins. When we, amidst our sin and misery, as eagerly partake of this Paschal Lamb slain for us, and his blood shed for our sins, as an hungry and thirsty person takes meat and drink (and this in

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faith) then do we eat and drink the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. Oh! How emphatically does our dear Lord and Saviour represent to us the actual participation of his expiatory offering! And cannot every one easily discover, if he examines himself, whether he has experienced, and doth daily experience it? For our Lord Jesus Christ is the bread of God, that is come down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. (John 6:33.) He says, "I am the bread of life, *he that cometh to me* shall never hunger; and *he that believeth in me* shall never thirst." (John 6:35.)

Is it not plain from this, that the believing on him is an eating and drinking? Wherefore he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, hath everlasting life." (John 6:47.)

We stand in need of this bread of life for our daily food; and it is necessary that we pray daily for it.

¶146

In the words of Jesus, upon which the doctrine of the Holy Communion is grounded, it is said, "Take, and eat, this is my body;--take, and drink, this is my blood." And then it is also said, "As oft as ye eat of this bread,--as oft as ye drink of this cup."

It is therefore a mysterious enjoyment of the body and blood of Christ; that is, when the Holy Supper of the Lord is enjoyed according to the mind of Jesus Christ, the enjoyment of the bread and wine is connected with the enjoyment of the body and blood of Jesus, in a manner incomprehensible to us, and therefore, inexpressible. This is Paul's meaning in the words, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break (in the Lord's Supper), is it not the Communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16); that is, it is certainly the communion of the body and blood of Christ. As certain as it is, that we eat the blessed bread, so

certain is it that we partake of the body of Christ; and as certain as it is, that we drink of the cup of blessing, so certain is it that we partake of the blood of Christ; we eat and drink, we enjoy one as well as the other; for our Saviour says, "Take, eat, this is my body; take, and drink, this is my blood."

We can, in the Holy Communion, if we do not receive it unworthily, certainly expect no less, than what our Lord Jesus Christ has, in the sixth chapter of John, promised to them who eat and drink his flesh and blood, even when they do not partake of the Holy Communion; for our dear Lord would bestow, by means of the Holy Communion, a particular favour upon us, and provide a feast for his church.

But it should be observed, that he did not institute and ordain the Holy Communion for unbelievers, but for believers. For as no

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uncircumcised person durst eat of the Paschal Lamb (¶143), so also no unbaptized person ought to come to the Holy Supper of the Lord. And if a man has been baptized, but has broken the covenant of a good conscience with God, and is become a slave of the devil and sin, he must first be converted with his whole heart, before he presumes to partake of the Supper of the Lord. And even though he be converted, yet should he not approach to the Lord's Supper, without a contrite spirit and a due sense of his need, of having anew "*his robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.*" (Revelation 7:14.) This is more fully explained in the next chapter. See also Colossians 3:13-14.

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To this end, says Paul, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (1 Corinthians 11:28.)

Indeed, self examination ought not to be practiced at that time only, when we intend to go to the Lord's Supper, but even daily. For being sinful creatures, and remaining such to the end of our days, notwithstanding we, through the power of Jesus Christ, are freed from the dominion of sin; yet we daily discover faults and mistakes in ourselves, and fall short, alas! in many of those things that are commanded. This we are bound daily to acknowledge before God our Lord, to implore him to forgive our debts, and to recommend ourselves anew to his grace. But this ought particularly to be done before the Lord's Supper; and because we are too apt, from motives of self-love, which is more or less to be found in all men, to think better of ourselves than we are in reality; we should pray to God to let his light shine upon

us, that we may know ourselves better by it. "Hear me, O God," (David says) "and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts." (Psalms 139:23.)

Paul admonishes in particular the Corinthians to self examination; for they, not having reflected upon the great importance of this Communion, suffered many unbecoming things to take place among them on this occasion. Therefore some of them were chastised and punished by God with sickness, and others with death. And the Apostle says, "But when we were chastened of the Lord, it is, that we should be condemned with the world." (1 Corinthians 11:28.)

Had they judged themselves, that is, had they searched out what was amiss among them, acknowledged, and by the grace of God put it away from them; they would not have been judged; that is, no such chastisement would have been inflicted upon them. The first thing, for the examination of every one, who would go to the Holy Communion, is

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this, Whether his heart be converted to God? "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." (2 Corinthians 8:5.)

For if any one is defective in this, he is by no means fit to be a partaker of the Lord's Supper. See ¶146.

But though we be converted, yet we are to examine, Whether we be found in the faith? Whether we place our confidence and hope in Christ alone? Or whether, in one or another point we build upon our own doings and works? We are then to examine ourselves, in regard to the doctrine of Jesus and his apostles, and how we stand with God. Whether we walk in simplicity with Jesus Christ? Whether we have a child-like and confident heart towards our Father in heaven? Whether we submit ourselves to be taught, led, and directed by the Holy Ghost? Whether we crucify our flesh with its affections and lusts? Whether our Saviour, with his sufferings and death be ever before our eyes? And whether our heart live in it? Whether we be the entire property of our Saviour? For we ought to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. Whether we be contented with the ways which God takes us? Whether also we always, and for every thing, give thanks to God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ? Whether we be faithful and believing in our prayers and intercession? Whether we employ our time aright, and attend to our calling to our Saviour's mind? Whether our words be a joy to the Lord, and an edification to our neighbours? Whether, in general, we faithfully observe the commands of Christ, which we ought not to know only, but also to keep? Whether we love our neighbour, nay our enemy, as

ourselves? Whether we be glad to be serviceable and helpful to him? Whether to give be more pleasing to us than to receive, according to the word of our Saviour, "it is more pleasing to give than to receive." Whether the mind of Christ be in us, to be willingly poor and mean? Whether we care for that which is our neighbour's, as if it were our own? Whether we have a living hope of everlasting salvation, desiring to depart, and to be with Christ? These and others are the points on which a Christian should reflect, and by which he should examine himself. In doing this he will find a thousand reasons to blush before the Lord, and to humble himself at his feet. And, oh! How inestimable is then the death and blood of Jesus Christ, which gives us the expectation of so much grace and forgiveness.

Thus we are, in our own selves, certainly not worthy of the Holy Communion. For what is man, and what is all he can do? Yet as soon as we, by faith, become children of God, and members of the body of Christ, we are also purely, for Christ's sake, and for the sake of his bloodshed for us, counted worthy of partaking of the Holy Supper of the
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Lord, and may approach with confidence to the Table of the Lord. We obtain the Lord's Supper, as we obtain everlasting salvation, out of pure grace, without any merit and worthiness of our own.

¶148

There still remains something farther to be said concerning the blessing we receive by means of the Lord's Supper. It is undoubtedly great; when a poor sinner, who cleaves to the Lord by faith, having thoroughly examined himself, and meditating upon the death which Jesus suffered, and upon the blood which he shed for us, receives it according to the word and command of Christ; deeply sensible of his wretchedness and defects, yet in child-like confidence, that the Lord is both desirous to, and certainly will bless him with the participation of his flesh and blood. For if any one who still loves, and is a slave of sin, who will not be converted to God, or who, if he has been converted, gives way to evil, neither acknowledging, repenting of, nor desisting from sin; if such a person presume to approach to the Holy Communion, in this case he assuredly receives hurt instead of a blessing from it: although we can believe that God, with much compassion and great long suffering, bears with the ignorance of many thousands. But at the enjoyment of the Lord's Supper, a new seal of the forgiveness of sins is impressed upon every believing communicant; for he enjoys the body, which is given for us, and the blood, which is shed for us, for the remission of sins. It is

evident and clear from our Lord's own words, that we, by means of this feast, if we make a right use of it, become most intimately united with our Lord and Saviour, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." (John 6:56.)

How the communion of the faithful is by these means maintained with each other, Paul shows in the following words, "For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Corinthians 10:17.)

When a man for instance, partakes of wholesome and strengthening food, all the members of his body have the benefit and enjoyment of it, and are strengthened in fellowship. The same is the case with a congregation of Jesus. When they eat of that *one* bread, our Lord Jesus Christ, then do all the members, who in conjunction constitute but one body, enjoy it jointly one with another, and one as well as the other. For this reason, the Lord's Supper is called *the Holy Communion*; and it is a very proper name for it. The Holy Ghost teaches us by it, how highly we ought to prize our brethren and sisters, and how much we ought to love them; for Christ has loved and valued every one of them so much, as to die for them, and now gives them his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink.

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If, at the Holy Supper of the Lord, we consider that Jesus gave himself unto death *for our sin*, and the Holy Ghost renews in us a living impression of it, we are again zealous to mortify sin, and to continue to do so. The real, as well as mysterious participation of his flesh and blood in the Lord's Supper, strengthens us to mortify every thing in ourselves, which is against the mind of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to follow after that which is conformable to the mind and image of our Lord. Of this however more hereafter.

When therefore our Saviour says, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up the last day" (John 6:54), we learn, that believers obtain, by the Lord's Supper, a renewed assurance of eternal life and a joyous resurrection. And thus doth Christ, the second Adam, who restoreth all which was lost by the sin of the first man, evidence himself to be *that quickening Spirit*, as Paul expressly calls him. (1 Corinthians 15:45.) As the Holy Ghost, in the Lord's Supper, glorifies the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the expiation made for sins by his blood, in such a remarkable manner; and as we, by eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood, obtain such a special share in it, our soul cannot therefore but be filled with a living hope of eternal life. When we consider that Jesus gave himself to death, that he might bring us to everlasting life; and after he has drawn us unto himself, that he now grants unto us, by the enjoyment of his body and

blood, such a special share in the sacrifice of himself for us; how then can we doubt but that he will raise us up again unto eternal life, and graciously receive us into it.

Now, when a poor sinner, who through faith in Christ is become a child of God, partakes of so much good in the Holy Communion, he surely calls to mind on this occasion the death of the Lord as the cause of all the grace, which flows upon him richly. His heart melts in love, and is so filled with thankfulness, that his mouth also overflows with it. And this is the case, as often as he has the favour to partake of the Supper of the Lord. And this will continue always in the church of Christ, until he cometh.

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¶149

The infinite love of Jesus Christ, which constrained him to give his life, and to shed his blood for us; and which is also, in the most blessed manner, renewed to our hearts, at every enjoyment of the Lord's Supper, impels us to be abundantly thankful, and to put away ever thing from us which is not well pleasing to Him; and to endeavour to attain that which is according to his heart. This leads us to the subject of *Sanctification*.

We first observe upon this head, that the Holy Scripture does not always use the word *Holy* in one and the same way, nor in one and the same meaning. In the Old Testament, all that is called holy which is devoted and consecrated unto the Lord; which is separated from common and customary use, and is appointed for him; all which belongs to him as his especial property, chosen by him in preference, and which is brought to him as a gift and offering. Thus, for instance, doth Moses speak to the people of Israel: "Thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy GOD; the LORD thy GOD hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." (Deuteronomy 7:6.) And thus is the word taken in the command of God to Moses: "Sanctify unto me all the first-born, both of man and of beast: it is mine." (Exodus 13:2.)

In this way did they sanctify to the Lord, houses (Leviticus 27:14); money (2 Kings 12:4); treasures (1 Chronicles 26:20); oxen and sheep (2 Chronicles 29:33.)

The words of Paul, "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is *sanctified* by the word of God and prayer" (1 Timothy 4:4-5), refer to the difference between the clean and unclean food, which the Old Testament enjoined. This, after the Old Testament had attained its aim, ceased entirely; and now a fish, or any other creature, which believers partake of with thanksgiving, is made clean food by the word of God and prayer, although it had been forbidden to the people of Israel, as unclean.

Secondly, the words *holy*, and *to sanctify*, or make holy are, even in the New Testament, taken in so enlarged a sense, that all those who are united with the church of Jesus, are without difference comprehended under that name. Thus, for instance, Peter says to the strangers scattered abroad, "Elect of God, ye are a holy nation, a peculiar people." (1 Peter 1:2, 9.) Paul calls the church at Corinth, "The sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:2); the church at Rome, "Called to be saints" (Romans 1:7); that at Ephesus, "The saints and faithful in Christ

Jesus” (Ephesians 1:1); nay, Paul calls a man who is still a heathen, but is satisfied to dwell with his wife, who believes in Christ; and a woman

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who is yet an heathen, but who does not scruple to remain with her husband, who is converted to Christ, and also their children “holy.” The words of Paul are, “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.” (1 Corinthians 7:14.) See (§141).

Thirdly, all those who have by the faith obtained the forgiveness of sins, in the sacrifice and blood of Jesus, are called saints, and sanctified. It is said of the Corinthians, who had before lived in manifest and flagrant works of the flesh, “Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified.” (1 Corinthians 6:11.) This is the same with what we read in Revelation 1:5, “Jesus Christ hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood;” and with what stands in Hebrews 9:14, “The blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works.”

Fourthly, we find the following texts concerning sanctification in the Scripture; as for instance, “*Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*” (Hebrews 12:14); also, “This is the will of God, even your *sanctification.*” (1 Thessalonians 4:3.) “May the Lord stablish your hearts unblameable in *holiness before God*, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13.) “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*” (2 Corinthians 7:1.) “God hath not *called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*” (1 Thessalonians 4:7.)

Here we treat properly of this last idea of holiness or sanctification.

¶150

In all these texts, persons are addressed, who, through faith in Jesus Christ, were already children of God. Thus these belonged already to the church of Jesus Christ, which is called, “the chosen generation,” “the royal priesthood,” “the peculiar people,” “the holy nation.” They had been washed, cleansed, and sanctified with the blood of Jesus, and their sin and guilt had been pardoned; they had devoted themselves, body and soul, to the Lord our Saviour, and through him to the Father in heaven, and were become an holy offering unto God. They were sealed with the Holy Ghost, who dwelt in their hearts, and were therefore an holy house

of God. Thus, when it is said to them, “Follow holiness—proceed in sanctification,” what is precisely meant by it?

It is certain, that the beginning of holiness is the conversion of the heart to God. “Our hearts are purified by faith.” (Acts 15:9.) We die to sin, as soon as we believe, and are no longer willing to live unto it; and at the same time we put on Christ. (Galatians 3:27.) For faith is, as Luther
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says, “A divine work in us, which changeth us, and by which we are born of God” (John 1:13): it slays the old man, and entirely changeth us in heart, mind, disposition, and in all our powers; and by it we receive the Holy Ghost, as Luther says in his Preface to Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. Thus, as the Holy Scripture testifies, we, through faith, become new creatures.

But when we first receive life from God, we are like newborn children: such a child has, it is true, from its first moments, a body and a soul, and brings with it all the faculties of the soul, and all the internal and external organs of the body; yet it must be nourished, nursed, and tended, that it may grow to the fullness of its stature. Thus then the image of Christ, with every thing that belongs to it, shows itself directly, at the beginning, in the new creature; that is, in a person who through faith is become a child of God. But, as long as he lives, he must grow up in all things into the head, Christ Jesus, resembling him more and more every day; as hath been already shown in ¶105. And if this takes place, he then advances in sanctification, he “follows holiness.”

God does neither change any one so suddenly, nor in such a manner, as to make him incapable of sinning: when he is converted, he is indeed made free from the dominion of sin (being under grace, sin has no dominion over him) neither can Satan any longer exercise the power which he had formerly over him; for he is set free from the chains, which Satan had previously bound him with, according to his will. Faith also overcomes the world, and enables him to shake off its yoke, and forsake its evil ways. Yet he must, as long as he lives, by the grace of God, be always upon his guard, and stand firm against every thing that is not conformable to the mind of Christ. He must preserve himself against that which comes from the flesh, that is, from his corrupted nature, which is contrary to the mind of Christ, and purify himself from it. He must always withstand the allurements of Satan and the world, and not meddle with him: if he does all this faithfully, he advances in sanctification, he follows holiness. Thus then the following texts of Holy Writ become clear, “Put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, which after God is

created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Ephesians 4:22.) And, “Put off the old man, with his deeds; and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.” (Colossians 3:9-10.)

By the old man is meant the depraved and sinful character which we have by nature, and bring with us into the world, with all its evil consequences and fruits, as is above described. (§53). By the new man we understand the character which is conformable to the image of God,

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found in the Man Christ Jesus; of which we have treated in §49. We should put off the old man, and put on the new.

¶151

Sanctification, of which we are now speaking, is preceded by justification, which implies that a poor sinner, conscious by the grace of God of his forlorn and sinful state, comes in faith with it to Christ, and receives the forgiveness of all his sins, for the sake of the blood and death of Jesus. Yet sanctification is so intimately connected with justification, that if a man, whose sins have been forgiven him, should not follow earnestly after sanctification, but on the contrary be slothful and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, of such an one it is said, that “he is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” (2 Peter 1:8-9.) We must yet add, that a man has, even after his conversion, continual need of Justification; that is, he has always reason to pray to God for the pardon of his trespasses; and this continues as long as he lives. We learn to comprehend this in the school of the Holy Ghost, and cannot understand it, till He clears it up to us. For when a man, who feels the burden of sin, and is painfully grieved on that account, finds grace at the feet of the Saviour of poor sinners, and is, as it were, overpowered with it, he then commonly supposes, that he is going on in the best and fairest way possible: and his case may be compared with that of Peter, who said to our Saviour, “Lord, I will lay down my life for thy sake!” and he is really so disposed. Through the experience of grace, and the forgiveness of sins, of which he is assured by the Holy Ghost, the wickedness in which he formerly delighted, becomes so abominable to him that he hopes never to perceive any thing more of it. Should he be afterwards sensible that he is still in the flesh, that he has a depraved nature, and that many things discover themselves both in soul and body, which are not conformable to the mind of Christ; he is then commonly perplexed; especially when, notwithstanding all his good intentions, he continues to

make so many mistakes, and finds himself surrounded with so many infirmities, imperfections, and defects. The Holy Ghost then teaches him, that he must continually fall, as a poor sinner, at the feet of our Saviour; and that he not only may and ought, but that he must ask forgiveness of him; and if happily he should meet with a person experienced in the ways of God, if he be teachable only, and will attend to advice, he will soon understand the Holy Spirit, and his sweet instructions. Is he faithful and obedient; he will guard against sin, and thus avoid much anguish and distress. At the same time he by no means looks upon his infirmities, imperfections, and defects, as trifling; but he is heartily

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ashamed of them, and bewails them frequently before our Saviour with many tears. The Holy Ghost is so faithful and unwearied in his labour upon him, as not to suffer him to remain in ignorance of his transgressions, backwardness, and trespasses. Our Saviour always gives him, from time to time, new assurances of his love, grace, and complacency; and this is the constant progress of justification. It is usual to call this a daily repentance, and whoever understands it aright, will acknowledge that a child of God, as long as he lives in the flesh, cannot be without it; but it is, alas! too true, that many entertain a perverse notion of it, and while they remain children of wrath, serve sin, fulfill the will of the flesh, and of a corrupt mind, call this a daily repentance, because they suffer anguish and distress about it.

From what has been said, we may understand the words of John, which he did not write to the world, but to believers: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:8-9.)

Here we observe first, *Justification* (he forgives us our sins) and, secondly, *Sanctification* (he cleanses us from all unrighteousness) God does all through Christ. See ¶83. And thus is Christ made unto us *wisdom*, when he has enlightened us, so that we begin to have a knowledge of God and of his will, and particularly of ourselves, He is made unto us *righteousness*, when we have in him redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; He is also made unto us *sanctification*, when he cleanses us from all sins, and makes us again like unto his own image; and lastly he is made unto us *redemption*, when he delivers us from all evil, and by grace receives us into heaven. Amen. [1 Corinthians 1:30.]

Thus is Jesus Christ our sanctification; and the Scripture says, that “he is of God made this unto us.” (1 Corinthians 1:30.) These words can have no other meaning, than that, according to the will of God, we are sanctified through him. That he washes us with his blood, that is, that we through his blood have remission of sins, and are in this sense sanctified through him, has been said already. But as we are now speaking of sanctification, which consists in our being freed and cleansed from such things as are not according to his mind, and being formed into his image; we must therefore observe,

- (1.) That he has purchased the grace of this sanctification for us by his sufferings and death.

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Our Saviour in the prayer to his dear Father, in which he did not commend his disciples only, but also all those who should believe in him through their word, says: “For their sakes I sanctify myself, *that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*” (John 17:19.)

The meaning of these words is, I give myself as an offering to thee for them, that they also may become an offering unto thee, a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto thee, according to Romans 12:1.

We may also observe the same in the following Scripture passages: “Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*” (Titus 2:13-14.) “And you hath he (Christ) reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, *to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouceable in his sight.*” (Colossians 1:21-22.) “Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it: *that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*” (Ephesians 5:25.)

- (2.) That, according to ¶49, he is to us, the perfect image of God, not as an example only, after which we ought to be formed in our sanctification (See ¶105), but that his very thoughts and will, his prayers and tears, his speaking and being silent, his labour and rest, his sleeping and waking, are likewise meritorious for us. As he took our sins upon himself, and appeared before the judgment seat of God, as if he himself had been the sinner; so now does he become ours with all his righteousness and holiness; by faith, we are clothed with him, as with a garment, and thus appear in him before God.

(3.) He, according to Ezekiel 26:26, gives us a new heart, and a new spirit, and his chastisements are profitable unto us, as we by them are made partakers of his holiness. (Hebrews 12:10.) Thus the promise given by him is fulfilled: "HE (the Lord our Saviour) is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: *and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.*" (Matthew 3:2-3.)

(4.) We have likewise, in our Lord Jesus Christ, power sufficient for our sanctification. He himself said to his disciples, "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.*" (John 15:4-5, 1 John 2:28 and 2 Peter 1:3.)

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¶153

The incomprehensible condescension of the great King of Glory, our Lord Jesus Christ, to poor sinners, who have once experienced his gracious dealings, contributes greatly to their sanctification. He has already gained their hearts, by having forgiven them every thing which had grieved him. They love him the more, because he forgave them so much, though they deserved nothing but punishment. They thus become so confident towards him, that they know of no happier hours on earth than those they pass with him. And what still more attaches their hearts to him is, that he daily and richly forgives them their debts, which they look upon as so many sins (and so indeed they are) and has compassion with their weaknesses. They, by experience, become better acquainted with him, as the merciful, gracious, sympathizing, kind, constant, and faithful friend of the poor and wretched. All this makes them desire nothing so much, as to prove a joy and honour to him. From this principle they abhor all those things that are contrary to his mind, and wish to be cleansed from them. On the other hand, they long from the bottom of their hearts to be and become in this world, as He was, and as he still is. Oh, how do they inwardly rejoice, when they can hope that he will not leave them, till he has made them perfectly according to his own image! and, as they know that this will certainly be effected after this life, they therefore wait with longing for the hour of his appearance, or of their being taken home to him. Such is the condition

of those, who are faithfully attached to our Saviour with their whole hearts.

¶154

The Holy Ghost is unwearied in promoting our sanctification; and therefore sanctification is particularly ascribed to him. (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2 and Romans 15:16.) And we are exhorted, “to purify our souls in obeying the truth *through the Spirit.*” (1 Peter 1:22.) When we attend to the work of the Holy Ghost in our hearts, we observe the following:

- (1.) He makes the words of Jesus, and of his apostles and prophets, plain and clear, and brings them frequently to our remembrance.
- (2.) He shows us unweariedly those things, both in general and in particular, which are not conformable to the mind of Jesus, and from which we ought to disengage ourselves.

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- (3.) He sets Jesus Christ constantly before our eyes, as the image of God; both as a model of what we should endeavour to attain, and as the means of preventing us from forgetting his example.
- (4.) He constantly renews in our minds the distress of soul and body, which our Lord Jesus Christ suffered in his agony and in the pangs of death, and directs us to the cause of it, in order that the image of God lost in Adam, might, through Christ, be again restored unto us.
- (5.) He makes us loathe those things which are contrary to our Saviour’s mind, and excites a deep sorrow on account of them; he also teaches us to pray incessantly, that God may take us into his protection, and in mercy deliver us from them.
- (6.) On the other hand, he gives us inward delight in those things which constitute the new man in Christ, or which belong unto it, enabling us to be constant in prayer to God to assist us in our endeavours to attain them.
- (7.) When we with open face behold the glory of the Lord our Saviour, then we are “changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as *by the Spirit of the Lord.*” (2 Corinthians 3:18.)
- (8.) This same Spirit, who is the Lord, makes us more and more acquainted with the heart of our heavenly Father, which burns in love towards us, and teaches us, in all our concerns, to come with a child-like and confident spirit, and pour out our hearts before him.
- (9.) He also preserves us in an inward and confident intercourse of heart with him, who out of love gave himself unto death for us. To

him we make our complaints, acquainting him with all our wants, every thing which distresses us, and he sympathizes with and assuredly helps us. Whoever is backward in this, certainly also falls short of sanctification.

(10.) The Holy Ghost also opens our eyes, and enables us not only to understand the promises of God, which fill us with astonishment, but like wise to lay hold of them by faith: and this powerfully excites us to follow after sanctification.

¶155

The Holy Ghost however does not take us under his care in general only, but he also takes each individual poor sinner, who through faith comes to Christ, under his especial care. He knows every one thoroughly, and nothing is hidden from him. “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:10.) That he deigns to dwell in men, is of itself a great condescension. But what shall we say to his taking notice of even the most minute circumstance relating to them? Yet he certainly does it. When they stand in need of the word of God for doctrine, warning, consolation, support, or for

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correction, and forget to whom they should apply: the Holy Ghost then takes the proper time to bring to their remembrance what our Lord Jesus Christ said unto us disciples, and what the disciples of Jesus said unto the churches. See John 14:26. “The truth makes us free,” according to the word of Christ. (John 8:32.) But who is it that guideth us *into all the truth*? The Holy Ghost, according to John 16:13. “Through the knowledge of him, that hath called us to glory and virtue,” that is, of Jesus Christ our Lord, all divine power is given unto us, that is needful and serviceable unto life and godliness. (2 Peter 1:3.) But who is it that glorifies Jesus Christ to us? The Holy Ghost. (John 16:14.) When we are too weak to pray, HE then helps our infirmities, according to the words of Paul: “The Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Romans 8:26-27.)

Whenever we deviate, he brings us back into the right way; if we fall, he lifts us up; when we are walking in the way of the Lord, he guides and leads us, in all cases treats us with the care of a mother. See ¶115. When we now daily perceive how faithfully he attends us, with what patience he bears with us, how wisely he rules, how unweariedly he labours upon us, how often he inflames our heart with the love of Jesus, how powerfully he supports, what long suffering he shows towards, (for how often might he justly withdraw himself from us, and yet he doth it

not!). Oh! how do all these circumstances unite our hearts with him in a manner inexpressible. We rejoice, and even with tears, on account of this kind Guest who deigns to dwell in our hearts, wishing to remain eternally under his tuition. And when we do this we walk in the Spirit, we submit to his government, we follow him as children, according to Paul's admonition. (Galatians 6:16.) Who then doth not see that the communion of the Holy Ghost, which Paul wishes for the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 8:14), belongs indispensably to the great work of our sanctification? When the Holy Ghost rules in our hearts, and we submit ourselves as children to his guidance, we then approve ourselves to be the children of God.

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14 and Galatians 5:18); then "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16); "crying in us, Abba, Father." (Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6.) "We through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body" (Romans 8:13); that is, every thing which proceeds from our depraved nature, according to Matthew 15:19 and Galatians 5:19. And on the other hand, we are filled with the fruits of the Spirit, such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering. (Galatians 5:22.)

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¶156

The Scripture testifies, that the eternal purpose of the Father, to save us by Christ, was intimately connected, with his determination of our recovering the image of God, lost in Adam, and of our becoming holy in him. "*HE hath chosen us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.*" (Ephesians 1:4.) "*Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.*" (Romans 8:29.)

When the appointed time was fulfilled, he sent his Son into the world, to become a sacrifice, and to purchase salvation for us; but *he made him*, at the same time, *our sanctification* (1 Corinthians 1:30); that is, the only way by which we could regain the holiness that was lost. When we come to Christ, receive him by faith, and confess our sins; then is He (the Father) "*faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" (1 John 1:9.) This is the import of what our Saviour says. (John 15:1-2.) "*I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*" And as the "*Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively*

hope.” (1 Peter 1:3.) So doth he also “*sanctify us through his Truth,*” through his Word. (John 17:17.) He enables us by his grace, to become obedient to his Gospel, and thus to become holy.—When we bemoan our distress before him, and beg for his grace, he then heareth us. For, “having delivered up his own Son for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32.) His work is also effectual, and is not directed against one or another evil only, but against every thing, which is opposite to the restoration of the image of God in us. In this sense, Paul says, “The very God of Peace *sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless,* unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23.)

Since we experience, both in internals and externals, so many proofs of his love, grace, and paternal care, extended to the most trivial circumstances of each individual; all this cannot but increase our love and confidence towards him. Oh! how much does this contribute towards our furtherance in sanctification! The prayer of Christ, “Father, sanctify them through thy Truth: thy Word is Truth” (John 17:17); is likewise always applicable to us: we reap that which He hath sown.

¶157

Let no one think, we have exhausted the subject of the kind and gracious care of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, for our sanctification. Oh no!--for the care which God bestows on poor man,
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to reinstate him in that happy condition from which he is fallen, is incomprehensible, and therefore inexpressible.

In the mean time, it is evident, from what hath been said, how we are to take and understand the following texts, which treat sanctification. “*Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*” (2 Corinthians 7:1.) “We are bought with a price; *therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.*” (1 Corinthians 6:20.) Let “every one of you *know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.*” (Thessalonians 4:4.) “*Follow Holiness.*” (Hebrews 12:14.)

These, and other passages in Scripture, cannot be supposed to imply, that we ought by our own strength to endeavour to obtain holiness; For our Saviour expressly says, not to the world, but to his disciples, “*without me ye can do nothing*” (John 15:5); and Paul writes to the believers at Philippi, “*It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*” (Philippians 2:13.)

What has a man to do, who would purify himself, even as HE (the LORD) is pure, and who would wish to glorify God in his body, and in his

spirit? In brief, who wishes to follow holiness? He ought previously to admit that holiness is necessary; For God did, from eternity, when he chose us in Christ, “*predestinate us to be conformed to the image of his Son.*” (§156.) For this did Christ deliver himself unto death, that we might be sanctified through the truth (§152); and is it not evident, from the many passages of the Holy Scripture there cited, that our sanctification is the will of God?

That the sanctification of a man, who, though faith belongs to our Saviour, is not impossible, though he be ever so depraved by nature. For, since the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are so earnestly intent upon the sanctification of every man (§152) how can it be impossible? Unless a man should, after having obtained grace, make shipwreck of faith, and so become a tree twice plucked up by the roots.

According to what has been said, a man therefore, who has found grace in Christ, who now shows all requisite faithfulness, and submits to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, before all other things follows holiness *in faith*; that is, he has a child-like confidence, that God has not the power and inclination only, but will do every thing for him that is necessary for his sanctification. See Philippians 1:6. As he knows that he can do nothing without our Saviour, so according to the exhortation of Christ, “Abide in me, and I in you” (John 15:4); he seeks continually to be in the closest fellowship with him: and in case he has not a constant enjoyment of this, he feels like a child, just weaned from its mother. Oh! how does such a child cry after its mother. He most willingly also makes use of the free access, which we through Christ have to the Father, remembering

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the words of Jesus, that his elect cry to him day and night, and that he certainly grants every thing, we ask of him in the name of Jesus. If our Saviour chastens him for his good, he receives it with deepest submission; although it may be even very painful, knowing by experience, that he shall receive no small blessing from it. If he observes that our Saviour has something against him, he cannot rest, until he has an assurance of forgiveness in his heart. He is, without ceasing, attentive to the voice of the Holy Ghost, and observes every thing, which he, from day to day, from hour to hour, from one quarter of an hour to another, is desirous of effecting in him. He carefully guards against every inclination to run, toil, and work, in his own strength, for though the aim be usually good, yet it is not obtained; for it obstructs the work of the Holy Ghost, who can alone conduct us safely. And because the Holy Ghost traces every thing to its source, as well for the removal of evil, as for the establishing of that which belongs to the image of God, he therefore resigns himself up as a child to him, and thus succeeds.

It is in general to be observed, that whatsoever may be further said concerning sanctification, and keeping the commandments of God, is by no means to be so understood, as if we were required to do this by our own strength. But rather, when we obtain the grace of becoming, through faith in Christ, a child of God, and a partaker of the Holy Ghost; we must not then receive the love and faithfulness of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost “in vain,” and particularly of the Mediator Jesus Christ, which from that time rules in him. (2 Corinthians 6:1.) For the Scripture speaks with great severity against those who sin thus; concerning whom we shall only quote the following: “Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.” (Matthew 13:12.)

Our Saviour has inculcated these words more than once; and we may plainly see the sense of them from Matthew 25:14. If a man does not make such use of the grace bestowed upon him by God, as is well pleasing to him, it is the same as if he had not received it; and the consequence is, that if he persists in this levity, the grace is withdrawn from him. Our Saviour moreover says, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, my Father taketh away.” (John 15:1-2.)

Whosoever is a branch in Jesus Christ, the Vine, certainly derives sap and power from him: but if he receives this sap and power in vain, bringing forth no fruit, the Father takes him away,--he is cast forth, and is withered;--“*men cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*” (John 15:6.)

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¶158

A man who, with a child-like mind, is devoted to our Saviour, and who endeavours to obtain sanctification, does not reflect upon these words only, “Purify your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren” (1 Peter 1:22); but likewise on the words of Paul in Romans 12:1. “I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

To purify the soul, implies as much, as to cleanse it from all such things as defile and pollute us in the sight of God; And such are all those ideas and sentiments, which do not harmonize with the mind and word of our Lord Jesus Christ; and likewise all those representations and imaginations which spring from the depravity of nature, together with all

those propensities and passions, which are repugnant to the doctrine and example of Jesus, and the like. From all these we are both to purify ourselves by the Holy Spirit, in the obedience to the truth of the Gospel, and to preserve ourselves from them; and thus arises in us, among other fruits, unfeigned love of the Brethren.

Would we present our body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to the Lord, we should first of all duly consider, that it is the temple of the Holy Ghost. “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19.) We must also observe these words, “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” (Romans 13:14.)

Thus then, we should regulate the use of our members according to the mind of Christ. Paul says, “Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” (Romans 6:13.) And, “As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.” (Romans 6:19 and 1 Corinthians 6:15.)

James speaks particularly of the necessity of bridling the tongue. (James 3:2-12.) The external senses, which before our conversion have been so scandalously abused, must be restored to their proper use, when we belong to Jesus Christ. For he that is not sufficiently careful, and on his guard to prevent this abuse, and afterwards to use them properly, will certainly suffer hurt in his soul. Therefore Paul says, “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding *keep your hearts and minds* through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7.)

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If a child of God does not faithfully watch over his heart and senses, he may fall into temptation. He is still in the world; but the whole world lieth in wickedness, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life rule in it. We are all as tinder, which may take fire from a single spark of evil, and thus our corrupt nature is liable to be easily affected by it. As soon as we perceive any thing of this, we are by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, who is our faithful friend in all such circumstances, to turn to our Saviour, beg his pardon, and implore his assistance against it. It is also necessary in this case, to flee, as much as

possible, from every occasion, which might prove detrimental to the soul. See 1 John 2:15.

Satan and his confederates are continually tempting the members of Jesus, against whom we are by day and night to be upon our guard, lest they should succeed in finding an entrance, and stirring up something which might deform or defile us. But should any one have the misfortune to fall into temptation, and feel any kind of sinful inclinations within him: He, in the first place, ought to seek the fault in himself; for had he steadfastly withstood the tempter in faith, and preserved himself, Satan would have fled from him and he would not have fallen into such circumstances. See ¶59. Secondly, he should in a child-like manner bemoan his distress to our Saviour, and in faith seek to be purified in his blood, and to obtain the pardon and forgiveness of his sins. And if he does this, with his whole heart, by the kind influence of the Holy Ghost, and prays without ceasing for deliverance from the temptation; then will the temptation terminate in such a manner, that he will be able to thank and bless God for it. What, (¶71) has already been said of the temptations of Christ, will prove beneficial to us when under temptation. For it is said, “We have not an High-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15.) “For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” (Hebrews 2:18.)

¶160

Although it is impossible to speak particularly of all those things, which constitute the old man, whom we are to put off with his deeds; and to specify every deviation, from which those are to be purified and made free, who follow holiness. We can however point out what we should chiefly attend to, as being most likely to hurt us; and thence conclude as to the rest.

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We are therefore to mention first, the *carnal mind*; which rules in all men, who are not yet become new creatures. It consists in following the impulse and inclinations of our depraved and sinful nature; and, as the apostle expresses it in Romans 8:1, “Walk after the flesh.” He that is carnally-minded fulfills, as far as he is able, the lust of the flesh; according to the expression of Paul. (Galatians 5:16.) He who is governed by the carnal mind, and who is still a slave of his own nature, is not yet a child of grace. For Paul says, “*The carnal mind is enmity*

against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Romans 8:6-7.)

Such as believe in Jesus Christ, and seek after sanctification, watch over themselves; and when they perceive the least stirring of the carnal mind, turn immediately to the friend of poor sinners; bemoan it with deep sorrow; beg grace and forgiveness, for the sake of his blood and death; and endeavour, by *our Lord's* power, to quench the first sparks of this evil.

Secondly, we are to mention in particular, the evil habits which men contracted before their conversion; and which are an addition to our corrupt nature, both in soul and body.

When a man's heart is converted, he is enabled through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to free himself from them; they can no longer have dominion over him. He is however to attend faithfully to the admonitions of the Holy Ghost, as often as they present themselves; and to entreat our Saviour to assist him, to deliver him from them, and to grant him forgiveness of every thing of this kind which may still remain in him, for his blood and death's sake. Thus his evil habits gradually decreasing, he finally overcomes them, and by the grace of God remains victorious.

Thirdly, we must mention *evil thoughts*, which proceed out of the heart, and of which our Lord Jesus Christ expressly says (Matthew 15:19-20), “they defile the man.” All thoughts are evil, which are contrary to the word of God, and to the mind of Jesus Christ, or which are inconsistent with the love of God and of our neighbour; they are the fruits of a depraved understanding, and of a perverse will, and God is the judge of them. (Hebrews 4:12.) Such kind of evil thoughts may sometimes proceed from the wicked enemy. Thus, for instance, “*Satan* stood up against Israel, and *provoked David* (out of pride) to number Israel.” (1 Chronicles 21:1.) “*The devil put into the heart of Judas Icariot*, Simon's son (from a motive of covetousness) to betray Jesus.” (John 13:2.) Oh, how needful is it then, to watch over ourselves, and to be ashamed of every unprofitable thought; to beg God to forgive us, and to

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cleanse and free us from each of them! If we attend only to the voice of the Holy Ghost, as we ought, every thing will be easy to us.

Fourthly, By means of the deplorable fall through sin, there is in every man an irregular, idolatrous, and sinful kind of *self-love*. God has certainly implanted in man, as well as in all beasts, fowls, fishes, and creeping things, an instinct and inclination to keep themselves from hurt, and to attend to their own preservation. Therefore, says Paul, “No

man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.” (Ephesians 5:29.) But if a man loves himself more than the Lord his God; or, if he loves himself more than his neighbour; that is not the order which is well-pleasing to God. Is not this quite manifest from Matthew 22:37-39? The Holy Ghost earnestly opposes this perverse and sinful self-love in the hearts of those things who belong to Christ; and as soon as we perceive it, we are to purify ourselves from it, and to be always upon our guard against it. For this hateful disposition will often discover itself anew. “We ought not to please (or to have a complacency in) ourselves, for even Christ pleased not (or had not complacency in) himself.” (Romans 15: 1-3.)

Fifthly, To be *high minded* is very common to the natural man; although the Scripture says, “Mind not high things.” (Romans 12:16.)

A child of God cannot be governed by pride, and whoever is under the dominion of it, is an abomination in the sight of God. “*He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.*” (Luke 1:51.)

But the seed of it is in all men. *Haughtiness*, a fruit of pride, cometh out of the heart, and defileth the man. (Mark 7:21.) Consequently, whoever is intent upon sanctification, purifieth himself, and putteth it away from him, as soon as by the light of the Holy Ghost, he perceives the least of it; and this he does as often as it may in any measure show itself again. This occasions him to be greatly ashamed of this odious disposition, and to beg earnestly our Saviour for pardon on account of it.

Sixthly, *Covetousness*, or a disposition not to be content with food and raiment, but coveting after riches is called by Paul, the root of all evil. (1 Timothy 6:9.) Because, “they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” (1 Timothy 6:9.)

“Covetousness cometh forth out of the heart, and defileth the man.” (Mark 7:21-22.) And “Whoever is born of God,” can be no slave of covetousness. He therefore that is governed by covetousness, is certainly not yet a child of God. All who are concerned about their sanctification, attend to their heart, and to the work of the Holy Ghost in it; and as soon as any thing springs up in them, which savours of covetousness, they complain of it to their Lord and Saviour;—they beg to be cleansed by his

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blood, and for his assistance against this evil, *so far from indulging it, they mortify it.* “*Mortify* your members which are upon the earth (that is, every thing belonging to the carnal mind, which is enmity against God)—*covetousness*, which is idolatry.” (Colossians 3:5.) For the Scripture

says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right-hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3:1-2.)

¶161

Under this head belongs, seventhly, *Unbelief*. This is an inbred evil of the human heart, which plunges us into temporal wretchedness, and eternal perdition. When God, by his word, imparts faith to us, it is, in the Scripture, accounted among his greatest works. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness (He said, Let there be light, and there was light), hath shined in our hearts (that is, he has not granted unto us the knowledge of Jesus Christ in our hearts only, but would also, that by us should be given "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.") (2 Corinthians 4:6.) But as we are very wretched, very deficient, make frequent mistakes, and are guilty of so many trespasses; we are therefore much inclined to ask, will God not be weary of forgiving us? We are apt to think that God is like ourselves. We could not bear any one to behave as basely towards us, as we do towards God. We should certainly break out in a passion and give up such a person; especially if we had loaded him with benefits. If we give way to such thoughts, we are benighted, our joy in the Lord is lost, and we are no longer able to run our race with cheerfulness. Can this be well pleasing to God? Oh no!--We ought rather to confess our vileness, pray to him with child-like confidence for forgiveness, draw nigh to his throne of grace; and hold fast by that word. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9.) Whoever will advance in sanctification, must make this his daily occupation, and thus purify himself, otherwise he will make no great progress. If we give attention to the Holy Spirit, who is ever glorifying Jesus Christ, and his meritorious sacrifice for us, unbelief will never gain any power over us.

Eighthly, The passions are not in their own nature wrong, except those which grow out of a bad root, for insane envy; but according to circumstances they become so, and even sinful. Therefore it is incumbent upon every one, who follows holiness, to watch over the emotions of his mind, and his passions, and when they arise in him, to examine strictly into their nature. For if any one, for instance, is angry,

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and he considers the cause, circumstances and consequences, his heart will soon show him, in what light he ought to look upon his anger. If we

read Ephesians 4:26 and 31, Colossians 3:8, 1 Timothy 2:8, and James 1:19-20, we shall easily discover, that we have more reason to be apprehensive of something bad, than of expecting any thing good from it. Nay, wrath may become such a flagrant work of the flesh (Galatians 5:20-21); as to exclude him from the inheritance of the kingdom of God, if he perseveres in it. As soon as any one shall discover, that he has transgressed by being angry, he should hasten to our Saviour, to be cleansed and freed from it. The same may be said of sorrow. There is sorrow of the world (2 Corinthians 7:10) which every one who seeks after sanctification must put away from him, and cleanse himself from it. "Joy and meekness are fruits of the Spirit." (Galatians 5:22-23.)

Ninethly, One thing more is to be observed; we have commonly before our conversion, certain bosom-sins, and they are even after conversion very dangerous. James says "Every man is tempted, when he is *drawn away of his own lust*, and enticed." (James 1:14.)

Here a man's bosom-sin is termed his own lust, against which he is warned. Judas Iscariot's own lust was covetousness; and not being radically cured of it, it proved at last his ruin. Whoever then is truly faithful in the pursuit of sanctification, takes notice of the least stirring of his own lust, and purifies himself from it, by the power of Jesus Christ, and of the Spirit, without sparing or fostering it in the least.

From all these instances we see, that nothing is more necessary, than earnestly to withstand all these evils, from the very moment we perceive them. If we do not, then the spark, which might have been easily extinguished, enkindles a flame which ravages far and wide.

¶162

From what has been said, we may easily understand the meaning of putting off the old man with his deeds; we have however something to add, respecting the putting on the new man. The Scriptures signify by this, that we ought to endeavour, by the grace of God, to recover that likeness to the image of God, which we lost by the fall. The following words explain this, "Put on the new man, *which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*" (Ephesians 4:24.) See Genesis 1:26-27 and Colossians 3:10. Paul expresses it thus, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 13:14.) In another place (Galatians 3:27), he said, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

This had no other meaning, but that through faith in Christ, in which they had been baptized, they were made partakers of the expiatory offering of Jesus made for us and our sins, and were clothed in his

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righteousness; and that Christ was most, closely united with them, and they with him. Now, when Paul says to the Romans, who had already put on Christ in baptism, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." He would say thus much unto them, that they were to give all diligence to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ; to have the same mind in them, that was also in him; and to walk as he walked. See Galatians 4:19. For Christ, the most perfect image of God, is our example, by which we are to be formed; the original, of which we are to be copies. Therefore, says Peter, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." (Epistle 1:15.) "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us *an example*, that ye should follow his steps." (Galatians 2:21.)

But although the Lord our Saviour is our nearest and most suitable example; because he himself was a man in this world;-- (¶49) and (¶105); yet we are directed to our dear Father in heaven; who is likewise held out to us as a pattern. "*Be ye merciful* (says our Saviour) *as our Father also is merciful*. For he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil." (Luke 6:35-36 and Matthew 5:44-45.) "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; *that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven*: for HE maketh his Sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

In the Epistle to the Ephesians it is said, "Forgive one another, *even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*. *Be ye therefore, followers of God, as dear children*; and walk in love." (Ephesians 4:32 and 5:1-2.)

But we are also carefully to observe, that the whole life of Jesus relates to his mediatorial office. He was on earth, the Mediator between God and man, for our sake only. He became a man like unto us, yet without sin; that he might redeem us by his death. "Though he was rich, yet he for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty, might be rich." He submitted to the very law, which he himself had given to the people of Israel; and was in all points perfectly obedient to it, that he might redeem those who were under the law (that is, who sighed under the curse and rigour of the law;) and that we might receive the adoption, or might become children of the new covenant of grace, which consists in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. His walk upon earth was, according to the word of God, in holiness and righteousness, which is acceptable to him. As he was to reconcile man to God by his death, he stood in no need of any offering for his own person. "For such an High-Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, who needeth not daily, as those High-Priests, to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins." (Hebrews 7:26-27.)

It was necessary that he should be a Lamb, without blemish, and without spot, otherwise he could not have been an offering acceptable

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and well pleasing to God. This was typified in the Old Testament, for according to God's commandment, no lamb that had any blemish, could be presented for an offering to the Lord; otherwise it was not acceptable to him. But Christ offered himself without spot to God for a sweet smelling favour: That is, his offering was lovely, and accepted with joy. Thus the mediatorial office of Christ required, that he, without blemish and without spot, conducted his whole life and conversations on earth in conformity to the will of God, without the least exception.

Consequently the life and conversation of Christ upon earth was not intended merely for our example; but they really furnish us with every blessing. Thus we derive a benefit from every thing Jesus did: For example, His child-like obedience, his diligence at his labour, his meekness and humility, his watching and fasting, his prayer and supplication, do all communicate a blessing to us, and belong to our salvation.

¶163

It is still to be observed, that the word of God is given to us for the furtherance of our sanctification in soul and body; and this "Word is Truth." (John 17:17.) If we become obedient to *this* Truth; then shall we, through the Holy Spirit, be rendered pure both in body and soul. For it is the truth which makes us free from those things which deform and defile us, and which render us not conformable to the image of God. "If (for instance) we believe in Jesus, and continue his Word." (John 8:31-32.) He therefore that is concerned about his sanctification, should read diligently the word of God, and through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the assistance of his Spirit, make a proper use of it.

It is always necessary for every one that is converted to Jesus Christ, to view himself continually in the mirror of the word of God. We thus become better acquainted with ourselves, and in it more readily discover, and more distinctly view our own defects and infirmities. We are also plainly directed by the word of God, which is, and remains Truth to all eternity, to that upon which all depends, and what we are to seek for, when we follow holiness; and thus we are taught of the Holy Ghost.

The Lord our Saviour laboured continually to bring the Jews in general, and his disciples in particular, to the knowledge of themselves. The disciples of Jesus proceeded in the same manner, teaching all men, but especially the churches, which were gathered together unto him, their own state, their defects, what they were to pursue, and how they might be effectually helped. When the Corinthians began to make distinctions between the servants of Christ; one attached himself to this,

and the other to another servant of Jesus; and this occasioned schisms. Paul then spoke earnestly with them, and on this account called them
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carnal. For this was not of the Holy Spirit, but of nature: this was walking after the manner of men, from which they were to be cleansed and freed. Thus also must every one, that is concerned about sanctification, look daily to himself, and put off everything which is not agreeable to the mind of Jesus, and seek to be conformed to his image. And thus he will find cause enough to pray, to weep, and to reflect upon himself.

¶164

In general, we have here to observe, that the doctrine and ways of Jesus are as different from those of men, as day from night, and light from darkness. The ways of men, who are not converted with their hearts to Jesus magnificently tend to idolatrous self-love, each (see ¶160) esteems, regards, and seeks himself, and in every thought, word and action, has always himself for his ultimate aim. To procure and to obtain for himself profit or advantage, reputation and esteem, ease and pleasure, or what else may be agreeable to him, is the main spring of all his thoughts, pursuits, words, or undertakings. Is not this evident? And do we not find books enough full of such advice; and are not children commonly educated and trained up in such sentiments?

But what is the doctrine of Jesus? Jesus said to all, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23.)

To "deny himself" is the very opposite of all the above-mentioned ways of natural and unconverted men. He that regards himself merely as a wretched, depraved creature, loaded with sins and transgressions, lying under the wrath and curse of God, and deserving damnation:--He who at the same time knows, that Christ, the Son of God, and the Creator of all things, came into the world to save such sinners; and that, on this account, he endured the cruel punishment of death, to redeem us from our wretched condition, and bestow everlasting life upon us:--He who, for this reason, and because he receives even the most wretched sinners in so friendly, and so gracious a manner, loves this Saviour more than father, mother, son, daughter, himself, and his own life, yea, more than all things:--And he who loves Jesus above all things, and makes him the only aim of every thing he does, or leaves undone, without paying any attention to himself, or seeking his own interest;--he it is who may be said to deny himself, and to appear the meanest in his own eyes.

Christ, and a desire to obey his commandments, and be an honour and joy to him, are the main spring of all his thoughts, will, words, and actions; for all he does, is done for Christ's sake.

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But what is it, "to take up his cross daily?" A malefactor, condemned to the death of the cross, was usually obliged to carry the cross himself, or the wood to which he was to be nailed, to the place of execution; as our Lord Jesus Christ likewise carried the cross to which he was to be nailed, to Golgotha. The words of Jesus therefore imply thus much: He that would follow me, must daily and willingly, for my sake, take upon himself, every thing which may render him an object of contempt in the eyes of men; every thing which may be hard and oppressive to his nature; and every thing which the world may design against him, to make his life disagreeable. Thus did Paul, for instance, who had persecuted the church of Christ, daily take up his cross, after his conversion; and from a learned and celebrated Pharisee, become a confessor of Jesus, and on that account an abomination to the Jews, which was certainly no easy task to nature; he crucified his flesh, with its affections and lusts, which was also hard and difficult; he devoted himself to the service of our Saviour; and although he knew he must suffer bonds and afflictions on that account, nay, even martyrdom, with which he was also honoured; yet he willingly took his cross. He gloried only the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world was crucified to him, and he unto the world; that is, he looked upon the world, as we do upon a criminal, who is suffering his punishment on the cross, and the world regarded him in the same light. (Galatians 6:14.) He who is converted to Jesus Christ with his whole heart, has, in some degree and measure, the same to do and suffer which Paul had done and suffered.

But, finally, What does that mean, "And *follow me?*" If the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus, and we walk as he walked, being neither ashamed of him or of his words, but on every occasion boldly confess him before men, we do then follow our Saviour.

The *hope of eternal life*, which lives and prevails in a heart that believes in Jesus, is a powerful motive to sanctification. We have therefore still something to add on this head. Our Lord Jesus Christ has said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, (on the cross) that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:14-15.)

In believers, the hope of eternal life is founded upon this, “which God that cannot lie promised” (Titus 1:3); which hope waits, with assurance and certainty, for things not yet seen. This hope is a work of God in those who receive Jesus Christ in faith. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (says Peter), which according to his abundant

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mercy, *hath begotten us again unto a lively hope*, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:3.)

Christ is called, “*Our Hope*” (1 Timothy 1:1), because we ground our hope upon Christ, who by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:14.) The Holy Ghost establishes us in it; for after that we have believed, we are sealed with him.

“*HE is the earnest of our inheritance*, until our (consummate) redemption” (Ephesians 1:13-14); and “we abound in hope *through the power of the Holy Ghost.*” (Romans 15:13.) It is also the will of God, that we persevere in hope, according to Hebrews 6:11. “We desire that every one of you *so show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.*” For if this be in the heart, we have no reason to be afraid of death, but can say with Paul, “I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.” (Philippians 1:23.)

This hope excites us to holiness, as is evident from the following passages of Scripture: For instance, “*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*” (2 Corinthians 7:1.) “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. Mortify *therefore* your members, which are upon the earth (that is, the members of the old man, which, with his deeds, we are to put off and to lay aside) fornication, uncleanness, etc.” (Colossians 3:4-5.) “Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, that when HE shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is: and every man that hath *this hope* in him, purifieth himself, even as HE is pure.” (1 John 3:2-3.)

The experience of the children of God confirms this: for if we do but reflect, what God hath bestowed upon us;--he has delivered up his only-begotten Son for us; if we further weigh what Christ has done and suffered for us;--he tasted a bitter death, and shed his blood, for the remission of our sins; if besides this, we experience with what love, faithfulness, patience, long-suffering, wisdom, and power, the Holy Ghost

labours upon us; all this, together with many other great benefits he daily and hourly confers upon us; it is sufficient to excite us to live to his joy, and to his honour. If we still add the expectation of an inheritance, beyond all conception glorious, of which we are by him to be made partakers, and of which he gives us the certain assurance in our hearts: Oh! how shall we then be fired with zeal, to live unto him alone, and to put away from us whatever might grieve him!

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And as this hope of eternal life, as also the communion of believers with Jesus Christ, and with each other, is greatly strengthened by the right use of the Lord's Supper (see ¶148), so it is hence evident, that the Holy Communion is of exceeding great service in our endeavours after sanctification: and the more so, because the remembrance of the death of Christ for us, by which he has so effectually displayed his love towards us, remains a principal point in the Holy Communion. For what can excite us to sanctification which is acceptable unto God more than the heart-affecting and grateful remembrance of the love of Jesus, who gave himself for us to the bitter and ignominious death of the cross.

¶167

If we sum up all that hath been said concerning sanctification, we may easily conclude how we are to understand the words of Scripture, which speak of perfection. Our Lord Jesus Christ undoubtedly says, to his disciples, "*Be ye perfect*, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48.)

From the preceding words it is evident, that our Saviour intended to lead his disciples from the perverse doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy."—"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matthew 5:44.) His motive for it is this, "Your Father in heaven maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:45.)

Now, because he is kind towards the unthankful and ungodly, you ought therefore to be so likewise. You should not follow him in loving your friends only, but also in loving your enemies, and doing them good; love makes no exceptions. This is therefore not spoken of the degree of love, but of its extent. If we love all men, we have then that perfection of which we are speaking.

In other places of Scripture, being perfect implies as much, as growing and increasing in knowledge, and in all goodness. For instance, “Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but *in understanding be perfect.*”* (1 Corinthians 14:20.)

Now, if we grow up into him in all things, “who is the Head, even Christ,” according to Ephesians 4:15, then shall we be perfect, “we shall abound more and more.” (1 Thessalonians 4:1.)

But should any one conceive, that he had made such a progress in knowledge, as not to offend in a single word; and that he was arrived to

*In the English version it is, “Be men;” but in the margin, Gr. “Be perfect.”

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such a growth in goodness, as no longer to have occasion, even in his own account, to pray, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,” he would give the plainest proof that he did not understand the Scripture: nay, he would in fact be a witness against himself, that he was far from perfection, and did not even know himself.

¶168

After what hath been said concerning sanctification (see ¶152), it may be proper to repeat the following Scripture: Christ Jesus “is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Corinthians 1:30.)

Now, as all this is found together in Christ, so we should experience it, altogether in us. For if any one, who has been awakened out of the sleep of sin, and comes with all his misery to Christ, and through faith in him finds the remission of sins, should think; Now as Christ is made unto me righteousness, so I must also be sanctified through him,—such a man is certainly in the right way: but if he, in some measure should forget justification, and seek day and night after sanctification, he will at least become so wearied, as to lose all desire and power to obtain it. Christ and the ransom which he paid, when he tasted the bitterness of death for us, must remain in our heart, and before our eyes, day by day, when we “follow holiness.” If we do not constantly remember, that in him we have redemption through his blood, namely, the forgiveness of sins, we shall make no great proficiency in holiness. Paul, who with all the power that was bestowed upon him by Christ Jesus, followed holiness, has given us an excellent example of this. He says of himself, “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, *I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*” (Galatians 2:20.)

His heart was full of Christ Jesus, and of his death on the cross; and therefore from the abundance of his heart his mouth was always speaking. This is seen in the words which he writes to the Corinthians: "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2.)

And because there were many at that time who aimed at something else, therefore he declared concerning himself, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus." (Galatians 6:14.)

What Paul, among other things, besought on his knees of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for his Ephesians, "that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith" (Ephesians 3:17); he himself, by the grace of God, had experienced. Christ lived in him, and was ever present to him as the Lamb of God, that bore the sin of the world. His life in the flesh, that

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is, his waking and sleeping, labour and rest, thoughts and inclinations, will and intentions, was a life in the faith of the Son of God. The faith in the Son of God was not in Paul, something which today is, and tomorrow is not; but was in him something which increased daily, as long as he lived. And his faith was particularly directed to this point: "HE loved me, and gave himself for me" If we ask: To what did he give himself? Unto the death of the cross.

When our hearts are so disposed, as that of the late Valerius Herberger, whose name justly remains in esteem, because he loved his Redeemer heartily, we may sing with him,

"May, in my heart's recesses,
Thy name and cross *always*
Shine forth with all their graces,
To yield me joy and peace."

If we are always thus disposed, when the name of the cross of Jesus alone shine in our hearts, we shall then neither be wanting in desire or power to obtain sanctification.

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¶169

The subject of sanctification naturally leads us to that of the commandments of God, by which he has informed mankind what they should do, and what they should leave undone. God has, at all times, acquainted them with what he expected from them, and what they were to eschew and avoid: the only difference was in the way and manner of his making it known to them. The heathens themselves may and ought to discern, by the works of creation and preservation, that it is their duty to fear, honour, and love the Creator and Preserver of all things, and to serve, praise, and thank him, and to perform his will: that they ought also not to injure their neighbour, but to love him, and to do him good. See ¶55. We should here call to mind, what has been said concerning God's economy with men, from the beginning of creation unto Moses (¶1, ¶2, ¶3). It has already been observed in ¶13 that God afterward entered into a particular engagement with the people of Israel, having chosen them in preference to all other nations for his inheritance, and made his will known unto them.

But the most glorious revelation which God made to men, was when he spoke unto them by his only-begotten Son, by whom he also made the world. HE was that great Prophet whom God sent into the world, and HE preached the Gospel with divine power publicly, to all men, confirming it with numberless signs and wonders. Multitudes heard from his mouth (for they came out of all other countries to Jerusalem, to worship God, especially at the grand festivals) the true sense of the commandments of God, which had been given by him, even in the Old Testament. Every man was astonished at his powerful discourses, in which he declared the will of God towards men, and enforced his commandments upon them.

After the disciples of Christ had been baptized with the Holy Ghost, they, according to their Lord's injunction, went forth into all the world, and preached the Gospel to all men. They testified to every man, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that Jesus Christ, who had been slain on the cross, and was risen again, is the LORD, who is set down at the right hand of God; and that all who believe in him should receive forgiveness of sins, life and salvation; and such as believed, they taught to observe all things, whatsoever Jesus had commanded them.

But the disciples of the Lord have not inculcated the commandments of God by word of mouth only, but have also, by the grace of God, handed them down to us likewise in writing. The men of God, who described to us the walk of Christ upon earth, and the finishing his work

by the suffering of death, being moved by the Holy Ghost, penned many of his discourses; and we cannot thank God sufficiently for them. We find in them the will of God for our observance, that is, his

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commandments, so plainly and divinely expressed, as to afford unspeakable joy to the hearts of the children of God. What the disciples of Jesus have farther, in his name, and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, enjoined us, we are likewise to regard and follow as the commandments of God. We are bound to observe them; yet it is a blessing to us when we are obedient to them.

But are we obliged to follow the commandments of the Old Testament in the New? We are, but with some distinction. That the commandments of the Old Testament, which refer either to the regal government of God among the people of Israel, or to the Levitical divine worship (§13), do not bind the believers from the Gentiles in the New Testament, which is plainly to be seen from Acts 15. See §18.

With respect to the Ten Commandments (§13), which God gave the people of Israel, our Lord Jesus Christ has, in the plainest and most perfect manner, declared the meaning of them, according to the mind of God (Matthew 5, 6 and 7 and other places); and so far we are to abide steadfastly by them in the New Testament: and whoever does not observe them, sins against God. To this we must add all that the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ have said, with respect to the meaning of the Ten Commandments, and of other passages of the Old Testament, which relate to the moral conduct of men. But where we find in the New Testament any point explained, with more precision than in the Old Testament, we are in that case to keep the New.

¶170

Our Lord Jesus Christ has constantly enforced the keeping his commandments, as a necessary point. At the conclusion of his sermon, contained in Matthew 5, 6 and 7, he says among other things, (Matthew 7:19, 24-25); “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Therefore *whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them*, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.” And in Matthew 7:26-27, “And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth them not*, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain

descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

Of his sheep he says in general, “*My sheep heard my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*” (John 10:27.)

With respect to his disciples in particular, we see from divers passages in John, that he inculcated and urged the keeping of his

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commandments. Thus he says, for instance, (John 14:15); “If ye love me, *keep my commandments.*” And, “*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.*” (John 15:10.) “If a man love me, *he will keep my words: and my Father will love him.*” (John 14:23.) “Ye are my friends, *if ye do whatsoever I command you.*” (John 15:14.)

From all these words of Jesus it plainly appears, first, That there can be no love to Jesus, without keeping his commandments. The one is inseparable from the other; it is the very nature of the genuine love to Jesus. And secondly, That we cannot serve our Saviour by the external observance of his commandments, without love: as Paul says (1 Corinthians 13:3); “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned *and have not charity (love), it profiteth me nothing.*” This therefore is to be attended to, with respect to all the commandments of God. Hence, when Luther expounds the Ten Commandments of Moses, he places before each of them, “We should fear and love God.” For example, “We should so fear and love God, as not to bear any false witness against our neighbour.”

¶171

As our Lord Jesus Christ taught his disciples to keep his commandments, so did he also direct them to teach the same to others. We see this by the short instructions which he gave his disciples before his ascension: “Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: *Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.*” (Matthew 27:19-20.)

And this the disciples have done; which is evident from all their writings, in which they not only bear witness to the doctrines of faith with divine power, but also faithfully declare all that God requires and expects of us, unto whom he has shown so much kindness, and will continue not only to do it daily, but even to all eternity. See ¶169. But John says in particular (Ephesians 5:3), “This is the love of God, *that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*” That

is, God gives unto his children the powerful assistance of his grace, to enable them to keep his commandments; and he inclines their hearts to do it willingly, and therefore this is neither burdensome, nor grievous to them. Further, “He that saith, I know him, and *keepeth not his commandments*, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (1 John 2:4.) “*He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in Him*” (1 John 3:24.); that is, he is in the closest fellowship with God.

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And this will remain the doctrine of Christ until the end of days. For when the Lord, at the consummation of all things, says, “Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12); it follows immediately, “Blessed are they *that do his commandments.*” (Revelation 22:14.)

¶172

It must, however, be observed on this occasion, that unconverted people are not here spoken of, but the children of God. An unconverted man may refrain from gross sins, for instance, from murder, adultery, theft, cursing and swearing, perjury, and the like; he may also do some things which are good in themselves; as for example, he may provide for the poor, preserve his neighbour from injury, be industrious at his work, be a useful citizen, and the like (See ¶55); but should any one imagine, that an unconverted person could keep the commandments of God, to the extent of their spiritual sense, he would be greatly mistaken. If therefore, such a man resolves to keep the commandments of God, that he may escape condemnation, such a resolution may be serviceable to him, if he comes into the right way; that is, if he comes to the knowledge of his misery and corruption, despairs of himself, and his own powers, and with his heart turns to Jesus, who can alone save us from our sins: for thus he becomes a child of God, and a new creature, he is made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, freed from the slavery of sin, and obtains inclination and power to do the will of God. But if he does not come to Jesus Christ, does not receive him in faith, is not in his heart converted to him, but contents himself with this thought only, Now I will forsake every thing God has forbidden, and do every thing he has commanded, he will in this case harass himself greatly, but to no purpose. The following words of Jesus refer to it: “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” (What is understood by the strait gate? Christ. How do we enter into the strait gate? By believing on him.) “For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” (Luke 13:24.) But why not? Because

they pass by Christ, and seek to help and amend themselves. Therefore did our Saviour command his disciples, first to preach the Gospel, and to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, such as receive it in faith, and then to teach them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them. And the disciples of Jesus proceeded in this order, as may be seen in the Acts of the Apostles. In their preaching they first exhorted men to turn to Jesus, obtain forgiveness of sins, and become partakers of the Holy Ghost, and then the fruits would certainly follow. They afterwards taught them to observe all things which Jesus had commanded. This is what our Saviour says,

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“Make the tree good, and its fruit will be good.” (Matthew 12:33.) “For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.” (Luke 6:43-44.) Consequently, in order to bring forth good fruit, and to keep the commandments of God, he must first, by faith in Christ, become a good tree, that is a new creature. We need only turn to what is related (Acts 2), and we shall meet with a delightful instance of this. No sooner did the men who heard Peter testify, that they had crucified and slain the Lord of Glory, smite upon their breasts, bewail and lament their transgressions, receive Jesus in faith, submit to baptism, and become partakers of the Holy Ghost, than they were filled with the love of God, and of their neighbour; which discovered itself powerfully in every respect. Then the promise of God was fulfilled, “*I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.*” (Hebrews 8:10 and Jeremiah 31:33.) Paul says, “Do we then make void the law, *through faith?*” God forbid: “*Yea, we establish the law.*” (Romans 3:31.) (§172.) We by faith become the children of God, new creatures, partakers of the Holy Ghost, of a child-like spirit. He dwells in our hearts, and “teaches us all things.” (John 14:26.) “He guides us into all truth.” (John 14:13.) He teaches us the will of God, as for instance, Paul says, (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10); “As touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you: for *ye yourselves are taught of God*, to love one another: and indeed ye do it.” (§144.) He who has not learnt the will of God in the school of the Holy Ghost, forms many wrong ideas of it, as we see, for instance, in the Scribes and Pharisees. They had indeed the Scriptures of the Old Testament; but how perversely they interpreted them we may see, among other places, in Matthew 5:6-7 and 23. But the Holy Ghost does not teach us the will of God only, but likewise gives us inclination and power to do it. Therefore it is said (Galatians 5:22-23), “*The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.*” (Ephesians 5:9.) Therefore, whatsoever we do

in consequence of God's commandments, is a fruit of the Spirit. See ¶144. He gives us grace to see what is well pleasing to God, and not to be willing only, but also to be able to do it in Christ. This is the meaning of the law's being put into our mind, and written in our heart. In Christ all this is found in the highest degree of perfection. See Psalms 40:8 and Hebrews 10:7. In us it is indeed imperfect, but what Peter said is however true, "Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." (John 21:17.) Consequently, if we would keep the commandments of God, we are to attend to the Holy Ghost only; who will bring all things to our remembrance, and from hour to hour teach us how to act according to his good pleasure.

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Now, as the Holy Ghost is unwearied in reminding us of the commandments of God, and in enabling us rightly to understand them, in animating us to keep them, and in communicating to us richly the power and ability; so also our Lord Jesus Christ, and his and our dear Father, are always ready to give us the necessary assistance. Of our Saviour Jesus Christ it is said, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, *zealous of good works.*" (Titus 2:44.)

By good works, we commonly understand benefits conferred upon our neighbours; and this is not wrong: but we are, in general, to call good works every thing which a child of God does through grace, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit, agreeably to the commandments of God. Here it is necessary to observe, that Jesus Christ, when he delivered himself up to death for us, would not make an atonement only, but likewise purchase for us the grace of being zealous of good works. We are bound to this, even at our baptism; this is the answer of a good conscience towards God; but which is broken, as soon as we lose sight of his commandments. See ¶140. Moreover, our Saviour teaches us, that we must, by faith, abide in the closest fellowship with him, if we, as branches in him, would bring forth fruit, that is, do good according to the commandments of God. He says, "He that *abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.*" (John 15:5.) We are therefore always to take heed, that we may, by the grace of God, stand fast in the faith on Jesus Christ, through whom we become free from the dominion of sin, which is the victory that overcometh the world, and by which we are rescued from the power of the devil (¶131) and be found in the faith, and abide in it, if we wish to be able to keep the commandments of God.

What has been said of our Father in Heaven, that he is graciously pleased to assist us in keeping his commandment, appears clearly from the following words of Scripture. Christ says, "Every branch in me, that beareth fruit, HE (my Father) *purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*" (John 15:2.) And in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is said, "*God maketh us perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.*" (John 13:21.)

¶173

On the subject of keeping the commandments of God, we shall still make the following observations:

- (1.) That all the commandments of God are intended for the good of man; and that the observance of them is attended with a blessing to ourselves, and the neglect of them with misery.

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For instance, our Lord Jesus Christ has said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28); that is, If your sin presses upon you as a heavy load; and under this weight you are full of misery, affliction, and anxiety; believe on me, as your Saviour and Redeemer, and your sins will be forgiven and blotted out. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." This means, Be satisfied with my government; resign yourselves wholly to me; cease to live according to your own will; be obedient to me with your whole heart; and learn from me in particular, meekness and humility of heart. "And ye shall find rest unto your souls." All those therefore who do not follow this call can find no rest in their soul.

- (2.) Thus we should look upon all commandments of God, as so many proofs of his love, and gracious attention to men, especially to those who belong to Jesus Christ, and are ruled by his Spirit. If David found himself moved to thank God with his whole heart for the law of the Old Covenant; which indeed contained many precepts that were extremely burdensome, as it took in the whole Levitical service; as may be seen in the 119th and other Psalms; We, in the New Testament, have much reason to thank the Lord for the glorious commandments, which he has graciously given to us.
- (3.) When thus we have a new heart, and a new spirit, through Christ, and his commandments are our joy and delight, Oh!

what an important grace is this! And if then, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, we walk in his commandments, that is, we are day and night determined to do what he has commanded, and to refrain from what he hath forbidden; we undoubtedly enjoy a great favour, as often as God grants us grace, to do good, and to resist evil.

¶174

But whatever we do according to the will of the Lord, is also attended with such happy consequences, that we have reason humbly to thank him for them: For example, our Saviour has said, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace makers: for they shall be called the children of

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God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 5:3.)

We are *poor in spirit*, when we are divinely convinced that we are destitute of every thing belonging to a state of grace, or that we are greatly defective with respect to what we should be. We *mourn*, when we are not indifferent about our misery and depravity, but are deeply concerned, and grieve bitterly on account of it. We are *meek*, when the impetuosity of our natural passions is broken; and we, on the other hand, are attentive to our own state only, and think, O wretched man that I am! We *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, when we have nothing so much at heart as to find grace in the blood of Jesus, and to be clothed in his righteousness. We are *merciful*, when we feel pity for others, mourn over the condition of poor mankind; and would willingly assist them in all their misery and distress. We are *pure in heart*, when we diligently keep ourselves from all the filthiness both of the flesh and of the spirit, and are washed clean from all sins, through the blood of Jesus Christ. We are *peace makers*, when we seek not only to remove every thing, both in ourselves and in others, which might injure the bond of peace; but do also every thing in our power for the preservation and increase of mutual love. We *suffer for righteousness sake*, when we are hated, reviled, and persecuted, not on account of our own evil deeds, but for the sake of Christ, whom we love and serve; and on account of the good we do in his name:--each of these graces is in itself a real

happiness, for which we are bound to thank God: and each of them is likewise attended with the most happy consequences.

Thus in every commandment, we have to consider, *first*, how valuable in itself that is, which is enjoined; and how hurtful in itself that is, which is forbidden: and *secondly*, the consequences of our obedience, or disobedience.

¶175

Upon this occasion we are yet to observe, that in every thing which we do, or leave undone, in consequence of the divine commandments and prohibitions, it is necessary to consider the motive. The external observance of the commandments of God is not sufficient; for God looketh at the heart. And therefore our Lord Jesus Christ calls those hypocrites, who gave alms, that they might have praise of men; and offered up prayers, so as to be seen of men; and who also kept fasts with the same view, that they might be seen. (Matthew 6:2.) He then adds (Matthew 6:22-23); “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light: but thine eye be evil, the

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whole body is full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”

We see by the connection of the whole discourse, that by the *eye* is meant, the aim of our actions. Now as the whole man is full of darkness, when his eye is evil, so is every action bad, and displeasing to God, when our aim is evil.

If every thing be done purely out of love to God, and to our neighbour; our eye is then single, and not drawn aside to look after self honour, self interest, and the like. But the true source of the love of God, and our neighbour, John tells us in the following words: “We love him, because he first loved us.” (John 4:19 and 10.) “If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” (1 John 4:11, Matthew 28:33 and John 15:13.) To which we may add the following passages: “Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Corinthians 6:20.) “Christ died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15.) See Romans 14:7, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness.” That is, HE took our sins upon himself “and made himself a sacrifice for them.” (1 Peter 2:24.)

We ought not to lose sight of that which has been suggested (§18) that the whole doctrine of Jesus, and of his disciples is Gospel, and is thus called the Holy Scripture. When we find words in the Scriptures, which gloriously display the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of our Father in Heaven, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, with all those blessings which flow from such gracious expressions, and are connected with them to all eternity, we are by no means to separate such considerations from the commandments of God, in which we are shown, how exceedingly thankful we ought to be, and how great is our obligation to be a joy and honour to him; for they are connected with each other. When we reflect upon the commandments of God, we should always keep sight of the words of the doctrine of Jesus, and of his disciples, in which all the beatitudes are set before us, which we have in and through Jesus, and which we shall have to all eternity, and by no means to separate them from each other: or otherwise with all our endeavours, we shall make no great progress in keeping the commandments of God; and we shall always be deficient in inclination and power.

¶176

Our Lord Jesus Christ has comprised all the commandments of God, in the love of God and of our neighbour when he said: “Thou shalt love
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the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37 and 40 and Mark 12:30-31.) His disciples follow him in this. For it is said, for instance, “The end (or summary) of the commandment is charity (or love) out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” (1 Timothy 1:5.) And in 1 Corinthians 13:1, Paul gives such a description of charity, or love, as makes it very evident, that he deduces every thing from him. See also Romans 13:8-10.

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¶177

In treating of the commandments of God, we begin with that which concerns both all men in general, and each in particular.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” We did not first receive this commandment in the New Testament; for it was commanded in the Old: for thus it is written in Deuteronomy 6:5. “Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

It was also given to the faithful even of the Old Testament, to keep this commandment according to the degree of their knowledge. David says: “I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: my GOD, my strength in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.” (Psalms 23:1-2.) But they had not at that time the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, of his and our dear Father, and of the Holy Ghost, with that clearness which we now have in the New Testament. Therefore it is expected, that the faithful of the New Testament should love God, with greater tenderness, and with more child-like simplicity. God approved himself to the believers of the Old Testament, as their gracious, kind, faithful, patient, long-suffering, meek, merciful, and loving LORD and God. He forgave them their sins, he heard their prayers, he protected them in their distress, and bestowed every kind of good upon them. He made his will known unto them, he gave them the most glorious promises, he owned them graciously, and guided them with his hands. They were indebted to him for every part of their bodies, for every faculty of their souls, for their lives, and every good thing. He cared for them, as a kind father, and bestowed every thing upon them, which was necessary for their nourishment and support. Whenever it was needful, he chastised them for their good; and whenever they had strayed from him, he brought them back again. Fire and water, air and earth, rain and snow, thunder and lightening, heat and cold, sun and moon, and all creatures, at the command of God, were obliged to serve them, whensoever it was requisite. They had therefore numberless motives to excite them to the love of God. We have in our days not this only, but also many other spiritual gifts, richly bestowed upon us in the New Testament. When a poor sinner obtains the grace to know Jesus Christ, and to believe in him, he has then redemption through his blood, namely, the forgiveness of sins; and has the power given him by Christ, of becoming a child of God. He is made a partaker of the Holy Ghost,

and by his help is able to call the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ his Father. Through Christ he is made free from the dominion of sin, from
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the power of Satan, and from this present evil world. He has no longer any cause to be afraid of death, of judgment, of the wrath to come, and of Hell. He can always comfort himself with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the love of God, and with the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. In every distress or want, he has always, through Christ, a free access to his Father in Heaven. Through the knowledge of Jesus Christ, he is richly endowed with power requisite for a godly life and conversation. But should he still err, and commit a fault, he no sooner confesses it, than our Lord and Saviour, is faithful and just to forgive him his sins, and to cleanse him from all unrighteousness. The Holy Ghost does not give him the assurance only, that our Heavenly Father, who gave us his only-begotten Son, will with him also freely give us all things; but also that our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his own life, and shed his blood for us, will deny us nothing, that is necessary for our salvation. He knows, that through faith he is a member of the body of Jesus Christ, and that he enjoys the most faithful care of him, who is the head of his body. He partakes, through Christ, of all the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are necessary for him until the end of his days. He has a hope, grounded upon the promise of God, of being an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ. He has the most faithful protection, superintendency, and watchfulness of God our dear Father, who screens, shelters, guides, and provides for him, in all circumstances that relate to him. Finally, he tastes and sees the friendliness and goodness of God, our Saviour. Now, since all these salutary blessings of salvation, and treasures of grace, come to us through Christ; (he having indeed purchased them for us by his obedience and death upon the cross)—it is easy to comprehend, that a believer first loves the Lord his Saviour, as a child does its mother: and that this love is also inseparably connected with the love of his Father and our Father. Therefore we can apply these words most assuredly to ourselves, “We love him, *because HE first loved us.*” (1 John 4:19.) And because the Scripture says, “God hath not given us the *Spirit* of fear; but of Power, and of *Love.*” (2 Timothy 1:7.)

And as Love is first mentioned among the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), therefore it is rendered possible for believers to love God; not indeed in the greatest perfection, required by the holy law of God (which is peculiar to our Lord Jesus Christ alone) yet however, in sincerity and truth.

“The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.” (2 Thessalonians 3:5.)

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¶178

It is easily comprehended, that in treating of the love of God, we must not presuppose *faith in God*, in a general way only; for “he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 9:6), but also faith in Jesus Christ in particular, of which we have spoken in ¶132.

The love of God, and of Jesus Christ is connected with *joy in the Lord*. When in the Holy Ghost we joy first in Jesus Christ our Saviour, unto whom we are directed by God himself, and then also in our dear Father, to whom we come through Christ; then is this joy not allowable only, but even expressly commanded.

“*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice.*” Thus writes Paul to the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi. (Philippians 4:4.) Add to the Thessalonians, “*Rejoice evermore.*” (1 Thessalonians 5:16.) And to the church at Rome, “Be fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; *rejoicing in hope,*” (Romans 12:11-12.)

It is the earnest desire of our Saviour, that his people may possess this joy in the Lord. He said to his disciples: “These things I have spoken unto you, *that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*” (John 15:11.) “Ask, and ye shall receive, *that your joy may be full.*” (John 16:24.) And in his prayer, John 12:13, he says to his dear Father, “And now come I to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they (my disciples) *might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*”

This joy is one of the principal points in the kingdom of God, or in God’s new covenant of grace with men, of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the Mediator. “The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and *joy in the Holy Ghost.*” (Romans 14:17.) And this joy is among the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which are mentioned in Galatians 5:22.

When Paul speaks of the character of the servants of Christ, he, among other particulars, describes them “as sorrowful, yet *always rejoicing.*” (2 Corinthians 6:10.) Isaiah says, “*I will rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in God.*” (Isaiah 61:10.) And Mary, “My Spirit hath *rejoiced in God my Saviour.*” (Luke 1:47.)

So far is this joy from being disturbed even by sufferings for Christ’s sake, that it is rather increased; which appears from the following passages of Scripture: “*Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s*

sufferings.” (1 Peter 4:13.) “My brethren, *count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.*” (James 1:2.) And, “*Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake: Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in Heaven.*” (Matthew 5:11-12.)

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Neither shall this joy cease, according to 1 Peter 1:7-8, “At the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye *rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.*”

All this is proved so plainly in the Scripture, to remove the opinion of some well meaning persons, that the spirit of sorrowfulness belongs to genuine Christianity. It is true that David says, “I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim: I water my couch with my tears, mine eyes so consumed because of grief.” (Psalms 6:6-7.) This every one experiences in some measure, when his conscience awakes, and in the distress of his soul he seeks grace and forgiveness of the Lord. It is also true, that a poor soul may experience great grief, if after its conversion it is not obedient to the word of God, and doth not attend to the voice of the Holy Ghost. This was the case with the Church at Corinth, and especially with that person who had been guilty of so grievous a transgression. See 1 Corinthians 7. But it was not always so with David; he was richly comforted and rejoiced. See ¶122. And then he sang, “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction: Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies: *Who maketh thy mouth joyful.*” (Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things.) (Psalms 103:1.) The Corinthians were also richly comforted. I conclude then with this wish of Paul, “*The God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*” (Romans 15:13.)

¶179

We find a thousand reasons to rejoice in God, and to be glad in him, when we duly consider what we possess in our Lord and Saviour, what through grace he is unto us, and what through him we possess in our dear God and Father in Heaven, and in the Holy Ghost, our Teacher and Comforter. We speak now of those who have obtained redemption, viz. the forgiveness of sins, through the blood of Jesus Christ; that is, such

as by faith become children of God, and heirs to everlasting salvation: and these are they, who can and ought to *glory in their Saviour*, according to 1 Corinthians 1:31. “He that glorieth, *let him glory in the Lord.*”

When, for instance, the wise glory in their wisdom, the mighty in their might, the rich in their riches; and these glory because they are wise, strong, and rich (Jeremiah 9:23): yet all this is nothing, when compared with the grace, the blessing, and the happiness of knowing the Lord, and of living in his fellowship. This is alone worthy of being highly
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prized; and whosoever has him, has all things, and abundance. Therefore Paul says, “I count all things”—which otherwise are highly esteemed among men, and upon which they are apt to pride themselves; for of this he spoke—“but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” (Philippians 3:8.)

¶180

But we proceed from the joy in the Lord to the *fear of the Lord*. In the New Testament we find various passages concerning this point, which seem to contradict one another. For it is, on the one hand, said, “God hath not given us the spirit of fear.” (2 Timothy 1:7.) “He remembers his holy covenant,—that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, all the days of our life.” (Luke 1:72.) “There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” (1 John 4:18.) “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” (Romans 8:15.)

Whereas on the other hand we read, “Fear God.” (1 Peter 2:17.) And, “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2:12.) And, “Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.” (1 Peter 1:17.) And, “We receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.” (Hebrews 12:28.)

There is however no contradiction in these passages of Scripture. For the fear, which ought not to find place in us after we have experienced the grace of the New Covenant, unto which we are called, is of one kind, and the fear, which is enjoined the children of the New Covenant, and which for that reason must take place in us, is of another kind. A poor slave, who does not love his Lord, serves him merely out of fear, because he knows that he incurs a severe punishment if he does not; and if he abstains from such things, as his Lord hath forbidden him, it is not out

of love to him, but merely from the fear of punishment; such a fear is incompatible with the new Covenant: for if we believe in Jesus Christ, we become the children of God, we obtain the forgiveness of sins, our heart is inflated with love, a child-like spirit takes possession of it, the will of God becomes our joy; and all slavish fear is lost. This is the state of which Paul speaks (Galatians 4:1), concluding with these words, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Galatians 4:6.)

But if a man, who enjoys the grace of the New Covenant, who consequently with his whole heart loves Jesus Christ his Lord, and his

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dear Father in Heaven, who also certainly knows, that he has the privilege of rejoicing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost:--if such a person reflects seriously, what he is in himself; in what circumstances he finds himself; with whom he has to do; what he might fall unto; has he not reason to be afraid? He is a poor creature depraved in soul and body, who cannot put the least confidence in himself, and who may easily plunge into sin and shame, if he doth not abide in Christ. Satan spares no pains to deprive us of simplicity, and thus to seduce us to some evil, by which he may bring us into distress and misery. We are yet in the world, and the world lieth in the wicked one; and we are as liable to be hurt, and as effectually to be ruined by its allurements and incentives, as by its enmity and persecutions, even after we have been delivered from the world. He has to do with God, who is as holy and just, as he is gracious, kind, and merciful; with Jesus Christ, who judgeth without respect of persons; and with the Holy Ghost, who is grieved by levity and withdraws himself. Even though he be a branch in Christ, the true Vine, yet, if he bringeth forth no fruit, he is taken away by the Father. And, "if he doth not abide in Christ, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into fire, and they are burned." (John 15:2 and 6.) Can a man, who takes all these considerations to heart, be without fear? Will not the love he has for Christ, and his Father in heaven put him upon his guard? Will he, in the danger in which he stands, be indifferent or trifling? Will he not cry day and night to God, to keep, preserve, and take him into his protection against that depravity which is in him? Will he not pray to God, to seal and shut him up from the temptations of the world, and of the wicked enemy? Will he not think upon what Christ was obliged to suffer on our account, and thence learn how angry God is at sin? Will it now come into his mind by this occasion, Oh how dreadfully should I sin, were I not to prize the grace he has shown me, and what an heavy judgment should I then draw down upon me! Will he not also on

every occasion, and on every allurements which may induce him to sin, and to act against the mind of Christ, think and say, as Joseph once did, How should, how could I do this great wickedness and sin against God?--against my Lord and Saviour, who loved me unto death, and against my dear Father, whose child I am by grace? Will he not be as a person, carrying a precious treasure in a brittle vessel, careful of every step he takes, lest he should fall, and lose it?

This is the fear which is and must be in the children of God, and which also is very compatible with the peace of God, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 9:31.)

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“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and *Walked in the FEAR of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.*”

This was the disposition of the whole church of Christ in those days.

¶181

This fear of God is closely connected with *confidence towards God*: by which, in all our concerns, we turn to him, expect from him all comfort and help in our distress, go on our course in a firm dependence upon him; not having the heart overcharged with anxieties and cares. This is grounded upon the doctrine of the providence of God, and the government of his creatures, but especially of man, (of which see ¶32). Nor is it less grounded upon what has been said concerning his love, omnipotence, wisdom, and truth (¶41). Our Lord Jesus Christ has said, “God is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil.” (Luke 6:35.) “He feeds the fowls of the air, though they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns.” (Matthew 6:26.) “He clothes the flowers of the field (which are of short duration) so that Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.” (Matthew 6:28.) He thence shows to his disciples, that they had no occasion to be anxious about their food and raiment. God, their Father, would certainly provide for them. This is as much as if he had said, depend upon God, and put your confidence in him, “he will not leave you, nor forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5.) See ¶36.

This is also in other passages of Scripture expressly enjoined; as for instance, “*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.*” (Proverbs 3:5.) “*Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.*” (Isaiah 26:4.) “Who is among you that feareth the LORD—that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? (that is, is in melancholy circumstances)

let him trust in the Name of the LORD, and stay upon his GOD.” (Isaiah 50:10.) *“Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.”* (Psalms 62:8.) *“Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.”* (Psalms 4:5.) *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”* (Isaiah 41:10.) *“Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”* (Isaiah 43:1-2.)

On this occasion we are to take good notice, that God insists earnestly upon the observance of these commands: this is evident from
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the words (Jeremiah 17:5); *“Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD;”* the happy contrast of which is, *“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.”* (Jeremiah 17:7.)

The Bible contains many examples, partly of people, who by trusting to their own understanding and power, or to other men, have brought upon themselves dreadful punishments; partly of men, who by turning to God in their distress, and placing their trust in him, have on that account been gloriously delivered: for example, when the people of Israel did not hearken to the words of the prophets, who cried unto them with great earnestness, *“Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD.”* (Isaiah 31:1.) They notwithstanding went down, and plunged themselves into the most lamentable circumstances, which are described by the prophet Jeremiah. Hezekiah, on the other hand, having put his trust in the LORD, experienced a wonderful deliverance. (2 Kings 19:19.) But the examples on each side are too numerous to be here particularly alleged; but they are written for our instruction; and we still continue to experience them.

Is that commandment grievous, when God directs us to put our trust in him? Oh no!--happy is he, who like a simple child confides in him! Yet we are still to observe on this occasion, first, That we resign ourselves as children into the hands of our Father in Heaven, even though we cannot see the possibility of being helped: for he knows ways and means to assist us, when we are totally without counsel. Secondly, That we must simply leave to him the time and hour, as also the way and manner

of our being helped: for HE is wise. What do we know? To us it us a sufficient consolation, that we can believe with an assured conviction, that “all things work together for good to them that love God.” (Romans 8:28.)

The more simple and tender our converse with our Lord Jesus Christ is, the greater is our confidence in him. We have new proofs of his tender love towards us daily, and of his taking share in all our circumstances. When our defects cast us down before him, and our manifold mistakes would discourage us, his great patience towards us, and the gracious encouragement of the Holy Spirit, comfort us. Is the Lord our Saviour severe towards us (for he is like the refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap), he not only daily and richly forgives us, when we come weeping and praying to him, but he also healeth all our infirmities. His love to us, which induced him to suffer distress and death, and to take the chastisement we had deserved upon himself, that we might have peace, is, through the Holy Ghost, rendered clear to us by a renewed

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impression and sensation in our heart. He also often reminds us, that our Lord Jesus Christ, has all the power, both in heaven and upon earth. If we at the same time become more acquainted with our dear Father in heaven, through Christ, it increases our confidence towards him. But, in the school of the Holy Ghost, we are daily made more acquainted with our dear Heavenly Father; for he puts us faithfully in mind, that as God has given his Son unto us, we need not doubt, but that with him he will freely give us all things. He teaches us, with boldness and confidence to lay all our necessities before him; and to speak with him, as loving children speak with a tender Father. Though the grace of the Holy Ghost we also learn to say with Paul, “I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God (towards us) which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39.) Moreover, we see from time to time, how graciously he hears our prayer and supplication, which we offer at his feet, and all these prove so many new seals of love towards us. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Your Father in Heaven has numbered all the hairs of your head, so that not one of them shall perish,” are often laid before us by the Holy Ghost. When we speak with our dear Father, he also gives us the assurance in our hearts, that we are accepted in the Beloved, his Son Jesus Christ. All this enables us to put our whole trust in him, and in his word, let our distress be ever so great, or ever so heavy. To this we should add, “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.” (Hebrews 10:35.)

When, by divine grace, a man loves God, rejoices in him, and has confidence towards him, then he is no longer *idolatrous*, if he was so before, but guards against becoming so again. Of the Gentiles, Paul says, “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations (that is, in their worthless thoughts and reasoning) and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools (that is, they had recourse to very foolish practices in their imaginary worship of God), and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts.*” (Romans 1:21.)

Hence we see, (1.) That idolatry, properly so called, or the worship of idols, is a divine judgment upon men, who do not glorify and thank God, who has nevertheless manifested himself unto them. (Romans 1:19-20.)

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He therefore suffers them to become fools. (2.) That idolatry has been, by God’s holy and righteous judgment, attended with abominable sins, which are mentioned in Romans 1:24.

This heathenish idolatry God very earnestly forbade to his people Israel, with the most severe threats. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water in the earth.” (Exodus 20:4.)

Neither would he allow them to worship him, and pay honours, *at the same time*, to idols. (Romans 10:3.) “Thou shalt not have *other gods before me.*”

How the people of Israel conducted themselves touching this prohibition, has been already treated of in ¶5 and 6. Paul, who had to deal with people who had been formerly heathen, frequently reminds them of the wretched circumstances from which they had been delivered. For instance, he writes to the Corinthians, “Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.” (1 Corinthians 12:2.) See also Ephesians 2:11. And when he is speaking of the manifest works of the flesh, which exclude men from any inheritance in the kingdom of God, he also mentions idolatry, and other abominations combined with. (Galatians 5:19.) See also 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Revelation 2:14-20. Doubtless he had sufficient reason, even after they were converted to Christ, to warn them against it. For

possibly, even among such as no longer outwardly worship idols, many ideas and customs remain, which take their rise from heathenism, and are propagated among mankind. What else are the interpretation of dreams, telling of fortunes, witchcraft, the distinction of lucky and unlucky days, the attention to the screaming of birds, the questions made to the dead, and departed spirits, and the like, which to this very hour we meet with among people who are baptized into the name of Christ? Are they not either deceits, or heathenish abominations, which have been thus propagated unto our days?

But, it must not be forgotten, that the Scripture calls him an idolater, or worshipper of images, who reposes confidence, and takes pleasure and delight in something out of God and Christ, and attaches his heart to it. Thus is covetousness, or the serving of Mammon (according to Christ's expression in Matthew 6:24) termed idolatry. (Colossians 3:5.) And Paul says of it, "This ye know, that no covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." (Ephesians 5:5.) See ¶160.

Thus doth Paul also speak of people who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which the Romans had learned: "Such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly." (Romans 16:17-

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18.) Concerning the enemies of the cross of Christ he says (Philippians 3:19), "Whose end is destruction, whose God *is their* belly, and *whose* glory is their fame, who mind earthly things." John concludes his first Epistle with these words: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.—*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*" (Philippians 5:20-21.)

¶183

He that loveth the Lord his God with all his heart, and has a child-like reverence for him, will certainly never *make use of his name, but with the most profound respect and veneration.*

That the word, "Thou shalt not take *the name of the LORD thy GOD in vain:* for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Deuteronomy 5:11); has equal force under the New, as it had under the Old Testament, is hence plain, because our Lord Jesus Christ teaches his disciples to pray to God, "Hallowed be thy name." (Matthew 6:9.)

"God hath highly exalted him (Jesus Christ) and given him *a name which is above every name;* that at the name of JESUS every knee should

bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.” (Philippians 2:9-10.)

We are commanded, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” (Colossians 3:17.)

And it stands in another place, “Whether, therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31.)

Our dear Lord and Saviour said to his disciples, “These signs shall follow them that believe; *In my name*, shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.” (Mark 16:17.) (That is, in languages they had not learned.)

All this shows in the plainest manner, that the holy name of JESUS, so full of consolation, must by no means be made use of and uttered in a light manner, and without some real purpose; and that is an heinous sin, if we make use of it for evil purposes, or rather by such means abuse it. Hence the seven sons of Sceva, one of the chief priests, suffered severely, when they presumed to call the name of the Lord Jesus, over such as had evil spirits, saying, “We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth.” (Acts 19:13.) But why so? Did not the disciples of Jesus cast out evil spirits in the name of Jesus Christ? Certainly; see Luke 10:17. But the sons of Sceva were persons who did not believe in Jesus,
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and who had neither command or permission for it. The consequence therefore was, that “the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded.” (Acts 19:16.) For they had taken the name of Jesus in vain. Therefore the evil Spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?” (Acts 19:15.) Oh that many, who are certainly not better than the seven sons of Sceva, might duly ponder the words in Psalms 50:6-17. “Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and callest my words behind thee.” For do not they take the name of God in vain?

Profane swearing, which is so common, and which our Lord and Saviour so earnestly forbids (Matthew 5:34) belongs also to this head. These are sins which too frequently prevail through whole nations; will God the Lord suffer them to pass with impunity?

Where the love of God, and a child-like reverence towards him, fill the heart of a man, there *disobedience* finds no place. For (¶172), it has been

shown, that whoever loves God and Christ, and as a child fears him, keeps also his commandments. Yet we should add something further concerning disobedience.

We now experience the distress and misery, which the disobedience of our first parents against the command of God has entailed upon themselves, and their whole posterity. See ¶51. The consequences of disobedience, during the time of the covenant which God established with Abraham and his seed, and which is usually called the Old Testament, were likewise dreadful. See ¶5 and ¶6. Also see Numbers 15:30-31 and Deuteronomy 28:15-19. But how is it under the New Covenant, the Mediator of which is Jesus Christ? May not disobedience, according to this covenant, be looked upon with more lenity, , since God revealed himself in it, much more as God of Love? And is disobedience to the Gospel less punishable than disobedience to the Law? By no means. “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance *on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.)

But what does that mean, *not to obey the Gospel*? As the word *Gospel* is here, as in many other places, taken for the entire doctrine of Jesus and of his apostles (see ¶18), so in the first place, a man is disobedient to the Gospel, in which Jesus Christ is preached unto us, when he does not
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receive him as his Lord and Saviour, and does not believe on him: “This is God’s commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 3:23.) And whoever doth it not, shall be damned on account of his disobedience to the Gospel. Secondly, We are disobedient to the Gospel, when we despise that which Jesus commanded to his disciples, and persist in our sinful courses, although with our lips we make confession of the truth of the Gospel. Such should seriously consider, what will become of them, who pretending to believe on Christ, yet serve sin, and fulfill the will of the flesh and of the mind. Certainly they will be damned, according to the Scripture, if they be not converted, and give up this perverse conceit of a dead faith, which is in reality nothing but unbelief, because it doth not evidence itself in power, or good works.

God did not make man to live in *indolence*; for even before his fall, “He put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it.” (Genesis

2:15.) Hence it appears, that man, even he were not fallen, would have laboured in obedience to God, who for that end had put him into the garden of Eden. But toilsome and hard labour came into the world by the fall. God made it known to Adam, as the punishment of his transgression, that from that time in *sorrow* he should eat bread in the sweat of his face, the ground being cursed for His sake. (Genesis 3:19.) And thus man, who through the subtlety of the serpent, had been beguiled and corrupted from his simplicity (2 Corinthians 11:3), found his labour strangely perverted. For, as man in the state in which God had created him, laboured from a principle of love to God, and of obedience to him; and in his blessed simplicity looked to his Creator only, that he might please and be a joy to him; he on the contrary, after the fall, began to labour from a very different motive. At first necessity urged him; for the ground, if not cultivated, brought forth thorns and thistles. But afterward, when men multiplied, and they began to divide the land arbitrarily, covetousness and all the consequent evils ensued. Thus, when any one became powerful, as for instance Nimrod, he made himself master of the rest, who being weaker, were compelled to serve him: He even sold some of them to others, who from this concluded they had a right of forcing them to do their work. Now, a proprietary right having been introduced among mankind, as well over men, as over portions of land and the like, therefore God the Lord made among the people of Israel, with whom he had entered into a special covenant, good and wise ordinances, how they should act in this respect. These

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ordinances being founded upon his love, goodness, righteousness, and holiness, ought therefore to be observed to this very hour with all fidelity: for instance, when it is said, "Thou shalt not steal." (Exodus 10:15.)

But other ordinances which relate entirely to the constitution of the people of Israel at that time, and which existing no longer, are not applicable, according to their literal sense, to our times: for example, that which is said (Leviticus 25:23), concerning the sale of lands.

But to return to the article of labour: God made this wise regulation among the people of Israel, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant

and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.” (Deuteronomy 5:13-14.) Our Lord Jesus Christ has shown us, that “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27.) That is, God gave it to men as a benefit, for their advantage, but not as a burden. That the believers from the people of Israel did celebrate the Sabbath, even after their conversion to Christ, according to the commandment that was given by God to the people of Israel, is without doubt: as may be proved from the words of the elders of the church of God at Jerusalem, with which they addressed Paul: “Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are *all zealous of the law.*” (Acts 21:20.) But we do not find a word in the Scriptures of the New Testament, by which the celebration of the Sabbath was enjoined the Gentiles. However, the seventh day, on which our Lord and Saviour lay and rested in the sepulcher, is, on that account, a special day of commemoration and thanksgiving.

It was judged proper to introduce the celebration of the first, instead of the seventh day, into the church of Christ: And we find traces in the Scriptures of the New Testament, that even in the apostles days they called the first day the Lord’s day, because on that day he rose again. (Revelation 1:10.) Now, though there is no express command in the New Testament, for the celebration of the first day, yet we have reason to thank God with our whole heart, that through his own wise government, and the administration of the higher powers, he has caused this day to be a day of rest in Christendom. For what might not be the consequences, if men had no opportunity of hearing the word of God upon that day? Whosoever, therefore, loves our Saviour, makes use of

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this day with hearty thanksgiving to God, as a blessing and edification for himself and others.

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Moreover, the New Testament does not show us merely that we are to labour, but also how we should labour. It informs us likewise, how servants and masters should conduct themselves towards each other, so as to be well pleasing to God. That all those who belong to Christ ought to labour, we see from the words of Paul: “Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, *and to work with your own hands*, that ye may walk honestly towards them that are without (that is, the unconverted and unbelieving, who do not belong to the church of Jesus), and that ye may

have lack of nothing.” (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12.) And, “*If any would not work, neither should he eat.*” (2 Thessalonians 3:10.)

He who, from circumstances, is obliged to work for others, not being his own master, is to observe what follows; “*Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God.*” (Colossians 3:22.) “*Servants be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to be good and gentle, but also to the froward.*” (1 Peter 2:18.) Likewise, “*Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.*” (Ephesians 6:5.)

Finally, “*Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are (or under the pretense of their being) brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.*” (1 Timothy 6:1-2.)

By these passages we see, (1.) that the apostles did not abolish the diversity of stations in life. They let masters remain masters and servants, servants. But see 1 Corinthians 7:20. (2.) That they deduce the genuine service of servants from the love of God, and of Jesus Christ, and not from constraint. (3.) That they call the service of a poor slave (for of such the apostles properly speak) even though it be done for an heathen master, a service of God. (4.) That the true comfort of poor slaves, who sigh under such a yoke, lies properly in this, that it is the will of God concerning us; He will have it so.

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¶188

The masters of such slaves have their instruction in the following words; “*Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.*” (Colossians 4:1.) Likewise, “*Ye masters, do the same things unto them (that is, approve yourselves as the servants of Christ) knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.*” (Ephesians 6:8-9.)

The apostle speaks thus to such matters as had to deal with slaves. But if we reflect, that it is forbidden by God, even to an Israelite in the Old Testament, “to rule with rigour” over another Israelite, who from poverty was obliged to give himself to the other as a servant; but rather that “he should fear God” (Leviticus 25:43.); we ought hence to conclude, that much more is expected from such matters as are the children of the New Covenant.

But in general, that word of holy writ, “Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31); extends to every kind of work we have to do. Likewise, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” (Colossians 3:17.)

If any one loves Jesus Christ, submits to the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and labours in *that* disposition of mind, he will feel the peace of God in his heart, and enjoy his comfortable assistance. Whereas, on the other hand, a man who either labours from a principle of pride, in order to signalize himself, or of covetousness, in order to enrich himself, or to procure something to make provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof, if his conscience be not dead, and his heart without feeling, has nothing but disquietude, reproach, and condemnation from his labour.

¶189

Many persons are obliged to labour from *necessity*, which in German is called *dear* or *happy* necessity, because it actually restrains them from many vices, into which, those in affluence, but too frequently plunge themselves; it is therefore, in this point of view, profitable, especially if they have wives and children, and wish to procure them a livelihood. When such however have not sufficient work to support themselves honestly, they are apt to be low-spirited and distressed. But this is not right: for the Lord and Saviour says, “take heed of yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with cares of this life.” (Luke 21:34.) See Matthew 13:22. He also speaks very comfortably in Matthew 6:25,

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“Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.” Peter says, “Cast all

your care upon *Him*; for he careth for you.” (1 Peter 5:7.) And David, “Commit thy way unto the LORD: trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.” (Psalms 37:5.) See ¶181.

Yet it must be here observed, that we ought to be *perfectly satisfied* with that which the LORD giveth us. Paul says, “Godliness with *contentment* is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out: And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.” (1 Timothy 6:6.) And, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; *and be content with such things as ye have*: For HE hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” (Hebrews 13:5.)

But what a pity it is, that men should think so much to the external circumstance which pinch them; when our Saviour has said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things (which ye stand in need of for a livelihood) shall be added unto you;” shall, as it were, be given you over and above. He that trusts these words of our Saviour shall not be confounded; and why should we not trust them? Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away.

¶190

But we ought not to be contented only with the ways of God, but also *to thank him heartily*, and be satisfied even with poverty, which however cometh from God (see ¶98 and ¶38); but all is not poverty which people call so; for if we consider properly, he is not to be called poor, who has sufficient from God daily to satisfy his hunger, and to cover his nakedness. He is indeed poor, who when pressed with hunger, has nothing to appease it; and when destitute of raiment, cannot procure so much as is necessary to cover his nakedness. He who has more than he stands in need of for daily food and raiment, may rather look upon himself as rich. But, supposing he were actually poor (which, according to the word of Christ in Matthew 25:31 may befall even children of God) yet saith the Scripture, (Ephesians 5:20); “Give thanks always *for all things* unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “*In every thing* give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus

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concerning you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18.) “*Do all* in the name of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks to GOD* and the Father by him.” (Colossians 3:17.)

But we ought, not in poverty only, but also in other tribulations that befall us, to be patient (Romans 12:12, Proverbs 3:11-12, Luke 21:19, Hebrews 10:36 and James 5:7-8) and even to be thankful to God. Thus do we read concerning Job, who having *in one day* heard, that he had

lost all his property (and he had indeed very great possessions) and every one of his children (he had seven sons and three daughters) “he fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; *blessed be the name of the Lord!*” (Job 1:20-21): this example is also expressly recommended for our imitation in James 5:10-11.

The afflictions which befall us are of various kinds; and it is very common for men to endeavour to console themselves under them, with reasons drawn from philosophy. But he who rightly understands what he has in our Saviour, seeks no consolation out of him. He has consolation enough, if he be poor, in the great poverty of Jesus; when his circumstances are distressing, and things go heavily with him, in the distressed life of Jesus; if he finds himself in low and mean circumstances, in Jesus, who took upon him the form of a servant; if no one regards him, and every one should slight him, in the despised and rejected condition of Jesus; if he is tempted, and in danger that his soul may suffer damage, his consolation is in the temptations of Jesus; if his body and soul be weakly, and full of pain, the weakliness and anguish of the soul of Jesus, which became so extreme, that he was in an agony, (that is, wrestled with death); when he is full of anxious care, which forces him to weep bitterly, in the meritorious tears of Jesus; if he suffers unjustly for the sake of the Gospel, were it even in fetters and bonds, in the scourges and bonds of Jesus, and in what he suffered even unto death. For the Lord our Saviour has in every one of these points, not given us an example only, after which we are to walk, but all he has done and suffered was likewise for our benefit. He has suffered every kind and degree of distress; he has a fellow-feeling with us; he can and will counsel and help us. Finally, the reason why we are to thank the Lord even for such things as are oppressive to nature, lies in the words, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” (Romans 8:28.)

For God, in every tribulation which shall befall us according to his permission, has certainly nothing in view but love and good will; which he also wisely accomplishes.

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¶191

A heart devoted to our Saviour has, in other respects, numberless reasons to be thankful. For beside the general benefits which the hand

of the Lord confers upon him, in common with other men, for instance, God has given him a soul, and body complete, and has graciously preserved him; he further enjoys the great and manifold blessings of salvation, which Jesus Christ has purchased for him with so much pain. No sooner does he taste and see how gracious the Lord is, and that his sins are forgiven, than genuine thankfulness takes place in his heart. The more he grows, from day to day, in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, the more is he filled with thankfulness. Through the love of the Father, which is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, and is sensibly felt as it is evident, he becomes more and more thankful. The unwearied labour of the Holy Ghost, which he daily perceives, and his own inexpressible unworthiness, with which by grace he daily becomes more sensible, lay him continually prostrate in the dust. All the benefits of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, and which he is to expect in eternity, keep him abashed, lowly and thankful: it is impossible to describe the sensation that is felt by a heart thus reconciled to God, and united with him. Oh! that thousands, who as yet know nothing of it, did but experience it; and that those who are partakers of it might advance more and more in it.

¶192

A thankful and fervent heart in the love of Jesus, certainly produces an undaunted *confession of him*, and his word. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven: But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33.) In another place, he says, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38.) And in 2 Timothy 2:12, it is said, "If we deny him, he also will deny us." Thus then it is manifest, that the confession of Jesus, and of his word, cannot be dispensed with, if our Lord Jesus Christ is to confess us, that is, if we would be saved.

The confession of Jesus Christ and his word and Gospel, was formerly attended with great distress and danger. A confessor of Jesus Christ and of his word, had nothing to look for but reproach and tribulation; the spoiling of his goods, nay chains, bonds, and often a

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painful and ignominious death. This our Lord and Saviour foretold his disciples and followers, and every thing came to pass accordingly. The

Scriptures of the New Testament are full of it; and the histories of the martyrs inform us, how many thousands persons were executed, in the most barbarous manner for the confession of Jesus, and of his Gospel. Nevertheless he asserts, "Whosoever doth not confess me and my word, him will I also not confess before my heavenly Father, and before the holy angels, when I appear in the glory;" that is, when I come to the last judgment. Was not this something severe? Verily, if in this life only we had hope in Christ, it might be looked upon as something severe indeed. But Paul says, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment (God help us to hear it) worketh for us a far more exceeding and internal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen." (2 Corinthians 4:17-18.) And, "I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18.)

Therefore the sufferings annexed to the confession of Christ, are a grace, and an especial blessing for which we ought to rejoice and be glad. (Matthew 5:11-12, Luke 6:22-23 and 1 Peter 4:13.)

But how is it in our days with the confession of Christ, and of his Gospel? Although the witnesses of Jesus and of his Gospel in Christendom are not always deigned worthy of martyrdom; we cannot however deny, that this has happened many thousand times, and still occurs: yet it is evident that they are reviled, looked upon as fools, hated, and persecuted, more or less, according to the circumstances of the country in which they dwell. But shall we on that account not confess our Saviour and his word? We shall certainly confess him, and indeed the more boldly and zealously, the more we have to suffer on that account.

But our confession, or denial of Jesus Christ, and his doctrine, is not confined to the mouth only, but may likewise be known by our actions. For if any one conforms to the world, against the prohibition (Romans 12:2) does he not deny Christ by so doing? But if his words and actions, and the whole of his conversation are conformable to the mind and word of Jesus, he does then most certainly confess Jesus to be his Lord, and his Word the rule of his life.

Had the holy and glorious God given permission only to us his needy and sinful creatures, to bring our concerns before him, and to bemoan our distress to him; that would have been in itself a grace, deserving eternal praise; but what idea must we have of his goodness, when he

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commands us expressly to *pray* to him for whatever we want, and gives us the most sacred promise that he will hear us. Is not he therefore a good GOD? Even in the Old Testament it is said, “*Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*” (Psalms 50:15.) “*Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.*” (Isaiah 55:6.) In the New Testament the Lord says, “*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.*” (Matthew 8:7-8.) And farther it is said, “*Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thankful giving, let your requests be made known unto God.*” (Philippians 4:6.)

If a savage Indian, who believes in a good and in a bad spirit, ascribing to the former every good, and to the latter every evil which shall happen to mankind, should utter the following sentiments; I have no need of praying to the good spirit, for he is previously inclined, even without any prayer of mine, to do me every good service; but I must pray to the evil spirit, not to do me any hurt; it would be difficult to convince such an one, before he is converted to Christ, and believes in him. But when he believes and becomes obedient to the Gospel, his sin, misery, and deep depravity, are also, by the grace of God, disclosed to him; and then he soon finds, how necessary it is for him to call upon God to deliver him from them. When he is afterwards told, that he must pray diligently,--because God will have it so,--because he had commanded it;--he then soon agrees with us respecting the necessity of it. It is indeed much more easy to convince an Heathen of his error, than one educated in Christianity, who is a scoffer at religion.

But the holy Scripture does not teach us the necessity of prayer only; but also how we should pray. The words of Christ particularly apply to this: “*What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*” (Mark 9:24.) Farther, “*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him: but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth, let him not think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*” (James 1:5.) “*Without faith it is impossible to please him (God): For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*” (Hebrews 9:6.) Thus prayer must be made in faith.

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Besides these passages of Holy Writ, the promises of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, suit excellently: For instance, “It shall come to pass, that *before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*” (Isaiah 65:24.) See Genesis 25:12. “God having not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32.) “This is the confidence that we have in him, that, *if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:* And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” (1 John 5:14-15.) See Luke 9:11.

These and others of the same import, are the promises, of which the Holy Ghost willingly reminds us, and which through grace, we should keep in our hearts, and most firmly depend upon them.

¶195

God has many holy and wise reasons, why at one time, he should grant what we pray for immediately, and as it were upon the spot (as for instance in Genesis 24:11 and Acts 4:24); and why at another, he should postpone it, and makes us wait as in Matthew 15:21. In the latter case the Scripture gives us directions to persevere in our prayers. This our Saviour illustrated to us by the instance of a widow, who did not cease to importune the judge—avenge me of my adversary, and she overcame him with her continual prayer, and though he was otherwise an unrighteous man, he however helped her; and he subjoins, “And shall not God avenge his own elect, *which cry day and night* unto him?—I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.” (Luke 28:1 and 9:5.)

In another place it is said, “*Continue instant* in prayer.” (Romans 12:12.) “Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, *and watching thereunto with all perseverance* and supplication for all saints.” (Ephesians 6:18.)

But as mention is here made of praying and supplication in the Spirit, and it is said in another place, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17), We must therefore observe, that the last exhortation cannot possibly be understood in such a manner, as if we were to be always upon our knees and praying aloud. Concerning Daniel it is said, “He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God.” (Daniel 6:10.)

This is excellent, but not sufficient: the heart must be incessantly directed to God, and walk with him, in some such way as we find it in Exodus 14:15. “The Lord said unto Moses, wherefore criest thou unto me?” And yet Moses was all the while talking with the people.

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¶196

Moreover, our Lord and Saviour has commanded his disciples to pray *to the Father in his name*. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my name*, he will give it to you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” (John 16:23-24.) And, “Whatsoever ye shall ask *in my name*, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (John 14:13.)

What then is the meaning of asking the Father in the name of Christ? It cannot consist in the mere form, with which we commonly conclude our prayer. For many thousand men conclude their prayer with this form, “for the sake of thy dear Son;” and are however not heard. And yet the prayer in the name of Christ cannot remain unheard. Thus the praying in the name of Christ must be something more, as for instance, when we pray to the Father, with faith in Jesus Christ, with a cheerful confidence in his word, by the impulse of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, in such a manner, that our Saviour himself owns it before his Father: We then may be said to pray in the name of Christ, of which we find an example in Acts 4:24.

¶197

The following observations are still to be made concerning prayer.

(1.) Our Saviour says to his disciples, “*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*” (John 15:7.) And John writes, “Beloved, *if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God; and whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*” (1 John 3:21-22.)

Thus if a man will ask any thing of God, he ought strictly to examine himself, Whether he be in Christ? Whether he have the word of Christ in his heart? Whether he walk in the commandments of God? Whether he do those things that are well-pleasing in his sight? Or, Whether his heart condemn him, and his conscience tell him that he is not right? For, in this case, the best expedient is, to turn first to his dear Saviour, to pray for forgiveness, and to be cleansed from such things as occasion his heart to condemn him.

(2.) Our Saviour has absolutely forbidden us to make vain repetitions in our prayers, or to rest the matter upon much speaking; and adds the

following, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before you ask him." (Matthew 6:7-8.)

He calls the people, who in their prayers use vain repetitions, Heathens; and will not have his people to conform to them. On the
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other hand, he has taught his disciples, in that excellent prayer, "Our Father which art in Heaven; hallowed be thy name, etc.," very plainly how they are to speak with God, their Father. (Matthew 6:9.) Thus when awakened people make long prayers, they often feel as much vain complacency themselves, as they endeavour to give to others: let such ask themselves, whether their hearts do not suffer by it?

- (3.) The following words of Jesus should be well attended to: "When ye stand praying *forgive, if ye have ought against any*; that your father also which is in Heaven may forgive your trespasses." (Mark 11:25.) Especially since Christ teaches us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." (Matthew 6:12.)

And not this only; but we must also remove every thing which others have against us, if we would pray to God acceptably. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and *go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother*, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matthew 5:23-24.)

We ought to understand this, as if Jesus said, When thou hast a desire to pray, and it comes into thy mind that thy brother has something against thee; then postpone thy prayer, and run to thy brother, who has something against thee; and when thou has satisfied him, and as far as it is in thy power made peace with him; then mayest thou return back again into thy closet, shut thy door, and pray to thy Father in secret. (Matthew 6:6.)

- (4.) Our Saviour lays a particular blessing upon fellowship in prayer. "*If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask*, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 18:19.) For, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20.)

All men are not in the same circumstances. In point of age, some are in their childhood, others are grown up. Such as are grown up., are with regard to their state, either married, or not married; such as are not married, have been either married before, and are now widowers or widows, or still in the state of celibacy. Men again with respect to

employment, are either magistrates, or subjects. God in his word has made known how each is to act, with respect to the circumstances in which he is placed; and each is bound to conduct himself conformably to the will of God. That flows naturally from the love of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he that loveth him, keepeth his commandments.

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Before we proceed to the different circumstances in which men are placed, and treat of the conduct suitable to each, we must necessarily repeat, what has been mentioned above. We do not write a system of morality for such as are estranged from the life which is of God, and who are wretched slaves of sin and the devil. As long as they abide in this miserable situation, they are incapable of walking as it becometh children of God. But if they come to Christ, and receive him in faith, and he gives them power to become children of God; if they obtain a new heart and a new mind, and the Holy Ghost takes up his abode in them; if by faith they become branches in Jesus Christ the Vine, and abide in him; it is then only, that they are capable of comprehending and putting in practice the following points: whatsoever we shall have occasion to say of a behaviour well-pleasing to God, whether in a child, boy, youth married man, or widower, we always presuppose, that they have received grace in the blood of Jesus. Where this is found, that is, when a person had, through faith in Jesus Christ, obtained forgiveness of sins, and is become a member of the body of Christ, he then no longer fulfills the desires of the flesh and of the mind. He is, on the contrary, filled with the love of Christ, and with the Holy Ghost. When therefore a boy, a youth, a married man, or a widower understands by the word of God, what he requires of him, according to the circumstances in which he is placed; the Holy Ghost then opens his understanding, and renders every thing not only plain, but also agreeable to him. He brings from time to time to his remembrance every thing which is required of him, and which tends to adorn the doctrine of Jesus. The Holy Ghost moreover encourages and cares for him, as a mother for her child. See ¶154. In the mean time, we have still to observe on the present subject, that we have either presupposed, or at least briefly touched upon the points which each has in common with others, independent of his own particular circumstances, and every one may add what is especially applicable to his own case.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was also a child in this world, has left both children, and adults an example that they should follow his steps. (1 Peter 2:21.) The Scripture testifies concerning him, "The child grew,

and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.” (Luke 2:40.)

When a child retains and preserves the grace of the New Covenant, which Christ began with us, and into which our children are by baptism received, if the Holy Ghost, who even condescends to make children his temple, and to dwell in them, meets with obedient hearts in them, and they, through him, are strengthened, both in doing good, and in eschewing evil; if children remain children, that is, simple and inexperienced in that which is evil, but become daily more wise, that is,

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more intelligent and disposed to that which is good;--they are then in the right way to follow the child Jesus. Then also will they love and honour their parents, and obey them, according to Ephesians 6:1. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise, that is, a special promise, as seen in Exodus 20:12) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” And, according to Colossians 3:20, “children obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.”

On this occasion we are however to observe, that the apostle is here speaking of parents, who do not command their children to do any thing that is evil. For in this case they are to obey God rather than men. But in all other matters, children are absolutely to obey their parents. Much indeed is not expected of children; but they are capable of loving, and of following in this respect the example of the loving child Jesus. Paul doth also testify concerning Timothy that “from a child he had known the holy Scriptures.” (2 Timothy 3:15.) Oh how happy is it, when our children do so likewise! When they begin early to praise and magnify God, fulfilling the words, “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength” (praise, according to Matthew 21:16). (Psalms 8:2.)

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When children increase in years, and suffer themselves to be led by the Holy Ghost; they are then not likely to become worse, but better. For when Jesus Christ was grown up to be twelve years old, “*he was subject unto his parents; and increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*” (Luke 2:51-52.)

It is indeed not to be denied, that corruption, both in soul and body, commonly shows itself more, when we are *boys* and *girls*, than before that period. But if they with child-like hearts, cleave to our Saviour, he will give unto them his divine power to lead a godly life, through the

knowledge of Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:3.) And the more they perceive in themselves, that “the imagination of man’s heart is evil *from his YOUTH,*” according to the declaration of God (Genesis 8:21); the more will they be convinced, how much they stand in need of a Saviour. And if they confess their sins, he is faithful and just to forgive them their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9.) If they come only in simplicity, with all their misery (John 3:21) and do not attempt to hide their faults, or shun the light, they may be easily advised and effectually helped. Jesus was, as a boy, obedient; that is, he continued obedient, as he had been before. He increased in wisdom. For as he would in all points, sin only excepted, be like other men, so would he

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therefore gradually *increase* in wisdom. He also increased in favour with God and man; that is, he, as a child, loved God and men, and was reciprocally beloved by God and men; and thus he went on, when he was a youth, and advanced continually in it. And all this is likewise expected of boys and girls, who in baptism have put on Christ. To such these words are particularly applicable, “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.” (Proverbs 1:8.) Also, “Be not wise in thine own eyes: Fear the Lord, and depart from evil.” (Proverbs 3:7.)

¶200

It is a very dangerous period for *a boy*, when he is of an age, and without control, to choose some line of life for himself. For if he should then choose something, which is not agreeable to the purpose of God with him, and all depends upon this; he may render all his future days extremely miserable. What ought he to do then in this case? He can do nothing better, than with soul and body to devote himself anew to Jesus Christ the Lord, who offered up his life for him, and has thus far preserved him; to renew from his heart the covenant of a good conscience, into which, in baptism, he entered with God; and to resign himself as an humble child anew to the Holy Ghost; who, for Christ’s sake, and through grace, takes us under his tuition. If this be done in truth, he then also knows, that he now lives, and is in duty bound to love, not to himself, but to him who died for him. Then he prays with humble confidence, “Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.” (Psalms 143:10.)

Thus he does not rashly resolve, and choose for himself, according to his natural propensity; but he rather thinks, I am a child, and God is my Father; Christ is my Lord, and I am his poor servant. A child must do

his father's, and a servant his master's will; and this will I do also. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20.)

He endeavours, by the grace of God; to comply with this admonition, "Purify your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren." (1 Peter 1:22.) And he has these words before his eyes, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,--and be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may provide what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1-2.)

He takes Christ for an example, and endeavours to resemble him in his mind and conversation upon earth. He thinks upon the words of

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Paul, which he wrote to Timothy, a servant of Christ, who led also a single life, "Flee youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith (fidelity), charity (love), peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (1 Timothy 6:10-11.)

If God should think him worthy to do something for his glory, and for the benefit of his neighbour; he does it faithfully, and thanks God for it. For he knows, that "those, who have believed in God must be careful to maintain good works." (Titus 3:8.) But should he be convinced, that it is the will of God, he should change his state and marry; he begs and prays most heartily, that it may be done "in the Lord," according to Paul's expression. (1 Corinthians 7:39.)

¶201

When girls arrive at years of maturity, what can they do better, than devote themselves with soul and body to our Saviour, and surrender themselves anew to him as his property? Certainly he has purchased them with bitter pain; he has reconciled them with his own blood, and delivered himself unto death for them. This passage of Scripture ought therefore to be well established in their hearts, "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Corinthians 5:15.) And in Romans 14:7, "None of us liveth unto himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord;--for to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

Thus they resign themselves entirely (as an handmaid of Jesus ought, who is the Lord's sole property, and whom he has so dearly bought) to the will and good pleasure of their Lord; and whatsoever he

pleaseth to do with them, although it may be hard and disagreeable; they answer with yea and amen. The Holy Ghost worketh to this end with each of them, to teach, lead, and guide them with incomprehensible fidelity, wisdom, and grace. As long as any one remains in her single state, she careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body, and in spirit. (1 Corinthians 7:34.) She endeavours to be preserved by his grace, from the love of the world (1 John 2:15); and knows, she is to “keep her heart with all diligence” (Proverbs 4:23); and also, that the “end of the commandment is charity (love), out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, of a faith unfeigned.” (1 Timothy 1:5.)

Should a *virgin* be assured in her heart, when any one desires her in marriage, that she is called to it by the Lord, she complies with it for his sake; though she knows beforehand, that she shall meet with much more difficulty in the married, than in the single state. But, if she is not convinced that it is from the Lord, and she has reason to apprehend

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besides, that she shall suffer hurt in her soul, and depart from that happy path, in which she had been in her single state; she has then according to the Scriptures, liberty to remain single. See 1 Corinthians 7:25. When finally Paul says, that it is better to abide unmarried than to marry (1 Corinthians 7:38-40); we are to observe, that this was an advice only, which he gave with a view to the present or future distress. For this he says expressly in 1 Corinthians 7:26. Neither does he deliver this as a commandment of the Lord, but as his own judgment.

¶202

Marriage is to be looked upon as a wise institution, approved of God for mutual assistance, and for the propagation of mankind. God did not create the man only, but the woman also, in his own image. (Genesis 1:27.) When Adam saw his wife, which the Lord brought unto him, he said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.” (Genesis 2:23.) That Adam did not discover this, but that it was disclosed and revealed to him by the Creator, is evident from Matthew 19:4. For here our Lord Jesus Christ ascribes these very words to him who made man at the beginning. It was HE who informed Adam, what his intention by marriage was, namely, that a man should live in the most intimate union with his wife, in such a manner, as to leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife. For this reason our Lord adds, “Wherefore they are *no more twain, but one flesh;*”

and says further, “*What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*” Now God having joined the first couple together, whom he had formed with his own hand, he also imparted his blessing to their marriage, and said, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” (Genesis 1:28.) Before the woman was created (which, according to Genesis 1:27, was done on the sixth day, though it is first *circumstantially* related in Genesis 2:18) the Lord says, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an holy meet for him.” But after the woman had been created, which is recorded in Genesis 1:27, it is then said, “God saw every thing that he made, and behold, it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31.) Consequently the marriage of our first parents was a holy state, which God had himself instituted and blessed; and as long as they bore the image of God, they lived in that state, in godly simplicity and innocence, according to Genesis 2:25.

But after our first parents had proved disobedient to the commandment of the Lord, and were fallen; then did their depravity discover itself, in respect to marriage also. The Scripture expresses it

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thus, “They knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.” (Genesis 3:7.) The Creator himself found it now necessary for men to cover their bodies; for it is said, “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins and clothed them.” (Genesis 3:21.) Whoever duly reflects, that, according to the will of God, we are obliged to cover our bodies, merely on account of the depravity we are plunged into by sin, will certainly avoid every vain show and parade in dress.

But to return to marriage: This institution, according to which every man has his own wife, fulfills still even among the most savage nations. But it has notwithstanding, been accompanied with so many sinful and scandalous proceedings, that it is scarcely possible to enumerate them all, and very thought of them is horrible. We need only read the 20th chapter of Leviticus, to find proofs enough of it. In the 23rd verse it is said, “Ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation which I cast out before you, for they committed all these things (namely, that were forbidden by the Lord in this chapter) and therefore I abhorred them.” The contents of the 28th chapter of Leviticus are the same, and forbid these abominations. The conclusion therefore is, “Defile not yourselves in any of these things; for all these abominations (which had, for instance, been before enumerated) have the men of the land done, and the land is defiled.” (Leviticus 28:24-30.)

Now seeing God did detest and extirpate the heathen on account of such things, as are specified in the 18th and 20th chapters of Leviticus;

and as he also ordered those crimes to be punished with death among the people of Israel, so there can be no doubt, but all men, who would not become an abomination in the eyes of God, should guard against them. When something of this kind occurred in the church of Corinth, that one had his father's wife, Paul very zealously testified against it, and with great severity condemned it, not in respect to the person only who had been guilty of it, but also in reference to the whole church. See 1 Corinthians 5:1.

We will, however, pass on to the times of the New Testament; where we know, from Hebrews 13:4, that "Marriage is honourable," and that it ought to be, and must remain so in all respects. From Matthew 19:4, we see, that the Lord our Saviour takes from the institution of marriage his proof against the divorces, which were among the Jews. He says, "He which made them at the beginning, made them male and female." Now, if God has joined a man and his wife together, they are, according to his word, no more twain, but one flesh; therefore should no man put them asunder. Here our Lord Jesus Christ makes the first institution of marriage a standard: and it is as much as if he had said, Would you

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know whether your marriage be of the right kind, then look to him who regulated it from the beginning; by his word and ordinance it must abide.

¶203

As marriage is in general an ordinance of God, according which a man should have his own wife, dwell with her in love and peace, beget children, educate them prudently, conduct himself faithfully respecting matrimony, according to the laws of the country in which he dwells, and in this way become a useful member of society; so in particular the children of God in conducting their marriage state should observe what follows.

(1.) A married pair, if they have faithful and obedient hearts to our Saviour, and are taught, led, and directed by the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in them, mutually agree from the beginning of their marriage, to care for that which belongeth to the Lord, as faithfully in their matrimonial state, as they did before when single. For what Paul says, "He that is married careth for the things that are of the world" (1 Corinthians 7:33), cannot be taken in any other sense, but that married people are obliged, on account of their circumstances, to be more engaged with the affairs of this life, than those who are unmarried. But here also, we must allow the truth of that which is

said in 1 Corinthians 7:29. "They that have wives, be as though they had none."

- (2.) They should likewise agree to conduct themselves in the married state, through his grace, according to the mind of Jesus Christ; to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 1:22); to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." (Romans 7:1.)
- (3.) They should establish this as a principle, that in order to render their marriage acceptable to God, they must follow the ordinance of God; that is, the man must love his wife; but he must be the head, and she submit to him. For this is the doctrine of the Scripture: "*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord: for the husband is the head of the wife*" (Ephesians 5:22-23); and in verse 25, "*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*"
- (4.) They should always remember, that they are to love their Saviour more than themselves, and indeed above all things; and that their mutual love must not proceed from natural affection only, but be chiefly a fruit of the Spirit, and should flow from faith, as its true source. (Galatians 5:22.)

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- (5.) Thus all they do, is done in love; that is, their whole marriage conduct flows first from the love of Jesus Christ, and then from the love which they bear towards one another.
- (6.) As they know, that they are not able to do all this by their own strength and power; therefore they pray and cry to the Lord, not only separately, but also with each other, and that heartily, that he would be pleased to guide, direct, and keep them from all evil, strengthen them in all that is good, and in all things prepare them according to his own will. And this they do.
- (7.) Especially when, according to God's ordinance, they come together as man and wife; that it may be done in his presence, in the peace of God, with his blessing, and according to the good pleasure of his will. For the Scripture says, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Colossians 3:17.)
- (8.) And, as they are sensible, that with all their fidelity towards our Saviour, they are poor and weak human creatures, who are often prone to err, nay, actually do so, notwithstanding all the favour which our Saviour has bestowed upon them; they therefore daily cleanse

themselves in the blood of the Lamb, and know that they partake of salvation merely through grace, for Christ's sake.

¶204

Such married people look upon their children as “a heritage (or gift) of the Lord, and the fruits of the woman his rewards” (Psalms 127:3); and they endeavour to educate their children in a manner well-pleasing to him, who shed his blood for them. See ¶141 and ¶142. The holy incarnation of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the happy period of her pregnancy, with her bringing him forth like another child unto the world, make a blessed impression upon them. As Jesus was used to put his hands upon the children, and to pray over them (Matthew 19:13) so they also commend their children to the Lord from their very conception, and never cease to pray for them. Because our Saviour denounces a woe upon him who offends one of those little ones that believe on him (Matthew 28:6-7) therefore they watch over them, and avoid not only speaking and doing what might injure the souls of their children; but they also endeavour diligently to preserve them from being injured by others. The examples of Moses and Samuel are an instructive lesson to them; for although the former was educated among the heathenish Egyptians, and the latter among the wicked sons of Eli; the instruction which they received from their mothers in their most tender years, was a
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permanent blessing to them throughout their lives. These examples should incite and encourage parents to accustom their children, in their most early infancy, to become acquainted with Jesus Christ, with what he has done and suffered for them, and with his will and words; and to habituate them to a tender and confident converse with him. They teach and keep them to obedience, always giving them something to do, according to their strength; left from being idle, they might fall into some mischief: for, “Idleness teacheth much evil.” (Ecclesiastes 33:27.)

And, amidst all this they should bear in mind the words of Scripture, “Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4); and, “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.” (Colossians 3:21.)

Your children must, amidst all the earnestness of their parents to keep them from evil, and to direct them to good (for this is indispensably necessary, lest we fall into the transgression of Eli) yet always remain assured of their parents love, that they may not lose their confidence towards them.

Such a real Christian marriage is an image of Christ, and of “the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28.) For “as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; so ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it: even as the Lord to the church. And, the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body. And, as the church is subject unto Christ, so also should the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.” By the church we here understand the flock of the sheep of Jesus, who hear his voice, whom he knows, who follow him, to whom he gives eternal life, who shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand; and none is able to pluck them out of his Father’s hand. (John 10:27.) Paul treats this subject fully in Ephesians 5:22.

Christ is the bridegroom (John 3:29); the church is the bride. (2 Corinthians 11:2.) The bridegroom loves the bride more than his own life (and of this he gave an effectual proof when he died upon the cross); the bride loves the bridegroom more than her own life; and many thousands martyrs have sealed this with their own blood. Oh how great a model have the children of God in their marriages! And how glorious a race have both husbands and wives to run, to obtain this great prize! See also 1 Peter 3:1 and Colossians 3:18-19.

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When God, by death, separates a woman from her husband, he is then *a widower*. Paul did not choose to advise the widowers at Corinth, to enter into marriage again, partly on account of the present, and partly of the ensuing distress. He says (1 Corinthians 7:27-28); “Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But, and if thou marry thou hast not sinned.” Should any one take the words (1 Timothy 3:2); “A bishop must be blameless, *the husband of one wife,*” in such a sense, as if Paul intended that Timothy should take no one for a bishop who had entered into a second marriage; he ought to consider that Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, and sent Timothy to the places where the Gospel had been preached, in order to regulate and form the believing Gentiles into churches, and to ordain overseers, or bishops and deacons among them. The Gentiles had the custom of taking more than one wife, and the very kings of Israel

followed this practice. Paul had indeed advised, but not commanded in the name of God, that if a brother had an unbelieving wife, and she chose to dwell with him, he should put her away. (1 Corinthians 7:12.) Now, if a man had more than one wife, what was then to be done? Probable it is, that he kept her, if she chose to dwell with him; for which should he put away from him? But Paul would not allow, that Timothy should make such a man a bishop, who, at one and the same time, had more than *one* wife.

Thus, when a widower marries again, he is to observe every thing, which, (¶202), is said concerning married people. Does he remain single, on account of his age, or for other causes, it is incumbent upon him to observe what is said in ¶200, concerning single people, who have not yet entered into the state of holy matrimony. In this case, the following words are particularly applicable: “Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 3:20.) “According to my earnest expectation, and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness,—Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.—I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.” (Philippians 1:20.)

¶207

A woman, who survives her husband, is called a *widow*; and children, who lost their father, are called *fatherless*. Widows and the fatherless are usually mentioned together in the Holy Scripture; but strictly speaking, such children are orphans, who have neither father nor mother. God is in the Scripture called a “Helper,” nay, “a father of the
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fatherless.” (Psalms 10:14 and 68:5.) He is extolled for relieving the fatherless and widow (Psalms 146), and for not despising their supplication. (Ecclesiastes 25:17.) He is also called the Judge of the widows, or the Lord who procures them justice. (Psalms 68:5.) Whatever has been said respecting children, whether boys or girls, relates also to the orphans, as children; and whatever has been said respecting females in the state of celibacy, relates also to the widow. However, as orphans have peculiar promises, they ought to put a peculiar trust in them; and the widows ought also to do the same. And as they are both a peculiar property of the Lord and Saviour, therefore they ought to be likewise peculiarly concerned to live to his joy and honour.

At the time when Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians, he was as unwilling to advise the widows to marry, as any other unmarried person (1 Corinthians 7:40); because he had his eye upon the ensuing

distress, and was desirous to spare them. (1 Corinthians 7:27-28.) He says, however, (1 Corinthians 7:39), “The wife is bound by the law (of marriage) as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband be dead, she is a liberty to be married to whom she will; *only in the Lord.*” In those times the parents of a virgin gave the decisive answer, in respect to her marrying, or not marrying. (1 Corinthians 7:36-37.) But when she became a widow, it depended principally *upon herself*, when she was asked whether she would marry, and to whom? And Paul expressly advised (1 Timothy 5:14), “that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” Now, when a widow marries again, she returns to the same state she was in before. See ¶205.

¶208

If she remains a widow, these words are particularly applicable to her: “she that is a widow indeed, trusteth in God and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.” (1 Timothy 5:5.)

The Scripture of the New Testament makes mention particularly of Anna, “who had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity.” Consequently, she was a young widow; for it was the custom among the children of Israel, at that time, to marry virgins when young. She lived afterwards as a widow until her eighty-fifth year, never departing from the Temple (that is, she neglected no divine service) and serving God with fastings and prayers night and day. This woman came in at the instant, when Jesus, being about five weeks old, according to the law, (Leviticus 12:2), was presented to the Lord in the Temple. “And she gave thanks unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption (through the Messiah) in Jerusalem.” (Luke 2:36.) Widows are again

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mentioned who are “well report of for good works; who have brought up children, who have lodged strangers, who have washed the saints’ feet, who have relieved the afflicted, who have diligently followed every good work.” (1 Timothy 5:10.)

Hence it is clear, (1.) That all young widows are not obliged to marry again; but that it depends upon the particular circumstances in which each widow is. (2.) That it is well-pleasing to the Lord, if a widow in a decent and proper manner continues in her house and family, educates her children, and in the church where she lives, approves herself, by services done to others, as an handmaid of Jesus and of his people. (3.) But that it is also well-pleasing to the Lord, if a widow, on account of age and infirmity, or for other well-grounded reasons, being free from

external occupations, devotes herself entirely to prayer and supplication before God, and to spend her days and nights, without intermission, in converse with Jesus Christ, and with souls belonging to him.

The words of James (James 1:27), may be properly mentioned in this place: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” Likewise, “If any man or woman that believeth have widows (that is, if his or her mother, or grandmother, or near relations, is a widow), let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed,” (that is, desolate persons, who have nobody to take care of them, and are in no capacity to get their livelihood) that these may be supplied, viz. with a livelihood. “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” (1 Timothy 5:3 and 16:4-8.)

¶209

Concerning *Magistrates*, we have the following passages of the Scriptures of the New Testament: “Let every soul be subject unto higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation: For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for the good: but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid (thou has cause to be afraid) for he beareth not the sword in vain: for his is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject (ye must by all means be subject) not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are

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God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render, therefore, to all their dues: tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour to whom honour.” (Romans 13:1.) See also Matthew 22:21. “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme (the highest magistrate); or unto governors (those invested with offices) as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the

King.” (1 Peter 2:13.) See also Titus 3:1. “I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.” (1 Timothy 2:1.)

¶210

From those passages of Scripture the following points flow very naturally:

(1.) A supreme magistrate, who has a love for our Saviour, and wishes to be governed by his Holy Spirit, finds here in brief, every thing that is expected from him. It is plainly expressed, that he, like all other magistrates is ordained of God, and is his servant. Thus it is his sole concern to please his Lord, whom he serves, and to do his will, in every respect, as well in small as in great things. He knows also from the Scripture, that “God raised Christ from the dead, and set him at his own right-hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Ephesians 1:20-21); and that HE is “King of Kings, Lord of Lords.” (Revelation 19:11-16 and 27:14.) Christ, in his government, is an example for them; they learn of him, and order themselves according to his word, and thus they become possessed of true wisdom, and choose the best means, both to put a stop to evil, and to further what is good. They know likewise, that in regard to themselves they can be saved only as other men are, by Jesus Christ; and that they are to observe in the same commandments, which are given to other men. Being thus convinced, it has also an influence upon every thing which they undertake as magistrates.

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It appears clearly, that,
(2.) He who belongs to Jesus Christ, who is under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and is faithful in his ways, considers duly, that the higher powers are ordained of God both for his good, and for the good of all those who are truly godly. On this account, he is

thankful to God for them, loves them from his heart, and yields them obedience, not from a fear of being punished if he did not, but from the love to God, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, who had ordained the higher powers, and who willeth that men should be subject to them.

(3.) As a magistrate must have a great many officers and servants under him, to maintain peace in the land, to protect every man in his property, to administer justice and judgment, to make every where good regulations, and faithfully watch over them; and as this requires great expenses, for a variety of disbursements; therefore a man who cleaves with his whole heart to our Saviour, and follows faithfully his precepts, is not only bound to bear his proportionate share of the expenses which are laid upon subjects, but is also heartily inclined to do it. And should it be in his power to keep back part of that, which he ought to give to the magistrate, without being discovered, and punished for it; yet his conscience would not allow him to do it, because he knows that such conduct would displease his Heavenly Father, and his Lord and Saviour.

(4.) When he brings before God his supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for kings, and for all that are in authority, especially for those under whose protection he lives, he does not pray for the government only, that it may prosper, and that under it we may lead a peaceable and quiet life in all godliness and honesty, but he likewise prays for their persons. For Paul connects the words, "God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth," immediately with the commandment for us to pray for all men, and in particular for kings, and all that are in authority, and alleges the one as the cause of the other.

We now come to the love of our neighbour; and observe first, That even in the Old Testament, God commanded the people of Israel: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Leviticus 19:18.)

If the Scribes* of that time had compared this with other passages in the books of Moses, they might easily have seen that the word neighbour did not include all men in general only, but also each in particular: for when God says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." (Exodus 20:16.) "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife." (Exodus 20:17.) "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's land-mark." (Deuteronomy 19:14.) "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him." (Leviticus 19:13.) Is it not evident, that all men without exception are comprehended under the word neighbour; for it is the same as if it had been said, Thou shalt not bear false witness against any man. But they made perverse explanation, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy; as if enemies were not to be reckoned among our neighbours. See Matthew 5:43. To refute this false explanation of the Scribes, and to enforce the true sense of the love of our neighbour, our Lord and Saviour commands: "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matthew 5:44.) And he speaks to the same purpose upon another occasion: for upon being asked by one, Who is my neighbour? He answered him the parable of the Good Samaritan. A certain man had been most cruelly treated by thieves, and a Samaritan took him under his care, and saved his life. How were the Samaritans looked upon by the Jews, and the Jews by the Samaritans? They were bitter and irreconcilable enemies, for the Jews regarded the Samaritans as heretics; and such they really were. The Samaritans thought, however, that they had the true religion. But our Saviour testifies, that the Jew was the neighbour of the Samaritan, and Samaritan of the Jew. See Luke 10:29. Thus then the words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," imply, according to the explanation given by our Lord and Saviour, Thou shalt love all men as thyself, whether friends or foes, whether of the same religious persuasion with thyself or not; and to express ourselves according to the circumstances of our own times, we must be obliged to say, Thou shalt love all men as thyself, whether converted or unconverted, whether Christians, Jews, Turks, Pagans, or by whatever name they be called.

*The Scribes were such as studied the Scriptures.

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Now the Scripture testifies, that this commandment of God comprehends every thing, which relates to our behaviour towards our neighbour. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self." (Romans 13:8-9.) "All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self." (Galatians 5:14.) Therefore this commandment was also called (James 2:8) "The Royal Law," that is, the chief of all laws; for the rest flow from, and depend upon it. And upon this especially the following words of Christ are founded, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." (Matthew 7:12.)

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Hatred against any man is therefore not compatible with a heart, that has experienced Jesus to be its Saviour. For hatred, which is a strong aversion to a person, induces us to endeavour to injure and ruin him, and even effectually to do it, or at least to rejoice at it. This is a notorious work of the flesh, and whoever suffers it to rule over him, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:20-21.) Even in the Old Testament it is said (Leviticus 19:17), "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart." And in the New, "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness unto now." (1 John 2:9.) And "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (1 John 3:15.) Father, "If a man says, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." (1 John 4:20.)

But we are all descended from one father and one mother, and are all, in that point of view, brethren; believers, however, have one Father only, who is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in this peculiar sense, are brethren also.

Hence, when David says, "I have hated them that regard lying vanities." (Psalms 31:6.) And, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?" (Psalms 139:21.) Nay, when it is said of God himself, that "his soul hateth the wicked." (Psalms 6:5.) All this must be understood to mean, that wicked people are hated, in so far only, as they are wicked, but not as they are creatures of God; or, as we otherwise express it, we do not hate the person, but his sin. In which sense also, on the other hand, the following words are to be taken, "God abhorreth nothing, that

he has made.” (Wisdom 11:24.) “Yea, He loved the people,” (as his creatures). (Deuteronomy 33:3.)

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The words “Love not the world” (1 John 2:15); are to be interpreted in the same way. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16.) And thus we should undoubtedly love the world; that is, all mankind, not expecting even such, as are yet poor slaves of sin and the devil, so far as they are men. But the ways and spirit of the world, viz. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, we are not to love, nor to have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

Hence it is clear, that we are to endeavour to love all men, according to 1 Thessalonians 3:12. “The LORD make you to increase and abound in love one to another, and *toward all men.*”

For the fruit of the Spirit is love (Galatians 5:22); and is it possible that a heart in which the Holy Ghost dwelleth, should be destitute of love? This love is a hearty inclination, nay, an earnest impulse, to do good to all men, and to seek their real interests. Moreover, we are to “*walk in love*” (Ephesians 5:2); that is, we are to advance in love without ceasing; and “let all our things be done with charity,” (love). (1 Corinthians 16:14.)

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Farther, mutual love is in an especial manner recommended to all those who believe in Jesus Christ; which in the writings of the New Testament is called *brotherly love*. The reason of it lies in the words of our Lord, “One is your master, even Christ; *and all ye are brethren.*” (Matthew 23:8.)

To which the disciples of Christ conformed, when they called believers simply *brethren*; as plainly appears by the discourses and epistles, which we find in the Scripture of the New Testament. For, although our Saviour did not abolish the difference of rank among men, as is evident from what has been alleged concerning masters and servants, and concerning the higher powers and subjects, as shown in both ¶187 and ¶209; yet this is certain, that in reference to the things that belong in the kingdom (for his kingdom is not of this world) no difference is allowed. Therefore James very seriously admonishes the churches of his time, not to prefer the rich before the poor in their assemblies for divine worship. His words are, “My brethren, have not the

faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect to persons”—“If ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.” (James 2:1-9.)

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Neither would our Saviour permit his disciples to aspire after preference. For he called them unto him, and said “Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (servant), and whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” (Matthew 20:25.)

According to this, we are to look upon each other as brethren; who have all one father, who “is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” so far as relates to the kingdom of Christ, or God’s covenant of grace, with men, of which Jesus Christ is the Mediator, and into which we are translated by means of faith in Jesus Christ. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again* (and through Christ made us new Creatures) unto a lively hope.” (1 Peter 1:3.)

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Many are the passages in which believers are commanded to love one another; from which we may observe the nature of brotherly love. Our Saviour said to his disciples, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; *as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:34-35.) Farther, “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, *as I have loved you.*” (John 15:12.)

When the Lord commanded his disciples concerning those who should believe him, and be baptized, “Teach them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20), the disciples did afterwards earnestly inculcate this doctrine. Peter says, “Purify your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit *unto unfeigned love of the brethren. See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently;* that is, love them with all your heart.” (1 Peter 1:22.) And, “Above all things have *fervent charity* (love) *among yourselves:* for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” That is, although others were greatly to injure us, and even frequently, yet love hides it, and willingly forgives it. (1 Peter 4:8 and 2:17.) Farther, “*Be kindly-affectioned one to another with*

brotherly love.” (Romans 12:10.) Likewise, “*Let brotherly love continue.*” (Hebrews 13:1.) And, “*Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another*” (Mark 12:31.); and “indeed ye do it towards all the brethren; but we beseech you, brethren, *that ye increase more and more.*” (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10.)

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John urges brotherly love likewise, in his first epistle, from beginning to end, and says, among other things, “This is his (God’s) commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, *and love one another*, as HE gave us commandment.” (1 John 3:23.) And, “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is LOVE.” (1 John 4:7-8.) “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because HE laid down his life for us; *and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*” (1 John 3:16.)

Paul (1 Corinthians 8) gives us a most beautiful description of the state of a person, whose heart is truly replenished with the love of Jesus; and who therefore truly lives in the love of God, and of his neighbour. No one can attentively view himself in this glass, without being sensible of his deficiency herein, and without receiving an impression of the happiness which they enjoy, who become more and more like their Saviour in love.

From all these passages, we see, that we should love one another; but how? As Christ hath loved us; and this goes so far, that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Consequently, our love to each other should be highly conspicuous. Every one by this shall know, that we belong to Jesus. Moreover, we should love another with reverence, truly from the heart, with constancy; and increase in it more and more. The fruits of such love will certainly manifest themselves.

It is hence clear, that believers are so far from being blamable for loving one another in preference to others, that it is even required of them in the Holy Scripture, and agreeable to the nature of the love of believers. “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, *especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*” That is, to those who are partakers with us of the faith in Christ. (Galatians 6:10.)

Universal love is however included in this brotherly love. (2 Peter 1:7.) “The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and *toward all men.*” (1 Thessalonians 3:12.) “Follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and *to all men.*” (1 Thessalonians 5:15.)

The love of our enemies is especially recommended to us, by our Lord Jesus Christ in the words above recited, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matthew 5:44.) See ¶212. That the children of God always have enemies is not known by history only, but also by daily experience. If we ask them the reason of this

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enmity, one assigns this, and another that, and some pretense is never wanting. But what our Lord and Saviour says to his disciples is the true reason of it; "Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, *therefore the world hateth you.*" (John 15:19.) He assigns the same reason, when he says to his Father, "I have given them thy word: and the world hath hated them, *because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*" (John 17:14.)

Now, if any one loves his enemy, then he not only seeks to avoid whatever might hurt him; but he is also inclined, and earnestly intent upon doing every thing to the utmost of his power, to the furtherance of that which can be of service to him. Whence it follows, that "he does not avenge himself." See Romans 12:19. Neither renders evil for evil, according to 1 Thessalonians 5:15. "See that none render evil for evil unto any man." He remembers also the words of Jesus, "I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matthew 5:39.)

If a man, in obedience to these words of Jesus, having been smitten on one cheek, would afterwards suffer himself to be smitten on the other (and such instances have actually occurred) that man would not sin. But the meaning of Jesus was doubtless this, that in such a case a man would do better, to turn the other cheek to him, than to resist evil, and return stroke for stroke. He himself said to the officer who struck him upon the face, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" (John 18:23.) The exhortation of Paul ought also to be rightly understood, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." (Romans 12:20.) For, should any one under pretense of doing good to his enemies, heap coals of fire on his head, and thus injure or destroy him, that would not be love. But if any one attends to the words of Christ, and simply follows them, and overcomes evil with good, that is, does good to his enemy, in proportion to the evil he intended, in this case, his enemy may be finally so put to shame, and feel so much

remorse for his enmity, as if he had coals of fire upon his head. See for instance, 1 Samuel 24:4 and 2 Kings 6:8.

This kind of love has prevailed upon many an enemy to reflect within himself, see, and own his injustice, and from an enemy, to become a friend. Oh how animating are such examples! Our Lord Jesus Christ died for men, who were yet sinners, that is, his enemies (Romans 5:8-10); and prayed for those who crucified him. (Luke 23:34.) This is a striking example of love to our enemies.

Our Saviour has said little of what may be called *love in friendship*, when, for instance, two persons love one another, in preference to all

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others, and seek upon all occasions to counsel, assist, serve, and promote each other's interest. For although this be of itself not improper, and rather necessary, as it include gratitude, the opposite of that scandalous vice unthankfulness, yet our Saviour will not allow his disciples to confine themselves to this friendly love, and look upon that as an evidence and proof of our title of being children of God. He says, "If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:46.) "And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thanks have you? For sinners also do even the same." (Luke 6:33.) "But love ye your enemies." (Luke 6:35.)

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Peace flows infallibly from the love of our neighbour, and disposes us not only to be peaceably inclined towards others, but also to take pains to make peace between others, and to preserve them in it. In children of God, unity in the spirit is pre-supposed. Our Saviour was much concerned about this, as we may see by his High priestly prayer, in which he remembers all believers; "I pray for them, *that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.*" (John 17:20-21.)

In the church at Jerusalem, this prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ was immediately accomplished. For "the multitude of them that believed (and the number of the men only were at that time about five thousand) were of one heart, and of one soul." (Acts 4:4 and 32.)

The disciples of the Lord were particularly careful, that this might continue with blessing in all the churches. Paul says, (Philippians 1:27); "Let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel—*that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind.*"

Now, when the unity of the spirit truly takes place, then the children of God cannot but maintain and keep peace. “Endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit *in the bond of peace.*” (Ephesians 4:3.) “Follow righteousness, faith, charity, *peace*, *with them that call on the Lord* out of a pure heart.” (2 Thessalonians 2:22.) “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, *be of one mind, live in peace*; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” (2 Corinthians 13:11.) “*Let us follow after the things which make for peace*, and things wherewith one may edify another.” (Romans 14:19.) See also Mark 9:50 and Matthew 5:9.

But the children of God ought not only to be peaceful one among another, but to labour also *to live peaceably with all men.*” (Romans 12:18.) See 1 Peter 3:11.

For peace is also one of the fruits of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22.) There are many things which may disturb peace, and which for that very
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reason, we ought to eschew. Self-conceit especially belongs to this class, on which account also we are earnestly warned against it. “Let us not be *desirous of vain-glory*, provoking one another, envying one another.” (Galatians 5:26.)—“I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, *not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly.*” (Romans 12:3.)

When the disciples of Jesus began to reason among themselves, which of them should be accounted the greatest, there was immediately strife among them, and peace was interrupted. (Luke 22:24.)

We may say the same with respect to self-interest. Oh how often is peace disturbed by this! Our Saviour shows us the shortest way to maintain peace, when the question is about thine and mine. “If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat (rather than that thou shouldst dispute with him) *let him have thy cloak also.*” (Matthew 5:40.) Paul gives the Corinthians a similar admonition, “There is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another: *why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?*” (1 Corinthians 6:7.) With respect to both these interruptions of peace, he speaks in the following words. “If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. *Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves; look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*” (Philippians 2:1.)

The more those, who are devoted to our Saviour, keep to the doctrine of Jesus and of his disciples; the more their eyes are fixed upon Jesus, who is the image of God, and the example for us all; the more they give due attention to the Holy Ghost, who does so faithfully teach, lead and rule us;--the greater is the growth in brotherly love, and the more they exercise it. We have all but one and the same rule to walk by; we have all one pattern, that ought to be ever in our view; we are all in one school, and have there one and the same instruction and direction. Therefore it is not only possible, yea one might say, not difficult, but it is highly necessary for the members of Jesus to be collectively of one mind, and to remain in peace, provided they be only faithful and obedient. The following things may be farther observed upon his head.

- (1.) Because they are still men, who are compassed with many infirmities, and err in many ways, they should have *patience*, and

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bear with each other. This patience is likewise one of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22.); and shows itself not only towards the brethren, but also towards every man. For so it is said in the Scripture, “Walk worthy of the vocation, wherewith ye are called,--*with long-suffering (patience) forbearing one another in love.*” (Ephesians 4:1-2.) And, “*Support the weak, be patient toward all men.*” (1 Thessalonians 5:14.)

The patience which the Lord has with us, is unbounded, and is the strongest motive for our having patience with others. The patience which has been spoke of in ¶190 requiring us to be resigned under afflictions, and not to murmur against God, is different from that patience of which we are here treating; but which however, is certainly connected with it. To this head belongs also *meekness*, which inclines us to spare our neighbour, and not easily to be angry with him, or retain our anger; of which our Saviour says, “Learn of me; and *I am meek* and lowly in heart.” (Matthew 11:29.) And, “Blessed are the *meek.*” (Matthew 5:5.)

- (2.) Thus we also look to him, for “HE does not bruise the broken reed, nor quench the smoking flax.” And on this account the “strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.” (Romans 15:1.) “*Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.*” (Romans 15:7.)

- (3.) If we love others as we do ourselves, we cannot be indifferent about those circumstances which affect them; but *we take share*

in them; according to the word of Paul, “Rejoice with *them that do rejoice*, and weep with *them that weep*.” (Romans 12:15.)

This was the exhortation of that loving father, at the return of his prodigal son, to his brother, when he was dissatisfied with the joy of his father and of his whole family; “It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.” (Luke 15:32.) This sympathy is connected with the words, “Remember them that are in bonds (as Paul, for instance, at Rome, being bound with a chain to a soldier) and them which suffer adversity.” (Hebrews 13:3.)

(4.) If we have the same loving mind as Jesus, we cheerfully *forgive* our neighbour. See ¶197. For our Lord Jesus Christ says, “*If we forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*” (Matthew 6:14 15.) And in other places it is said, “*Forgive one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.*” (Ephesians 4:32.)

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“Forbear one another, *and forgive one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*” (Colossians 3:13.) See Matthew 28:21 and Luke 17:4. If this be put in practice, then do we not retain resentment one against another. James says, “*Grudge not one against another brethren, lest ye be condemned.*” (James 5:9.)

How is this understood? If any one grudges against another, that is a proof of his not having forgiven him: but if he does not forgive him, neither will he himself be forgiven: and, if he is not forgiven, then he is condemned. See Matthew 18:23-35.

(5.) After reading these words of the Holy Scripture, “*By love serve one another.*” (Galatians 5:13.) Likewise, “*Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*” (1 John 3:18.) And, “*As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*” (1 Peter 4:10.) The following is however to be observed. When any one stands in the need of another’s assistance, it is but just that he should accept of it, as a blessing from the Lord’s hand; and if he partakes of it, he should first thank the Lord for it with all his heart, and then also his neighbour. But he, who is counted worthy to assist and serve another, if he has an understanding to judge according to the mind of Christ, will consider himself under still greater obligations to God; especially if it concerns the

members of Christ. For he well knows, that every thing that is done to the members of Jesus Christ, is looked upon by him, as if it were done unto himself.

(6.) A certain willingness and complacency is always necessary, if the service done shall afford pleasure. “Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, *go with him twain.*” (Matthew 5:41.)

The Holy Scriptures do not leave us without instruction, with respect to the manner of treating others: For instance, “*Be ye kind one to another, and tender-hearted.*” (Ephesians 4:32.) “*In honour preferring one another.*” (Romans 12:10.) “In lowliness of mind *let each esteem the other better than themselves.*” (Philippians 2:3.) “*Forbearing one another in love.*” (Ephesians 4:2.) “Let your *moderation* (that is, candour) be known unto all men,” (exercise it towards every one). (Philippians 4:5.) “See that *ye walk circumspectly*, not as fools, but as wise.” (Ephesians 5:15.) “*Walk in wisdom* toward them that are without.” (Colossians 4:5.) That is, towards such as do not belong to the church of God.

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The love of God, and the love of our neighbour, are inseparable in their very nature; for the Scripture says, “Every one that loveth him that begat (that is GOD), loveth him also that is begotten of him.” (1 John 5:1, his brother.) And, “If a man say, I love God, hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 John 4:20)—Hence it follows,

- (1.) That we seek our neighbour’s edification as far as we are able, pursuant to Romans 14:19. “Let us follow things wherewith *one may edify another.*” And, “Let us *consider one another to provoke unto LOVE, and to good works.*” (Hebrews 10:24.) Moreover, (1 Corinthians 8:1 and Ephesians 4:16); “*love edifieth.*”
- (2.) That we do not neglect any opportunity of restoring our neighbour, who hath gone astray; nor withdraw from him, when the situation of his heart is such that he wants our help. “Brethren (says Paul), If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual *restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.*” (Galatians 6:1.) “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, *and one convert him; let him know, that He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death.*” (James 5:19-20.)

(3.) That we set our neighbour a good example, and show him the way by a good conversation. That even a heathen, who doth not as yet believe in the Gospel, may and ought to be won, without the word, by the subjection and chaste conversation of his wife, who is a believer in Jesus Christ, is testified by Peter. (1 Epistles 3:1-2.) Whence it is evident, that the walk of a person who loves Jesus, is sometimes of more benefit than the most expressive words; and experience also confirms it. Whereas, on the other hand, a man who teaches the word of God, and denies it by his walk and conversation, causes the name of God to be blasphemed, and gives an occasion of offense; as Paul testifieth concerning the Jews. (Romans 2:17.)

A good conversation implies, in general, that we avoid and flee from evil, and learn to do good. Thus saith David, "*Depart from evil, and do good*" (Psalms 34:14); and Isaiah, "*Cease to do evil; learn to do well.*" (Isaiah 1:16-17.)

Paul, "*Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*" (Romans 12:9.) And, Amos, "*Hate the evil; and love the good.*" (Amos 5:15.)

To this we are also exhorted by the following passages of Scripture. "Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things
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are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise (any thing praise-worthy) think on these things." (Philippians 4:8.) "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Titus 2:11-12.) Farther, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*" (Matthew 5:16.) "*Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which shall behold, glorify God.*" (1 Peter 2:12.)

Believers are called, A "light in the Lord." (Ephesians 5:8.) Why? For as the moon shines bright in the night, from receiving the light of the sun, and reflecting it back again upon the earth, so do the children of God, by their good conversation, shine in the midst of a wicked world, for the benefit of others: yet they have not this of themselves, but from Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness.

To this head also belong, that “All things be done decently, and in order,” according to 1 Corinthians 14:40; and that they demean themselves as “blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation” (Philippians 2:15); also, that they “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” (Ephesians 5:11.)

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In general, such as belong to our Saviour ought never to forget, that they are in this world, to show forth the praises of him, “who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9.) For though a person be not appointed a shepherd and teacher in the church of Christ, he is nevertheless, according to the abundant mercy of God, begotten again unto a lively hope, as Peter speaks concerning the people to whom he writes (1 Epistles 1:3); and he therefore belongs to “the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people,” or to those people who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ, as his property; of whom it is expected, that they should show forth the virtues of Christ. Indeed it becomes them, first of all to look to themselves, according to the words of Scripture: “*Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*”

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That is, if he first reforms himself, before he endeavours to reform others, it will be an honour to him. (Galatians 6:4.)

It also becomes them not to be precipitate, but to be glad to learn; as James exhorts, “*Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak.*” (James 1:19.)

They are to observe also what Paul says, “*Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another*” (1 Thessalonians 5:11); and, “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom*” (Colossians 3:16); likewise, “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.*” (Ephesians 5:19.) On this occasion they are to take good notice of the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, “*Foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.*” (2 Timothy 2:23.)

And, feeling our Lord and Saviour has expressly spoken of the consequences of preaching the Gospel, “*From henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the daughter, the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her*

daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law” (Luke 12:52-53); the same may also happen in our days, that one who is from his heart converted to God, must be obliged to suffer much from his nearest relations. Then the words are applicable to him, “Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.” (1 Peter 4:19.)

They are however not to be backward, as often as it is required of them, to witness a good confession of the grace in the blood of Jesus: for it is said, “*Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.*” (1 Peter 3:15.)

¶221

If we love our neighbour, we shall avoid every thing which might injure and be detrimental to him. For, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour.” (Romans 13:10.)

Now we may offend and injure him, (1.) with respect to his body, soul, or life: (2.) with respect to his marriage and children: (3.) with respect to his goods, possessions, and livelihood: (4.) with respect to his reputation and good name. Therefore God, our Lord, by his holy commandments, made a barrier, a wall, by way of preservation and security.

Certainly there are cases, in which it is right to punish a man with death. God, in the Old Testament, had ordered capital punishments to be inflicted on account of several sins: nay, it was his will and pleasure, that entire nations should be extirpated, on account of the dreadful

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abominations which were in general practice among them. Thus, for instance, he commanded the Israelites to cut off the Canaanites entirely. In these cases, putting men to death was right; and if, for example, any one who had willfully taken away his neighbour’s life, had not been punished with death, it laid the country under the guilt of blood. And, because the Israelites spared the Canaanites, and did not exterminate all of them from the earth, according to the commandment of God, they sinned on this occasion, and drew upon themselves many and heavy judgments.

God, for the preservation of men, forbids every attack upon their lives, and all kinds of murder, under the severest penalties, except in such cases, when they are put to death, as a punishment for their crimes. Cain knew, that by killing his brother Abel he had done wrong. Immediately after the deluge, the Lord said, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” (Genesis 9:6.) God also gave

this reason, "For in the image of God made he man." Thus is man, in preference to all other creatures, the object of God's attention. Consequently, if a man who exercises cruelty upon any other creature, does not remain unpunished by God, much less will God suffer him to escape punishment, who takes away his neighbor's life. See Genesis 9:5. In the law of Moses it is said (Leviticus 24:17); "He that killeth any man, shall surely be put to death." See Numbers 35:16.

But this law is not intended for any one who has misfortune to slay a man unawares, against whom he had no ill-will. For instance, if any one should fall from the top of an house upon a person accidentally passing by, and kill him, he notwithstanding the law before mentioned, was not to be put to death. But if any one should willfully cause the death of another, though he did not kill him with his own hand, he would be considered as a murderer. Therefore Nathan said to David, "*Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword*" (2 Samuel 12:9); though he fell by the hand of the enemy. But it was by David's command that Joab contrived the method by which it was effected.

Nor did God forbid murder only, but also every thing which may or can give occasion to it: for instance, (1.) *Hatred*, "Whosoever hateth his brother is (in God's sight) a murderer." (1 John 3:15.) See ¶213.

(2.) *Enmity*. When a man has malice against another; as in the instance of Joseph's brethren (Genesis 37:4); which carried them to such lengths, that they contrived his death. (Genesis 37:20.)

(3.) *Resentment*. When a man bears malice against his neighbour, and retains bitterness; as Joab from resentment killed Abner, who had killed his brother Ashael with a spear. (2 Samuel 3:27.)

(4.) *Envy*. When a man from his heart grudges his neighbour the good which happens to him. Thus did Cain kill his brother Abel,

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because "the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." (Genesis 4:3.)

See also 1 John 3:12.

(5.) *Anger*. This made Simeon and Levi so outrageous, that they put Hamor and Shechem, and all the males that were in the city, to the sword. (Genesis 34:25-26 and 69:5.) See ¶161.

(6.) *Quarreling, calumniating, reviling, scolding*, and the like. For who can be ignorant of the many murders which they occasion? Therefore the Scripture enjoins, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." (Ephesians 4:31.) Likewise, "Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth." (Colossians 3:8.) "Where envying and strife is,

there is confusion, and every evil work.” (James 3:16.) “God will give to them that are contentious, tribulation and anguish.” (Romans 2:6-9.) See also Romans 13:13.

For, “Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions,” do all belong to the list of flagrant works of the flesh, which prevent our coming into the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:20-21.) Who can doubt, that the conduct necessarily connected with these, is equally opposite to the mind of the Lord? Such partake of the nature of Cain, who being very wroth with his brother Abel, his countenance fell. (Genesis 4:5.)

(7.) *Revenge.* “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil.” (Matthew 5:38-39.)

Moses commanded the judges to moderate the punishment of men, according to the nature of their crimes. But the Pharisees put a construction upon these words, as if they were warranted by such means to revenge themselves. But this the Lord expressly forbids; and Paul says, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath (the wrath of God); for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.” (Romans 12:19.)

¶222

How highly our Saviour values the soul of man, is evident from his own words: “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26.)

When, in another place, he says, if our right eye, or right hand, or right foot, offend us, we are not to spare, but to pluck out, to cut off, and
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cast them from us (Matthew 5:29); he there shows, how much we are to be upon our guard, and what earnestness we are to use, not to suffer hurt in our soul. And whereas, according to the commandment of the Lord, we are to love our neighbour as ourselves, it is therefore certain, that we should also be as carefully concerned, that by our means he may not suffer any damage in his soul. The holy Scripture thus expresses it, We are not *to give offense* to any man; that is, we are to demean ourselves in such a manner, that no one should be offended by us, or have occasion given him to commit sin, and thus to be hurt in his soul. Christ says, “Wo unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offenses come (the meaning is, that considering the deep

depravity of men, it cannot fail but men will hurt the souls of each other); but wo to that man by whom the offense cometh.” (Matthew 18:7.) This may happen in various ways. If, for instance, a person whose situation makes him an object of attention, is unmerciful towards his neighbour, and thus by his evil example, occasions another not to show mercy where he ought, in this case the former offends the latter. The holy Scripture thus expresses it, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth” (Ephesians 4:29); and, “Shun profane and vain babblings.” (2 Timothy 2:16.)

Men must give an account, in the day of judgment, of every idle word that they shall speak. (Matthew 12:36.)

Ah! How many are thus offended. For, “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” (1 Corinthians 15:33.) One man gratifies his pride in dress; and another follows his example, even though he believes it to be wrong. Is not this an offense? Another thinks, Why should I not frequent this and the other public diversion, as for instance, the play-house? Why should I make a conscience of this? He goes. His neighbour, though believing it be wrong and sinful, sees it, follows his example, and thus actually commits a sin; for he acts contrary to his knowledge. Does he not in this suffer hurt in his soul? “Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:32.)

Hence it follows, that we ought to give as little offense to unconverted people, to Jews, Turks, and Heathens, as to those that believe in Christ. This was God’s meaning by the commandment, “Thou shalt not put a stumbling block before the blind (that is, thou shalt not put any thing in his way, on which he might stumble, and over which he might fall) but shalt fear thy God; I am the LORD.” (Leviticus 19:14.)

To this head also we must add: “Let *no man put a stumbling-block*, or an occasion to fall *in his brother’s way*.” (Romans 14:13.) And, “Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours *become a stumbling-block to*

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them that are weak.” (1 Corinthians 8:9.) That we are not to give offense to children in particular, we refer to ¶204.

We are still, on this occasion, farther to remark, that we are to avoid not such things only, as are in themselves evil, and an offense to others, but that we have also a word of the Lord, which admonishes us to “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” (1 Thessalonians 5:22.) Now, as what has been said concerns every man, so the servants of Jesus in particular, who are appointed to be assistants in the house of God, that

is, in the church, are very earnestly admonished, “Give *no offense in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed.*” (2 Corinthians 6:3.)

¶223

LOVE also worketh no ill to his neighbour, in regard to his marriage and children.

Concerning married people, and their behaviour towards each other, we have spoken already in ¶202. We have only to add, that although polygamy was tolerated by God under the Old Testament, yet it never was approved or commanded. It was rather forbidden to kings to multiply wives to themselves, with the additional clause, that their hearts turn not away (from God). (Deuteronomy 17:17.) Solomon having, notwithstanding this prohibition, having taken many, and even strange wives, that is, such as were from idolatrous nations (1 Kings 11:3-4); these turned away his heart after strange Gods, so that his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God. (1 Kings 11:3-4.) The argument against polygamy is, that God in the beginning gave man one wife only; and our Lord Jesus Christ appeals to this ordinance, approved by God himself, as the rule for all other marriages. (Matthew 19:4.)

For the same reason also, our Lord Jesus Christ does not allow of divorces; which is evident from Matthew 19:3. For although God had, because of the hardness of their hearts, permitted the people of Israel to put away their wives, (Matthew 19:8, which he suffered to take place in order to prevent murder, and other sins among them) yet it was not according to his perfect will, for from the beginning it was not so. Therefore says Christ, “Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” (Matthew 19:9 and 1 Corinthians 7:10.)

This, among other things, belongs to the wicked customs which had gained ground among the Jews and Heathens, from which Christ has redeemed us with so dear a price; as Peter says, “Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from *your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers*; but with the precious
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blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (1 Peter 1:18-19.)

The holy Scripture often classes fornication and adultery together; and both belong to the flagrant works of the flesh, which exclude us from the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.) For,

“Out of the heart proceed adulteries and fornications, and they defile the man.” (Matthew 15:18-19.)

Fornication is to be avoided as an heathenish abomination, incompatible with faith. Paul classes fornicators with idolaters, adulterers, thieves, and revilers; that is, with such persons as shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10); and says, “Flee fornication.—Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What! Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:15, 18-19). Of adultery it is said, (Leviticus 20:10); “The man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer and the adulterers shall surely be put to death.” The New Testament says, “Marriage is honourable in all, the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” (Hebrews 8:4.) But it was not the wicked act only, which was forbidden, but also every thing, which might occasion it. God said even in the Old Testament, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife.” (Exodus 20:17.) And the doctrine of Christ is, “Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” (Matthew 5:28.)

When the heart filled with lust, produces obscene thoughts and ideas, seducing looks and behaviour towards the object of our inflamed passions, we are commonly and justly alarmed, provided we are still capable of being so, and not lost to all feeling; but even then it is more on account of the consequences of our sinful passion, than of the cause or root of them. We have indeed reason enough to be so; for by such means we may do injury to the souls of others. But the cause or root is however by far the most alarming; for unless the corrupt root be destroyed, we can expect nothing but bad fruit.

Words conveying a double meaning, so common among men, which conceal carnal lusts and impure fancies, are to be looked upon in no other light, than as so many poisonous darts, which one person casts into the heart of another. Paul no doubt means such, when he makes mention of filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting. (Ephesians 5:4.) For in the words immediately preceding, he is speaking of fornication and uncleanness. Such words should never be heard among people who are called by the name of Christ.

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Whatsoever doth not keep within such bounds of temperance and sobriety in eating and drinking, as is according to the will of God, nourisheth his lusts. For, as on the one hand, we are to give our bodies

that which is necessary for them, and to keep them clean and orderly, so are we, on the other hand, to avoid all excess. For the Scripture says, "Let us, who are children of the day (that is, who are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God) *be sober.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:5,8.) And, "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*" (1 Peter 5:8.)

On the other hand, the Scripture warns us against gluttony and drunkenness, as being the abominations of the Gentiles (1 Peter 4:3); and gross works of the flesh, excluding us from any inheritance in the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19.) "Take heed to yourselves, *lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness.*" (Luke 21:34.) "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; *not in rioting and drunkenness.*" (Romans 13:13.) See Ephesians 5:18.

¶224

In order to secure mankind, in the possession of every thing which belongs to them, God has in his law forbidden theft, "Thou shalt not steal." (Exodus 10:15.) "Neither covetous, nor thieves (if they be not converted from the heart) shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:10.)

The restitution of that which had been stolen was earnestly enjoined the Israelites. (Exodus 12:3.)

Therefore said Zaccheus, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." (Luke 19:8.) This was a consequence of his conversion. Alas! how few are there now who do as Zaccheus did! He that is truly converted with his whole heart to God, will not keep back that which has been stolen, if it be possible for him to return it, or to make restitution. But if it not actually be possible (for such cases happen) is it then to be according to the old rule, *Non tollitur peccatum nisi restituatur ablatum?* (that is), "Without restitution of that which has been stolen, is the sin not abolished?" We may boldly answer, No, it cannot be according to the old rule, in the case of impossibility: for as the malefactor on the cross, although he could not restore the man to life again whom he had murdered, obtained pardon of his sins, and inherited everlasting life, after having known, bewailed, and repented of his sins, and laid hold upon Jesus in faith. ("Today shalt thou be with me in

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Paradise.") So may also a thief, if he does as the malefactor did, become a child of God, and inherit everlasting life, although it be not possible for

him to make restitution of that which was stolen. Paul's advice is this: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Ephesians 4:28.)

God moreover has not only forbidden theft in itself, but every thing likewise, which is in fact theft, although it may not seem to be so. For example, when a man in trade sells bad commodities for good ones; when he uses false weights and measures; when sells his wares too dear, uses extortion; and other things of the same kind. To such practices the following passages of Scripture refer: "Wo to him that increaseth that which is not his!--How long?" (Habakkuk 2:6.) "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" (1 Corinthians 6:9.) "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in mete-yard, in weight, or in measure; just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have." (Leviticus 19:35-36.) See Deuteronomy 25:13.

But God has also forbidden the root from which all these evils spring: "Thou shalt *not covet* thy neighbour's house, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." (Exodus 20:17.) Therefore our Saviour says also, "Take heed, *and beware of covetousness.*" (Luke 12:15.) Of this we have spoken already in ¶160 and ¶182. He who has this commandment written in his heart, "*Love thy neighbour as thyself*", will not only faithfully guard against all those things that have the nature of theft in them, but also mortify the desire after his neighbour's property, and covetousness, as soon as he perceives such thoughts arise in his heart. See ¶160.

¶225

Thus it is also the will of God, that as we have opportunity, we should, with the substance given unto us by him, assist and serve our neighbour. Concerning this it is said in general, "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Galatians 6:9.) "To do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Hebrews 12:16.)

We have all that we have, be it much or little, from God, the Lord: but we are his agents and stewards only, who are to use and expend faithfully, according to his mind, that which has been entrusted to us. The day is coming, when every one must give an account of the use, we have made of that which God has put into our hands. For, as little as that servant could justify himself, who went and hid his lord's talent in

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the earth, after it had been instructed to him (for at his lord's command he was cast as an unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth as described in Matthew 25:24) so little will they be able to justify themselves before him, to whom he has given this world's goods, and who have not employed and improved according to his will. His command is this: "Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke 6:36.)

Now whoever doth not do this, has his sentence already pronounced: "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy." (James 2:13.) Of this we read in Matthew 24:41. There it is said; "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not."

By this we see, that we are to assist, according to the command of Christ, the poor and distressed sufferers, as far as we are able. "Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away." (Matthew 5:42.) "Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great—for HE (the Father in Heaven) is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil." (Luke 6:35.)

Then we shall see the accomplishment of what Solomon speaks, "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." (Proverbs 19:17.) And that word of the Lord will be certainly verified: "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only the name of a disciple, (or for this reason, because he belongs to Christ as said in Mark 9:41); verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." (Matthew 10:42.)

We ought also to take good notice of the words of Jesus: "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." (Luke 14:13-4.)

Nay, circumstances may occur, when the Lord our Saviour expressly requires one or another, to sell all and distribute it among the poor. This was his command to his disciples, unto whom he first said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. See that ye have, and give alms." (Luke 12:32-33.) When the church of Christ at Jerusalem was first founded, this was done by many of the brethren, and it was at that time necessary. See Acts 4:32. But the apostles of the Lord never proposed this to the churches, as a general command of Christ to all believers, which is very plainly to be seen from 2 Corinthians 8:1. For there Paul recommends it to the Corinthians, to take the necessities of the church at Jerusalem upon themselves; but he

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does it in such a gentle manner, that we must admire it. See Romans 12:13.

Peter says, "Use hospitality one to another without grudging." (1 Peter 4:9) And the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews 13:2.) We may likewise add, Be "given to hospitality." (Romans 12:13.)

It is likewise to be attended to as a point of great importance, that the love we show, and the good we do to our neighbour, to be done cheerfully: "He that showeth mercy, *let him do it with cheerfulness*" (Romans 12:8), and "God loveth a *cheerful giver.*" (2 Corinthians 9:7.) The words of Christ are very express; "When thou doest alms. *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth*; that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly." (Matthew 6:3-4.)

We will only add on this subject the words of Isaiah: "Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, when thou seest the naked, cover him; and hide not thyself from thine own flesh" (that is, from thy brother) (Isaiah 58:7); and the declaration of Christ: "Whosoever shall receive *a child in my name, receiveth me.*" (Luke 9:48.). Oh how highly does our Lord Jesus Christ esteem the love, fidelity, and mercy shown to a child!--and also Paul's direction to the brethren, who have this world's goods: "Charge them that are rich in this world (that is, such as have temporal substance) that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; *that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." (1 Timothy 6:17-19.)

The example of Job doth also afford us instruction. (Job 29:12.) But on this occasion, it must be observed, that commonly the rich man does but give of his abundance, even though he largely administers to his neighbour's necessities. But a poor man must, however, not think, that though his gift be inconsiderable, it is on that account less esteemed by God. No—for the little of a poor man, that is given with a faithful heart, is not particularly acceptable and welcome to the Lord, our Saviour only, but also to every one who is under the guidance of his spirit. See Mark 12:41.

To mention only one passage more, Paul says, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." (Philippians 2:4.)

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As men are no less anxious to preserve their good name, than their goods and possessions, the word of God which forbids any one to bear false witness, is also peculiarly serviceable to them in this respect. It may frequently occur, that a man may be divested of his property, and even of his life by false witnesses. Therefore says the Lord, (Exodus 10:16); “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ classes bearing false witness with those sins which were punishable with death; namely, “Murders, adulteries, and blasphemies,” and which, he says, “proceed out of the heart, and defile a man.” (Matthew 15:19-20.) But false witness is not only borne by a man in a court of Judicature (as mentioned in Deuteronomy 19:18-19), but also in common life. The Scripture speaks respecting each of them, “A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.” (Proverbs 19:9.)

For though men may not make much of it, it is notwithstanding an abomination in the sight of God. In the Old Testament it is said, “Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people.” (Leviticus 19:16.)

The Scripture of the New Testament says, “Speak not evil one of another” (James 4:11); and, “Lay aside all evil speakings.” (1 Peter 2:1.) That is, do not speak evil one of another.—To this also belong the words of our Lord: “Judge not that ye be not judged—and why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considereth not the beam that is in thy own eye? Thou hypocrite! First cast the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.” (Matthew 7:1.) Paul says, “*Putting away lying*, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members of one another.” (Ephesians 4:25.) See also Colossians 3:9 and Zechariah 8:16.

Wherever the Holy Ghost rules in the heart, there is also truth; truth being one of the fruits of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:9); every thing contrary to this, belongs to those things for which it is said, “HE (Christ) was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our inequities.” (Isaiah 50:5.)

And will any man, who constantly remembers how much it cost our Lord to redeem us, excuse these things in himself?

¶227

Whoever liveth by the faith of the Son of God, loveth God and his neighbours, and is governed by the Holy Ghost, doth faithfully in prayer interest himself in behalf of his neighbour, and his circumstances. We

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are expressly directed to this: "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made *for all men.*" (1 Timothy 2:1.)

We are taught by the following words, that in prayer we are chiefly to attend to the situation of the heart of men, and that we are specially to commune with God, the Lord, about it; "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:3-4.)

Thus are we bound to pray for all men, that God would have mercy upon them; take their souls into his keeping; rescue them from the power of Satan; translate them into the kingdom of his dear Son; and make them happy creatures. Kings, and all that are in authority, are next particularly mentioned to us (See ¶211), for they have an high office, upon which many others depend; and if it be not well administered, many thousands often suffer by it. The example of Jeroboam, and of the Kings of Israel, his successors, greatly illustrate this: for they having introduced, for wicked reasons of state, the worshipping of calves, and other abominations connected with it, made all Israel to sin, and thus drew upon their own persons, and upon the whole nation, whose shepherds they ought to have been, nothing but afflictions.

Holy writ shows us also, that in our prayers we are with concern to remember those, that labour in the word; our Saviour said to his disciples "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2.)

When therefore the Lord sends out his servants, we are bound to pray, that he may be with them; strengthen them in his service; put his word into their mouth, and bless it. Paul frequently exhorts the churches to this; and when the believers at Jerusalem prayed to the Lord in one spirit to grant unto his servants, that with all boldness they might speak his word, they were heard immediately. (Acts 4:24.)

We are faithfully to remember in prayer before the Lord, the people to whom we belong. Paul, who was an Israelite, acted in this manner, and testifies of himself, that "he had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart on account of his own people" (Romans 9:1-2); and he further adds "Brethren, my heart's desire and *prayer to God for Israel* is, that they might be saved." (Romans 10:1.)

We ought also to pray for the city and country, where, according to the will of God, we reside. God permitted the Jews to be carried away captives into Babylon, where they dwelt among horrible idolaters. But what did he command them? “See the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and *pray unto the LORD* for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.” (Jeremiah 29:7.)

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Enormous transgressions do often draw down the judgment of God upon whole nations, to their destruction; and this becomes also a subject of supplication to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to his and our dear heavenly Father. Thus Moses, by his intercession for the people of Israel, who had transgressed so dreadfully, that their total destruction was ready to take place, did more than once turn away the wrath and judgment of God. (Exodus 32:11.) Daniel sought the Lord, and confessed the sin of his people, with prayer and supplication, in the most humble manner: “*We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets.*” (Daniel 9:5-6.) And, whilst he was yet in prayer, he received a gracious answer. These, and many other scriptural examples, discover to us, how confidently a believing heart may speak with God, in behalf of other men, though the request be on matters of the greatest importance. We are only to observe, that in all such prayers, we do not act according to the suggestions of our own spirit, but according to the impulse of the Holy Ghost.

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When we commune with God, we commonly first think of those, who are particularly dear to us, and whose necessities we feel as if they were our own. In this manner our Saviour prays for us, which is evident from the 27th chapter of John; thus did the woman of Canaan pray for her daughter (Matthew 15:22); the centurion at Capernaum for his servant (Matthew 8:5); the nobleman for his sick son at the point of death (John 4:46); and the distressed father for his lunatic son (Matthew 17:14). And if the distress of our neighbour concerns us as much as our own, our prayer will then also be as earnest and persevering for him, and not remain unheard. For “the effectual servant prayer of a righteous man availeth much,” (that is, of a poor sinner, who having been washed in the blood of Jesus from his sins, has obtained the righteousness which avails before God.) (James 5:16.) Paul was in particular very faithful in his prayers for all the churches, and also for individuals; nor did he

forget thanksgiving. See Philippians 1:3-4, Ephesians 1:16, 1 Thessalonians 1-2 and 2 Timothy 1-3.

To this purpose also James says: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults "one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." (James 5:14.)

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It is easy to see, that this is spoken of sickness inflicted by way of chastisement, on those that believe in Christ; and of elders of the church, who also live by the faith of the Son of God. Wherever similar cases occur in our days, the prayer for the sick will be also attended with similar consequences. Oh, did but "the spirit of grace and of supplications," which promised unto to us (Zechariah 12:10), rest upon us! John's admonition however in this case should be well attended to: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, *he shall ask*, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." (1 John 5:16.)

The meaning of these words may be collected from what follows: when the members of the church of Jesus sinned, they were chastened by the Lord with sickness, or even with death. This was the case at Corinth. (1 Corinthians 11:30.) Now, if any had sinned in such a manner, that God thought proper to chasten them, and even to take him out of the world; then John says in this case, we are not to pray for his life; for against the will of God we are not to pray and this holds good to this day.

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It is often necessary to search out the will of God, in circumstances where two things offer, which are neither of them wrong in themselves; and yet, for the present we can do but one of them; in this respect Paul gives us the following advice: "*Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may PROVE* what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2.) David turned himself to God, and prayed unto him: "*Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.*" (Psalms 143:10.)

He who with his whole heart is determined, to wish to do nothing, but what for the present is most pleasing to the Lord, will make no prayer in vain: for God has given us the precious promise, that he will hear us graciously, and guide us with his eye.

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It hath been already said, and proved from Scripture (¶87), that, in the New Testament, God did not bind himself, either to any one nation, to any one order of men, or to any one family; but that he receives all those who are obedient to the Gospel, and believe in Jesus Christ; and adopts them as his children and heirs of everlasting life; that he seals them with his Holy Spirit, and, through grace, enables them to serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their life. When we speak of the whole multitude, who, without any merits and worthiness of their own, are received into the covenant of grace, of which Christ is the Mediator, such are called The congregation, or the church of Christ.

The congregation or church of Christ is divided into the *militant*, and the *triumphant*; we understand by the latter, the souls that have finished their race, and are entered into the rest, which will have no end; by the former, the children of God, who live still in this world, and who by faith and prayer must continually be upon their guard against, preserve themselves from, and combat not only the corruption which we feel in soul and body, but also the world, and the wicked enemy. The just men made perfect, who are spoken of (Hebrews 12:23) are, without doubt, to be reckoned among the church triumphant. But when Paul says, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7), he gives us a lively idea of a genuine member of the militant church of Christ, of which we are now to speak.

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The Evangelists and the Acts of the Apostles give us a most authentic account of the beginning, and the flourishing state of the first congregation, or church of Christ upon earth. From the former we may

see, how our Lord Jesus Christ, after John the Baptist by his preaching, had prepared the way for him (Matthew 3:3), preached the Gospel in Judea, Galilee, and also occasionally in Samaria. Thus it came to pass, that many believed on him, when they saw the miracles he wrought: "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." (John 2:24-25.) But he first chose twelve men for his disciples, whom he also named apostles. See ¶10 and ¶21. To these were afterwards added seventy, whom he also furnished with grace and gifts, and sent them every where before him, to preach the Gospel. Besides, there were a great many men and women, who were his followers, and many of them were favoured with his especial love; as, for instance,

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Lazarus, Martha, Mary, Mary Magdalene: these did not forsake him, when he was rejected of all the people, and as a malefactor, condemned to die upon the cross, was led out unto the place of execution. They followed him, as he carried his cross, bewailing him (Luke 23:27); yea, the very children, who believed in him (Matthew 17:5-6); were amazed, and rejoiced greatly, "crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David." (Matthew 21:15.) And our Saviour testifies concerning them that "out of their mouth God has perfected praise." (Matthew 17:16.)

Besides, how great the number of those were, who devoted themselves to our Lord and Saviour, and to his doctrine, and who loved him, may be hence inferred, that, after his resurrection, "he was seen of about five hundred brethren at once," as Paul testifies. (1 Corinthians 15:6.) This was therefore the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh.

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In the Acts of the Apostles we are informed, how the preaching of the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world began in Jerusalem, immediately after the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, according to the word of our Saviour; and how fruitful the preaching was. For immediately upon the first sermon that Peter preached to the people of Israel, in which he testified to them with energy, that, by wicked hands, they had crucified and slain the holy and righteous man, Jesus of Nazareth, whom God had approved among them by miracles, and wonders, and signs; and that this very Jesus, whom God had raised up again from the dead, and exalted by his own right hand, had shed forth this Holy Ghost upon them (the disciples of Jesus); about three

thousands souls were converted. Ah! What a miracle of the goodness of God this was! Here are the murderers of Christ: this sermon of Peter pierces their hearts; they ask “What shall we do?” Peter replies, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”—They receive the word, they are sorry for their hearts, and believe in Christ; they are baptized; they obtain the remission of sins, and become partakers of the Holy Ghost. And all this was done on the same day on which they heard Peter’s sermon. (Acts 2:14-41.) These three thousand souls were then added to that little congregation, which had before, by the preaching of the Gospel, been gathered together. Soon after, the number of *the men*, who became believers in Jesus, amounted to about five thousand. (Acts 4:4.) Thus it continued; and after several years, the elders of the church at Jerusalem said to Paul, “Thou seest,
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brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe.” (Acts 21:20.) If many thousands of Jews became believers, their numbers must certainly have increased greatly. “A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7), which is related as something very singular. Thus the church of Christ first began with the Jews.

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Besides this, the disciples of Jesus were commanded to go into all the world, and to teach all nations. This at first seemed strange to them; for God, with the kind design of preserving the people of Israel from the idolatry of the Gentiles, and the abominations connected with it, had so strictly forbidden the people of Israel all converse, and fellowship with the Gentiles, that an Israelite durst not even eat with a Gentile. Our Lord and Saviour therefore found it necessary to deal in a particular manner with Peter, to make him willing to go to the Roman centurian Cornelius. But when he, according to the commandment of the Lord, at the last resolved to preach the Gospel to Cornelius the centurion; the Holy Ghost fell upon all them who were assembled in Cornelius’s house, and heard Peter’s sermon. In consequence of this, Peter says, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we.” See Acts 10:1. Peter, when he returned to Jerusalem, was sharply reprov’d on that account, by those Jews who were become believers in Christ. But when he had justified himself by relating the above, “they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” (Acts 11:1-18.)

The persecutions of the disciples of Jesus at Jerusalem, occasioned the believers to be dispersed abroad in Judea, and in Samaria, and among the Gentiles; and their ministry was, amidst many heavy sufferings, every where so blessed, that a great number of the Gentiles were converted. (Acts 13:1.) And from Romans 16 we may conclude, that the servants of Christ among the Gentiles were many. Those believers, who dwelt in one place, were of course regulated into special congregations of Jesus, and furnished with pastors, teachers, bishops, and deacons. Yet were there also many believers, scattered here and there in this and the other province, who did not live together in one place, where there was a congregation of Jesus. See 1 Peter 1:1. But, as the Jews in those times resided in great numbers, even in places that were yet heathen, where they commonly had their synagogues; therefore Paul, on his apostolic journeys, whenever he came into such a city, preached first to the Jews, and afterwards to the Gentiles. The Gospel was therefore the power of God unto salvation to all those, whether Jews

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or Gentiles, that believed in it; and thus both the Jews and the Gentiles, who embraced and received the Gospel in faith, became *one* congregation of Jesus. Thus were our Saviour's words accomplished: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold (namely of the Jewish church): them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold (that is, one congregation of God) and one Shepherd." (John 10:16.)

This also illustrates the words of Paul (Ephesians 2:11-18), that Christ abolished the enmity which had hitherto subsisted between the Jews and the Gentiles, and of these twain made one new body. And Paul praises God, that now by the prophetic Scriptures, and by his commandments, he had revealed the weighty point, respecting the call of the Gentiles, which had not yet been made manifest to the Jews. (Romans 16:25-26.)

Luke relates the state of the church at Jerusalem at that time (Acts 2:42), that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The meaning of which is probably this, that they neglected no opportunity of hearing the counsel of God concerning their salvation, from the mouth of the apostles; and at the same time they were very benevolent and compassionate toward all those who stood in need of assistance; that they also frequently visited one another; ate and drank in love together;

and kept also the Lord's supper; and prayed partly alone, and partly with each other. It is farther said, that "they had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart; praising God, and having favour with all people" (Acts 24); likewise, "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." (Acts 4:32.) "Great grace was upon them all, neither was there any among them that lacked." (Acts 4:33-34.)

Should any one hence conclude, that the children of God ought to have nothing of their own, but must have every thing in common; he would go too far. For this neither Christ nor his apostles commanded. At that time, it was, according to circumstances, good, nay, even necessary, that all things should be in common. This mind must, however, be in all the children of God, to lay down their lives for the

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brethren; how then should they, in case of necessity, withhold their property from them. See ¶225.

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The churches planted by Paul were at the beginning in a pleasing course. In one place, they received his word, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and such indeed it was. In another place, they received him as an angel of God, nay, as Jesus Christ; and he gives them the testimony, that they would have plucked out their eyes and have given them unto him. To the Corinthians he writes, "In every thing ye are enriched by him (Christ) in all utterance, and in all knowledge: even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 1:5-7.) But when he returned with Barnabas to Antioch, some Jews began to teach, "Except ye (namely the believers from the Gentiles) be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1.) Now the apostles had from the beginning taught, "in the name of Jesus, all that believe on him should receive forgiveness of sins, and salvation." See Acts 2:38. And, in Acts 4:12, 5:31 and 10:43, Paul was certain, that this pretended doctrine of the Jews was false. But for the sake of others, he, together with Barnabas, and certain other brethren, submitted to go up to Jerusalem, and to treat with the apostles

and elders upon this head. Here the matter was taken into mature deliberation. Peter was of the opinion, that the faithful from the Gentiles ought not to be burdened with the Jewish laws. “Why tempt ye God (says he to the Pharisees, who were become believers, and who had signified, that they ought to circumcise believers from the Gentiles, and to enjoin them to keep the law of Moses) to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers, nor we, were able to bear?”—But James thought, it would be however well, if the believers from the Gentiles were to abstain from certain things, which were at that time so greatly repugnant to the people of the Jews, and to the believers from the Jews. For Moses was read in all cities, on the Sabbath days, in the Jewish synagogues, and had been preached for a longer series of years. The articles particularly mentioned were meats offered to idols, also the eating of blood, and of things strangled. And as fornication was but too common at such feasts, as may be seen from Revelation 2:14-20 and Numbers 25:1-2; therefore was fornication also especially mentioned. Now James having thus opened his mind, the whole church agreed with him; and thus the conclusion was made: “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from

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meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.” (Acts 15:28-29.) From this time, the Jews, who had been baptized into the name of Christ, and who preached circumcision to the Gentiles as necessary unto salvation, ought to have changed their opinion; but many of them did not, but persisting in their own opinion, occasioned much perplexity by it, among the souls converted from heathenism to Christ. And Paul was obliged to oppose them with great earnestness, as false teachers and lying apostles; which he also did with a godly zeal.

In the mean time, however, some of the brethren, who had been Jews before, retained the custom of preferring one day to another; of making a distinction between various sorts of food, and the like. The brethren from the Gentiles, who had not been commanded by the assembly of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, to observe any of the law of Moses, except the four articles above-mentioned, made no distinction either of days or food. All days were to them alike; and all food, that God had created for man, was equally esteemed. Here then Paul earnestly exhorts his congregation to avoid the feast of idolaters, of meat offered to idols, and fornication. But, with respect to days and food, he gives no commandment; but admonishes those only, who kept certain days, and did not eat one or another sort of food, not to judge others, who thought

and acted differently. But he exhorts such as esteemed every day alike, and made no conscience of using such kinds of food, as had been forbidden the Jews, not to despise the former. But to each he says, Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, and act according to his judgment. For should any person look upon something to be wrong, and yet do it; or should he look upon any thing to be right, and yet not do it; he sins. "Whatsoever is not of faith (in the before-mentioned sense) is sin." (Romans 14:1-23.)

All these things are of great importance; and we should thank God, that they are recorded in the Bible for our benefit. For we have as much reason at this time, as they had formerly, to avoid every thing, which we in the least suspect, or believe to be sinful: and, on the other hand, to do that which we look upon to be right. For if we act otherwise, we sin.

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This therefore is an established truth, that in the New Testament, every one who believes in Jesus Christ, let him be who he will, if he had been even one of the most miserable slaves of sin and Satan, becomes a member of the body of Christ, that is, of his church. (Ephesians 1:22-23.) The Scripture also confirms this: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye

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are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28.) "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13.)

This was promised in the Old Testament, by the prophets: for instance, "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out *my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids* in those days will I pour out my Spirit." (Joel 2:28-29.)

But the whole multitude of such as believe in Jesus, call upon his name, and follow his doctrine and example, are in the holy Scripture represented to us under diverse figures, which are however full of reality. For there is, for instance, called,

(1.) The *Body* of Christ.

"The God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to *the church, which is his body.*" (Ephesians 1:17, 22-23.) "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another," (for the

service of it). (Romans 12:5.) “*He is the Head of the body, the church.*” (Colossians 1:18.)

(2.) The *House* or the Temple of God.

“*The House of GOD is the church of the living God.*” (1 Timothy 3:15.) “Ye also, as lively stones, *are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood.*” (1 Peter 2:5.)

The foundation this house stands upon is Jesus Christ. “Other *foundation* can no man lay than that is laid, which is *Jesus Christ.*” (1 Corinthians 3:11.) And the Scripture says, “Ye are built upon the *foundation* of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom *all the building*, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy *temple* in the Lord; in whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:20.) Therefore the *foundation* of the apostles and prophets is nothing, but the doctrine of Christ crucified; and thus it harmonizes with the words of our Lord. “Upon this *Rock* I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18.) Peter said, “Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16.) Unto which our Saviour replied, “Upon this rock (upon this confession of me that I am Christ, the Son of the living God, or upon myself) I will build my church.”

(3.) The *Flock of Jesus Christ*, of which he is the chief Shepherd and Bishop, or Overseer. In Paul’s address to the elders of the church at Ephesus, the words are, “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the *flock*, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (bishops) to feed
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the *church of God*, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28.)

Our Lord and Saviour himself describes the genuine sheep of his flock thus, “MY SHEEP hear my voice, and I know them; and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” (John 10:27.)

He however describes himself as the true Shepherd. “I am the GOOD SHEPHERD, concerning whom the prophets have foretold.” (Isaiah 45:11 and Ezekiel 34:11.) “The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11); and, “I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.” (John 10:14-15.)

When he says, “I know mine,” it is intimated, that he does not take his flock under his general care only, but that he likewise thinks of each of his sheep in particular, and cares for it as circumstances require; as

he has promised, in Ezekiel 34:15-16, "I will feed my *flock*, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick;--I will feed them with judgment."

Happy are we who have such a good Shepherd! And happy the people to whom we can boldly say, with Peter, "By his stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishops of your souls." (1 Peter 2:25.) "He is that great Shepherd of the sheep" (Hebrews 13:20); and, "the chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4); nay, "the one (only) Shepherd." (Ezekiel 34:23.)

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The church, or congregation of Christ is also called,

(4.) *The Kingdom of Christ*, but which is a kingdom of the cross. When David and the other prophets speak of the Messiah (and they speak much of him, and frequently) they describe him among other things, as a great, powerful, mighty, righteous, gracious, and very wise King; and for this purpose, make use of the phrases and expressions at that time usual. This may, in part, have given occasion to the notion prevalent during the days of Christ's walk upon earth, respecting a temporal kingdom of the Messiah; which the Jews might also easily fall into, because the promises, given for the time of the Old Testament, did almost imply an external state of happiness. To say nothing of the natural propensity of the Jewish people to worldly grandeur, and the heavy circumstances in which they were under the Roman yoke, which

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might easily make them wish for a temporal king, who should deliver them from it.

Our Lord Jesus Christ opposed, both by his conduct and doctrine, these erroneous notions of a temporal kingdom of the Messiah. According to Philippians 2:7, he humbled himself so deeply, as to appear in the form of a servant: now servants were at that time commonly bond slaves. His journeys he performed on foot; and once when he rode, he took the foal of an ass, on which no man had ever sat; and even that was not his own. This could make no splendid appearance: for he had not so much as a saddle for the purpose; but some of his disciples, pulling off their garments, laid it on the back of the beast instead of a saddle. His most intimate friends were, for the most part, mean and illiterate fishermen; these were always about him, accompanied him on his journeys, and were favoured with his confidence. With those who were despised by men of reputation (publicans and sinners) he had chiefly and

willingly to do, though he knew that he should be despised and reproached on that account. Observing once, that the people intended to make him a king by force, after his having fed some thousands with a few loaves, he withdrew from them. In short, he chose a mean and low condition, and went willingly to meet his bitter sufferings and death on the cross. From all which it is evident, that by his whole conduct, he endeavoured to refute the erroneous notions of a temporal kingdom of the Messiah.

His doctrine was as much against them as his conduct. We need only read the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew, and we find there a plan which is in no way suited to a worldly kingdom. When his disciples, who still fostered and retained the prejudice which they had in common with other Jews, respecting the worldly kingdom which Christ was soon to set up, strove with each other about the pre-eminence which one or another expected in it; he did indeed tell them, that they should meet with a great recompense after this life, and sit upon thrones; yet at the same time he also testified to them, that they should not harbour a thought of a kingdom in this world. He said unto them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. *But ye shall not be so*; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve—for I am among you as he that serveth." (Luke 22:24.) And before Pontius Pilate our Saviour witnessed this good confession, "*My kingdom is not of this world*; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (John 28:36 and 1 Timothy 6:13.)

Now if it be hence evident, that the kingdom of Christ is no temporal kingdom, the question then naturally arises, In what does it consist?

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Our Saviour said to Pilate, by way of reply to this question, "Art thou a king then?--Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18:37.)

As strangely however as Pilate behaved upon this reply, and as it were in astonishment blended with indignation, said, "What is truth?" Although we are not speaking of this at present, yet in this lies the whole ground plan of the kingdom of Christ. Our Saviour preached the truth, that is, the Gospel, and he also commanded his disciples to preach the Gospel. He that receiveth the Gospel in faith, becomes a child of God, and the Father, who is in heaven, "delivers him from the power of darkness, and translates him into the kingdom of his dear Son," according to Paul's expression in Colossians 1:13. Then his sins are

forgiven him, the anxious fear ceases, and he can rejoice in God, his Saviour. Concerning this kingdom it is said, "The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Romans 14:17.)

Thus Jesus Christ becomes his King and his Lord; and he becomes his subject, serving him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of his life. Now, if we take the whole multitude of those who have, in this way, received Christ, loving, honouring, and serving him as their Lord and King, unto whom they entirely owe themselves, both body and soul; we then have an idea of the kingdom of Christ. But that this kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of the cross, is not plain from experience only, but also from this, that it was appointed to be so. Our Saviour tells his disciples, "*Ye shall be hated* of all men, for my name's sake." (Mark 13:13.) And it is again said, "*Ye shall be hated* of all men for my name's sake." (Matthew 10:22.) In another place he says, "Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, *therefore the world hateth you.*" (John 15:19.)

The apostles took it for granted, "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22.) See also 1 Peter 4:12.

There are indeed other figures under which the church of Christ is represented. Our Saviour, for instance, compares it to a grain of mustard seed, to leaven, to a treasure hid in a field, to a vineyard (Matthew 13:31-34 and 21:33); and we do well, diligently to search out not the meaning only of these characters, but also to consider, on what they are grounded. We are led to observe particularly, that the church is also called *The Bride of Christ*. Even in the Old Testament the Lord said, "At that day (that of the New Covenant) thou shalt call me Ishi (my husband) for I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and

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in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the LORD." (Hosea 2:16 and 19-20.)

When the Lord appeared in the flesh, and entered upon his ministerial office, John the Baptist testified to all the people of Israel, that "He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom." (John 3:29.) But that the church, or congregation of God, is to be understood by the bride of Christ, is plainly to be seen by the words of Paul (Ephesians 5:23-32) where also this union between Christ and his church is called "a great mystery." The reason of it is this, The union of the Maker of every creature, who is the supporter and Upholder of all things by the word of his power, and of poor sinful human creatures, who have merited

nothing but punishment, but do now believe on him through his grace, is a matter surpassing all comprehension, and cannot possibly be fathomed. For our Lord Jesus Christ, who so loved us before we loved him, as to give himself unto death for us, certainly now loveth us no less, and retains this love towards us unto all eternity. The church, which hath in him redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, loveth our Saviour reciprocally more than herself, and above all; and every member of it would rather die, than be separated from him. When therefore, a bridegroom loves his bride, and a bride her bridegroom, with the utmost affection and tenderness, yet this love is only a shadow, and a faint image of that intimate union of love between Christ and his church, which exceeds all comprehension.

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Now, though it hence appears, that no one in a strict sense, is a member of the church of Jesus, but he who through faith becomes a child of God, the Lord our Saviour in a peculiar parable, alluding to the future state of his kingdom or church, has plainly foretold, that wicked and ungodly men would arise, through Satan's instigation, in the neighbourhood, and even in the midst of his church, who would assume the character of members in it. According to his own exposition, the parable which we read (Matthew 13:24-30) is to be understood thus, Jesus Christ had a field; that was the world, or the earth. In this he sowed the good seed; these were the children of the kingdom, or the proper members of the church of Jesus; that is, men who live in the faith of the Son of God. But while men slept, his enemy the devil came and sowed tares among the wheat; that is, he caused such people to arise in the church of Jesus, who not only did wrong themselves, but also gave offense, and were hurtful to others; that is, they were children of the wicked one. The servants of the householder (Jesus Christ) ask him, Whether they should gather up the tares? Nay, said the Lord; lest while

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ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. But how will it then be with the wheat and tares at the time of harvest, that is, in the end of this world? The tares will be plucked up by the reapers (the angels) gathered together, and cast into the fire, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. These words indicate the condition of the damned; for instance, Matthew 22:13 and 24:51. But the wheat will be gathered into our Saviour's barn; and of this our Saviour says, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." (Matthew 13:36.)

This has actually taken place in the church of Jesus, as the Lord predicted. In the beginning it consisted of the multitude of them only, who were believers in Jesus; and the disciples of Jesus watched that none might approach, and be joined to them, but those whose intentions were upright and sincere towards Jesus Christ, and his great work. When Ananias, and his wife Sapphira, with selfish views, acted deceitfully, and lied to Peter, they were instantly punished with death (Acts 5:1); and thus “great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.—And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: (for fear of a like punishment) and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.” (Acts 5:11.) In this manner, by the watchfulness of the apostles, were the tares at that time kept from the wheat. Soon afterwards, Philip preached Christ in the city of Samaria, and many, both men and women, believed and were baptized; among them there was also a certain man called Simon, who had hitherto been a sorcerer. When Peter and John came to Samaria, and prayed, with imposition of hands over these new converts, they received the Holy Ghost. Then Simon offered the apostles money, saying, “Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou has neither part nor lot in this matter: (the word of the Gospel) for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.” (Acts 8:5.) Thus this tare also was at that time prevented from remaining among the wheat, and growing with it.

Had things remained in this laudable and proper state, and had that watchfulness, which was certainly very agreeable to the Lord, been continued every where, and at all times; the congregation of Jesus would have been preserved from the intrusion of insincere people. But when the people slept, and did not maintain this watchfulness, the devil gained his aim, and subtly brought people into the congregation who were not

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upright. Without doubt, this enemy of God and men believed, that he should thus most effectually prevent its good, and as effectually injure it: and he has, alas! succeeded. Yet his wicked craftiness was not detected, until the seed sowed by Christ was sprung up, and brought fruit (Matthew 13:26); that is, when the church of Jesus was already grown up, and displayed its beauty.

Thus were tares blended with the wheat in the church of Jesus, as early as the times of the apostles. There was, for instance, an Alexander the coppersmith, probably one of the false apostles, of whom Paul complains (2 Timothy 5:14-15); and a Diotrephes, of whom Jesus speaks. (3 Epistles 9.) It was certainly to be lamented, when that ancient apostle says, "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not,--prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren (who, for the sake of Jesus, went forth to preach the Gospel freely to the Gentiles in 3 Epistles 7) and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." This did not take place in individuals only; but there were very many, who partly in doctrine, and partly in life and conversation, deviated from the Gospel of Christ, during the apostolic times. Paul was distressed, when among the Christians, who had been gathered by him from the heathen, and were regulated into little congregations, some people came and perplexed them, perverted the Gospel of Christ, and, beside the faith in Christ, would introduce circumcision, as necessary to salvation; and, notwithstanding this, called themselves apostles of Christ. John was troubled with people, who boasted of an higher knowledge, and of a singular fellowship with God, and yet walked in darkness, slighted the commandments of God, did not love the brethren;--and against these was his first epistle principally leveled. James opposed perverse people, who boasted, in the church, of faith in Christ, and yet lived in scandalous sins; and testified unto them with great earnestness, that this could not be the true faith in Christ, and that, if they had not the faith, which evidenced itself by works, they would certainly be lost. In brief, we see plainly by the apostolic writings, that their field of wheat was not without its tares.

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Yet we must not on this account think, that the apostolic church was deficient in faithful care. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who had ordained some to be apostles, appointed also some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers. (Ephesians 4:11.) What relates to the *apostles*, has been already mentioned in ¶231. The *prophets* had at

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that time still many revelations concerning things to come. And, indeed, they had a sufficient reason from the word of Christ, to expect it, "When HE, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth—and HE will show you things to come." (1 John 16:13.) Their vocation was

otherwise to “speak unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort.” (1 Corinthians 14:3.) The *evangelists* were the assistants of the apostles, especially in the preaching the Gospel; as Timothy, for instance in 2 Timothy 4:5. The apostles, prophets, and evangelists were to minister every where; whereas the *pastors* and *teachers*, were confined to this and the other church in particular. Besides these there also *deacons*, whose special province it was to take care of the poor. (Acts 6:1.) Sometimes mention is made of the *elders* only and they are also called *bishops*, or *overseers*. (Acts 20:28 and 17.) These had this charge given them: “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to seed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” Thus saith Peter likewise, “The elders, which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; seed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock: And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.” (1 Peter 5:1.)

All these servants of Jesus in the church of Christ were thus called upon: “Has any one ministry, let him wait on his ministering.” (Romans 7:7.) And Paul speaks to all his fellow labourers in the following words: “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain—giving no offense (to any man) in any thing, that the *ministry* be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patiences, in afflictions, in necessities, in distress, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of the truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” (2 Corinthians 6:1.)

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From the Epistles of the Apostles, which are a part of the Scriptures of the New Testament, we can best discover, what was, at that time, the chief aim of the servants of Christ, in his church. Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, in particular, afford us much light in this respect: for they were written with the design of showing these faithful servants, who were so intimately connected with Paul, how they were to walk in the house of God; that is, in the church of Jesus; and what they were, in all points, to observe in it. The pure doctrine of the Gospel was the first point, which the apostle the more strongly recommends to them; because at that time many persons arose in the church, who introduced all kinds of perverse doctrines. See 1 Timothy 1:3, and 2 Timothy 1:13, 2:2 and 15 and 3:13. A holy and godly life, in conformity to the Gospel, and to the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, communicated unto us in and through Christ, was the second point earnestly inculcated in the church. See, for example, Titus 2:11 and 3:4. In a word, what Luther says: "Where the word of God is taught plainly and purely, and we also live holily, as the children of God, according to it; there is the name of God sanctified." This is what they then had in view in the church. They did not content themselves with mere public preaching, but they made it their endeavour rightly to divide the word of truth, and to give to every one his food in due season. What is to be propounded in particular to the aged, to the young, to husbands, to wives, to parents, to children, to widows, to virgins, to youths, to elders, to deacons, to masters, to servants, to subjects, to the poor, to the rich, to the erroneous, to the disorderly—all this the apostles point out, but Paul especially, not only in his Epistles to Timothy and to Titus, but also in his other Epistles to the churches.

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In respect to church discipline, the apostles had this prerogative, to inflict even corporal punishment occasionally, upon heretical and refractory person. Hymeneus and Alexander, who having put away faith and a good conscience, and concerning faith made shipwreck, Paul delivered unto Satan, that they might be chastened (perhaps with heavy sicknesses) and learn not to blaspheme. (1 Timothy 1:19-20.) The incestuous person in Corinth, Paul, in the name and with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1 Corinthians 1:3-5.) See ¶108. Yea, our Lord Jesus Christ took upon himself to chasten those in the church, who were refractory against his

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doctrine, and slighted it: for example, at Corinth, ¶147 and ¶228. Finally, it was an established principle with them, that “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed (or do not greet him with the salutation of brotherly love and fellowship) for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” (2 John 9-11.) “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump,” that is, “Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” (1 Corinthians 5:6-7 and 13.) This is explained by Paul, “If any man that is called a brother (and will be a fellow member of the church) be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.” (1 Corinthians 5:11.) “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, *from such withdraw thyself.*” (1 Timothy 4:3-5 and Romans 16:17-18.)

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Hence it is evident, what is signified by the Keys, which either bind or loose, and which the Lord hath given, not to Peter only, but to all his other disciples, and to their followers likewise. He said to Peter, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:19.) The meaning of these words is to be seen by that which HE said afterwards to his disciples in general: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” (John 10:22-23.) Yea, we may conclude from the connection of the discourse of Jesus (Matthew 28:15) that our Lord Jesus Christ has given this power in general to his churches upon earth. For thus he speaks: “If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established: and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall

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bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.”

The words of Jesus, “Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican,” are of great import: for a heathen was excluded from all communion with the church of God, at that time; and a Jew did not even dare to eat with a heathen: but the publicans, who farmed the toll of the Romans, and in consequence extorted more from their brethren, the Jews, than belonged to them, were looked upon as the heathen. We need not prove here, that in the application of these words of Jesus, a just distinction is to be made.

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With respect to the meetings, there was a difference between the congregation of Christ gathered from the Jews, and that gathered from the Gentiles. The Jewish converts to Christ at Jerusalem continued daily with one accord in the temple: where, every morning after nine o'clock, and every evening after three o'clock, sacrifice was made, and the rest of the divine service appertaining to it was performed: and in this practice, it is probable, they continued unto the destruction of Jerusalem, and its temple. (Acts 2:46.) But besides this, they broke bread from house to house (which we may presume was their Lord's supper as described in 1 Corinthians 10:16) and did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God. (Acts 2:46-47.) In other places, where the Jews had their synagogues, in which they held their assemblies, the Jewish converts to Christ continued to attend. But Paul, having been at Corinth, where for a while he visited the synagogue, and taught in it, and also testifying publicly to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, or Christ, and meeting with a violent opposition (“they opposed themselves and blasphemed”) departed from them, after he had plainly told them his mind, and thus began to form separate meetings in the house of a pious man, contiguous to the synagogue, and this he continued to do for a year and six months. (Acts 18:1-11.) Afterwards he taught at Ephesus for three months together in the synagogue; but when some spoke evil of the way he preached, before the multitude, (that is, concerning the faith in Christ) he withdrew from them, and separated the disciples (that is, such as having been baptized into the name of Christ, were converted to him) and began a meeting on his own, in which he daily discoursed both with Gentiles and Jews; and this practice he continue for two years together. (Acts 19:1 and 8-10.) At Troas the disciples came together to break bread, and continued their meeting all night; upon this occasion Paul

discoursed to them, continuing his speech even till break of day, and then proceeded on his journey. (Acts 10:6-11.) This was also in a private

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house. At Rome he was a prisoner for two whole years, that is, he was bound with a chain to a soldier, who had the guard over him; but yet in his own hired house, preaching to all that came unto him the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. (Acts 28:30-31.) That was the situation and state of the assemblies of the church of Christ, in the days of the apostles. The promise of our Saviour, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,” (Matthew 28:20) was a great comfort to them. And they were exhorted to be diligent frequenters of the assemblies: “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good words: not *forsaking the assembling* of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another.” (Hebrews 10:24-25.) “Let the word of Christ dwell in (among) you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16.)

But the meetings of the congregation of those days were conducted in a very simple manner. Paul writes to the Corinthians: “How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue (that is, he speaks in a foreign language), hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. Let the prophets (that is, such as speak unto men in edification, and exhortation, and comfort as described in 1 Corinthians 14:3) speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another (that is, if this or another thing be by the Holy Ghost made plain, or disclosed to him that sitteth by) let the first hold his peace: for ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. Let you women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak—These are the commandments of the Lord—Let all things be done decently, and in order.” (1 Corinthians 14:26.)

Among many things, which might be said of the church of Christ of that time, two points only remain still for our observation. The first has a reference to the preaching among the heathen, and the second to the elders and teachers.

Our Saviour, even before his death on the cross, had said to his disciples; “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” (John 15:16.) And, after his resurrection, he said to them, “Go ye into all the world, and *preach the Gospel to every creature,*” (that is, to

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all the heathen as in Mark 16:15). “Go and *teach all nations*—and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:19-20.)

But the church of Christ did not so understand this, as if it had been commanded the apostles alone, to the exclusion of all other persons. Neither indeed could it be so taken, on account of the words annexed, “Lo, I am with you *always, even unto the end of the world.*” For, if the preaching among the heathen was to have ceased with the apostles, how could our Saviour have said, “I am with you always, *even unto the end of the world?*”

But that the church of Christ believed, that the preaching among the heathen was to continue always (yet in a way conformable to the mind of Jesus) the following words of John indicate: “Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers: which have borne witness of thy charity before the church; whom, if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly fort, thou shalt do well: because that for his name’s sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles,” (that is, they preached the Gospel without charge, as Paul did likewise in 1 Corinthians 9:18). “We, therefore, ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth.” (3 John 5-8.)

These were not the apostles, but other brethren, who found themselves moved to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, or Heathen. The words, “That ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9), though they certainly speak not alone concerning the ministry in the Gospel among the Heathen, yet neither do they exclude it. If the church of Christ, after the apostolic times, had not believed that the words of Christ, “Preach the Gospel to every creature,” were obligatory upon them; many nations, who were afterwards brought to Christ, would be yet sitting in darkness, and know nothing of Christ. And as there are many thousands of heathen, who to this very day have heard nothing of the Gospel; therefore our Saviour’s words, “Preach the Gospel to every creature,” continue in his church, in as great esteem now, as it was then.

With respect to the elders and teachers of the particular church, they have already been spoken of, in regard to their own persons in ¶240. But what was expected from the churches and their members with respect to their elders, teachers and labourers? Paul says, “We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.” (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13.) “Let the elders that rule well, be counted

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worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” (1 Timothy 5:17.) “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” (Hebrews 13:17.)

Paul also entreated the churches whom he served, to think diligently on him before the Lord: “Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel.” (Ephesians 6:18-19.) See also Colossians 4:3-4 and 2 Thessalonians 3:1.

And thus the members of the church in general are to pray for their teachers. See ¶227. He exhorts the Galatians: “Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.” (Galatians 6:6.) For although he, for his own person, declares to the elders of Ephesus, “I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel: yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring, ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 10:33-35); yet did he not on that account deny, that even “the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the Gospel.” (1 Corinthians 9:14.) But he served the Ephesians, the Thessalonians, and the Corinthians, with the Gospel freely, for this reason, that he might be the more useful to these poor Gentiles; but believed, however, at the same time, that he should not have done wrong, if he had taken of them, that which was necessary for his support. But whereas the “brethren which came from Macedonia, supplied that which was lacking to him.” (2 Corinthians 11:9); and he himself had earned so much, as to have no occasion to take any thing at Ephesus, Corinth, and Thessalonica; it was the agreeable to him.

To that which hath been said respecting the state of the church, or congregation of Christ, in the apostolic times (¶239), we have still to add the following. John, who lived the longest of any of the apostles of the Lord, has, in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, written that, which he had received from the mouth of our Lord, to the seven churches, or to their bishops. (Revelation 2 and 3.) It is beyond dispute, that our Saviour in these Epistles had a view beyond that time; and that they were written for doctrine, and have been preserved for our benefit. It is however

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equally certain, that these seven churches, unto which Christ had written by his servant John, did really exist. If these letters are read with due attention, we may plainly perceive in what condition the church of Christ then was. Our Lord Jesus Christ greatly commends the angel of the church of *Ephesus*; but, at the same time, bewails his having left his first love. Paul had been before afraid of this. For he told the elders of this church, "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 20:29-30.) And this, among other reasons, proved an occasion for their departure from their first love.—The Angel of the church in *Smyrna*, was, with his church, under manifold sufferings, and was forced to endure much, especially from those who would be looked upon as Jews; that is, confessors of the truth, but were not. He had besides many sufferings to await, but was richly comforted by Jesus Christ.—The angel of the church in *Pergamos* had together with the church, a testimony of approbation. Yet there were people among them, who held the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So had they also them that held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, who probably had been seduced by the former, which could at that time be easily effected: for when a person had been converted to Christ, and still lived among his unconverted friends and relations, it might naturally occur, that one or another of them would give him an invitation to the entertainments, or feasts usual upon the sacrifices offered to idols; but these were connected with pastimes, and scandalous fornication. Now this had been expressly forbidden the Christians from the Gentiles, at the first synod of the church of Christ, at Jerusalem. But here were some, who notwithstanding the prohibition, persisted in it; and our Lord Jesus Christ was not pleased that they tolerated such in the church.—The angel of the church at *Thyatira* was also commended

on account of his works, his love, his service, his faith, and his growth in that which is good: yet, our Lord Jesus Christ was displeased with him, because he suffered a certain woman, Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, to teach; who then seduced the members of the congregation to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.—The angel of the church in *Sardis* was not a good state; for he had a name that he lived, and yet was dead. There were but few persons in *Sardis*, who had not defiled themselves. The rest had either no life of God, or were like the people who are ready to die: for this reason an earnest admonition and reproof is given unto him.—The angel of the church in *Philadelphia* had our Saviour's approbation, and obtained glorious promises. But the angel of *Laodicea* was neither cold nor hot, and yet self-conceited. He

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said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;" not knowing that he was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Our Saviour gave him a sharp reproof, but still afforded him and his church the hopes of much grace, if they would be converted, and hear his voice.

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This was the state of the church, or congregation of Christ, at the time when the ministry of the apostles was nearly at an end. The wheat and the tares stood together; nor was it pleasing to the Lord, our Saviour, that the elders and bishops showed so little zeal to exclude the wicked from the church. If he could rejoice over one church, he was the more displeased at the other; and he always laid the chief fault to the angels of the church.

After the apostles of Jesus Christ, and their faithful assistants in the propagation of the Gospel, and in founding Christian churches, were removed into the joy of their Lord, the tares obtained an evident superiority over the wheat. There were indeed many faithful and zealous men of God in the primitive church, who were concerned to maintain the doctrine of Jesus, and of his apostles, and to withstand the torrent of corruption which was breaking in upon it. The severe persecutions also contributed greatly to rouse the Christians, from time to time, from their sleepiness, and to cleanse the churches from their false and hypocritical members. But in general we must say, that with the multitude of those who adopted Christianity, the number of insincere and unconverted members of the church also increase: and this gave occasion to a still farther departure from the primitive grace, love and simplicity, in the churches.

Even the teachers and overseers of the church began now to assume many prerogatives beyond other brethren: and thus the distinction between the laity and clergy took place. These ecclesiastics were much more intent upon maintaining, and exercising, an external authority and power over the churches, than to serve them in humility and lowliness, to feed them with the pure Gospel, to make the condition of their hearts an object of their care and concern, and to approve themselves examples to the flock. Envy and ambition took place among the ecclesiastics themselves. The dignities of bishop, arch-bishops, metropolitans, and patriarchs, which were by degrees introduced, increased this calamity, and the pride and arrogance of the more dignified clergy proved a source of degeneracy, which every where prevailed.

By the accession of potentates and rulers, in the fourth and following centuries, this evil was not diminished, but increased. The bishops

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solicited the protection of the supreme magistrates, more for the promotion of their own views and state, than for planting and establishing true churches of Jesus. Christianity, which had been persecuted hitherto, now became dominant, and many heathens of rank were obliged to confess the doctrine of Christ outwardly, without any conviction in their own hearts, lest they should lose their offices at court, or in the army, or because they wished to obtain such offices. Whole nations were compelled, partly by force, and partly by circumstances, to become Christians; and many thousands were baptized, without knowing either what benefits God conferred upon them by it, or to what they bound themselves, in consequence of it.

The bishops, who should have stemmed this torrent of corruption, fell into the most unhappy contentions, partly about theological opinions, and partly about rank, precedency, and external prerogatives; to the great scandal of their congregations, they anathematized one another, and at length caused open schisms in the church. The potentates were not able to restrain this mischief; and the councils, in which human state and prejudices had the ascendancy, and where little room was left for the Spirit of God, contributed more to widen the divisions in the church, and to render its wounds incurable, than to close and heal them.

It was no better in respect to doctrine. Persons were early entrusted with the ministry, who signalized themselves more by their gifts, than by grace and the knowledge of the salutary doctrine of Christ. Many of them had been professors of rhetoric and philosophy, when they were Heathens. These retained many, if not all of those maxims which they before imbibed; and endeavoured either to blend them with the doctrine of Jesus and of his disciples, or to expound and preach the doctrines of

Jesus and of his apostles, according to the systems they had brought with them into the church. Whoever has read the so called Fathers of the church, and can judge of them by the Bible; will be at no loss to understand, what has been just now mentioned. It was also not unusual with these people to form their discourses in the churches, as much as possible, according to those rules of oratory which they practiced as Heathens. Hence arose, as it has been already intimated, a great variety of unprofitable questions, gendering strife, which were still multiplied at synods and councils; whilst the simplicity which reigns in the doctrine of Jesus, and in the Scriptures of the apostles, was at length almost lost. The following points of doctrine are very plain in the Scriptures, but have been gradually obscured in Christendom. The doctrine of the all sufficient propitiatory sacrifice made for us; the doctrine of the deep depravity of man, and of his total inability to deliver himself from it; the doctrine of faith in the name of Jesus Christ, by which we receive

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forgiveness of sins; that through him, we become children of God, and partakers in the Holy Ghost; that our hearts love much, because many sins have been forgiven us; that we, through him, and for the sake of his blood, which he shed for us, have escaped the wrath to come; that in the knowledge of Christ, all the power requisite for a godly life and conversation is bestowed upon us; that we, in him, and by faith on him, have the sure and certain hope of everlasting life. The ministers did not abide by the commands of Christ and of his apostles, but urged human traditions, as the Scribes and Pharisees had done before them. (Matthew 23:16.)

That the atonement made by Jesus Christ, by which we are made acceptable to God in his beloved Son, has been rendered obscure to mankind, is incontestably clear from this, that sometimes one method, and sometimes another, has been recommended to them, to quiet their consciences, instead of directing them immediately to Christ; who thus invites us, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest upon your souls." (Matthew 9:28-29.)

In this case it was as the prophet expresses it:

"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." (Jeremiah 2:13.)

Thus the *Christian religious Constitutions*, as we see them at this day, arose out of the congregations of Jesus, which the apostles and their successors had established, in the manner, which has been briefly described. But there is undoubtedly a great difference between, *Living Congregations of Jesus*, and the so-called *Christian religions*.

It is well-known, that to form a religion, nothing more is required, than that the members of it outwardly acknowledge some system of doctrine, and agree together about the mode of divine worship. If such a society receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the Word of God, and own Jesus to be the Messiah and Saviour of the world; they then constitute a *Christian Religion*. Such a religious constitution has of course, a greater or less number of regulations, tending to the promotion of truth and godliness; but among most of the religious societies, we shall find the following. They baptize the children of Christian parents. They afterwards instruct these children in the Christian doctrine, as soon as they are able to comprehend and learn any thing; and when their understanding is more open, they admit them

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to the Holy Communion, after they have given them some farther instructions concerning it. With all such as go to the same church, they have public meetings; in which they sing, pray, read, and discourse to them. None are excluded from the Lord's Supper, which is administered to the people, who have first signified their intention to the minister for that end, except such as are fallen into gross sins. For such as choose to enter into the state of holy matrimony, the banns are published in the churches; and after this they are given to each other in the name of God. If any persons dies, he is decently buried. Each parish, according to its extent, has one or more ministers; likewise one or more schoolmasters. They have also public schools, in which youth are taught and instructed, not in the necessary parts of learning only, but also in various useful languages, arts, and sciences. There are also schools of a still superior kind, in which youths are trained up for the public ministry, and in which they receive instruction for it.

These institutions have been gradually regulated in Christian countries, and the civil powers contributed greatly towards the establishment of them; nor can this honour be withheld from several bishops. We see clearly, that the good hand of God has evidenced itself in this affair; and that, amidst the degeneracy of the churches of Christ, he has caused an external church and religious constitution to take place, in order to prevent a total falling back into the state of heathenism. We are therefore not to despise such institutions, but

rather to look upon them as a great blessing of God, for the benefit of mankind. However, it is not to be denied, that, amidst these good external institutions and regulations, corruptions gained more ground from century to century, as well as in the Eastern as in the Western churches, which have now separated from each other, and formed themselves under the separate Heads. An incredible gloom, nay, a thick darkness, spread itself over the doctrine of the Gospel; because the Holy Scripture was not taken out of the hands of the people only, but was also totally forgotten by most of the ministers. In the worship of God, for the most part, they followed human traditions, and among all orders the most scandalous sins and vices prevailed; in which the clergy frequently distinguished themselves above others. At length, the judgments of God broke out, and Mahomet and his followers overspread a great part of those countries, which had enjoyed the Gospel till that time, but had not prized it.

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We must now, however, think, that the church of God, to which, in the true and proper sense, none but real members of the body of Jesus,
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the temples of the Holy Ghost belong, has ever at any time ceased to exist upon earth. For our Lord Jesus Christ, when speaking of the church, which HE himself hath built upon a rock (and HE himself is that Rock) avers expressly, that “the gates of hell” (that is, the devil and his adherents, the world with all its craft, power, and rage) “*shall not prevail against it.*” (Matthew 16:18.) It may indeed be impossible for any one to say, where the church of Jesus was at such a specified time, and under such and such circumstances. That great man of God, Elias, lived under the kings of Israel, who were, at that time, devoted to idolatry with so accursed a zeal, that all the worshippers of the one, only, and everlasting God were forced either to fly their country, or to hazard their lives: and in this case he believed assuredly, that none were left of the servants of the true God, but he himself alone. “Lord,” says he, “they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and *I am left alone*, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? *I have reserved to myself seven thousand men*, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.” (Romans 11:3-4.) We in like manner should think and believe assuredly, that even in the darkest times, the church of Jesus, the flock and sheep of his pasture, whom he knows, and unto whom he is known, who hear his voice, and follow him, and unto whom he giveth eternal life, has never at any time been prevailed against, and

quite extirpated. Our Saviour being “demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come? He answered them and said, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation (with outward show) neither shall they say, Lo here; or, lo there: for, behold! The kingdom of God is within you,” (or even now among you). (Luke 17:20-21.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Head of the kingdom, or the church of God, was then standing before the Pharisees, who put this question to him. His disciples, and other Jews who believed on him, were round about him; and these were the members of his church, or the kingdom of God. Therefore our Saviour could confidently say to them, The kingdom of God is within you, or even now among you. Oh, that *your* eyes were but open to see it! But they had a temporal kingdom in their thoughts, and for this they hoped; therefore it did not occur to them, that the kingdom of God was in Christ and the few that followed him. But it is sufficient, if the members of the church be surely known unto the Lord. “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, *The LORD knoweth them that are his.*” (2 Timothy 2:19.) Paul says to the believing Colossians, “*Your life is hid with Christ in God.* When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” (Colossians 3:3-4.)

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However, this is also to be observed, that God has not had his kingdom in secret only, but that he has also, from time to time raised up witnesses, who have publicly, and before every man, confessed the Gospel, and have been a light put on a candlestick, according to Matthew 5:14-15. These have been hated and persecuted by such, who, though called Christians, did not love the truth: nay, even those who were ordained bishops and public teachers, but loved and sought after the world, and that which is in the world, namely, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, treated them as open enemies. Yet their testimony has never been without fruit; and the promise of God has been fulfilled, “My word that goeth forth out of my mouth: shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11). Thus it has been at all times, as our Lord and Saviour has told us beforehand. (Matthew 13:3.) The sower sowed the word, and some seeds fell by the wayside; that is, there were people, who did indeed hear it, but not understanding it, the wicked one soon came, and caught away that

which was sown in the heart. (Matthew 13:19.) Some fell into stony places, where there was no sufficient depth of earth: these were people who heard the word, and received it with joy, but the word having not root in themselves, they believed for a while only, for when tribulation or persecution arose because of the word, they were as ready and hasty in being offended, as they had before been in receiving the word (and fell back again). (Matthew 13:20-21.) Some fell among thorns: these are they that hear the word: and the care of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this life, choke the word, and they become unfruitful. (Matthew 13:22 and Luke 8:14.) Some fell into good ground (that had been plowed and manured); and these were people, who, having heard the word and understood it, and kept it in an honest and good heart, brought forth fruit with patience. (Matthew 13:23 and Luke 8:15.)

But our Lord Jesus Christ did not raise up single witnesses only of the truth, among whom Peter Waldus, Wickliffe, John Huss, and others, are particularly distinguished; but did also often unite such, as were obedient to the Gospel, and form them into smaller or larger congregations, of which from time to time we meet with some traces: and in the Waldenses, and Bohemian-Moravian brethren, we have very striking examples of it. When a number here and there, kept together, out of love to Jesus, strengthening one another in faith, and provoking one another unto love, and to good works; they had then the experience of that word of the Lord, “Where two or three are gathered together in my
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name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20.) But such little churches seldom remained without being molested, and had, according to circumstances, more or less to suffer, agreeably to the words which were spoken to such churches, “that we must through much tribulations enter into the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22.) Ah! Had we but an ecclesiastical history, which, leaving out all those things that belong more to the world, than to the church of Christ in its proper sense, gave us a faithful account of the hidden ones of the Lord; of the witnesses of the Gospel; of the small congregations of Jesus Christ; and their order of succession, of which we have at present, but a few detached fragments! Such a church history would be inestimable.

After many witnesses of the truth had, in the preceding century, laid down their lives on account of their confession, without being able to overcome the opposition made by the enemies of the Gospel, God at length took pity upon these poor souls, who sighed under the intolerable oppression of their consciences; and awakened men at the beginning of the sixteenth century, who with boldness ventured publicly to encounter

the erroneous doctrines which had been hitherto, so shamefully propagated; and to hazard their goods, their lives, and fortunes, in support of the truth. Martin Luther, Philip Melancton, and their assistants, in Saxony; Ulrich Zuinglius, John Calvin, Bucer, and others, in Switzerland and France, were almost at the same time constrained by their consciences, and by the love of Jesus, to preach the Gospel in its purity. And as God did also turn the hearts of many sovereigns to forward this salutary work, and to protect the confessors of the truth; this gave occasion to that great event in the Western part of Christendom, which is called (and with good reason) the *REFORMATION*. For though we must allow, that under this Reformation, no such churches were produced, like those primitive Christian congregations in the apostolic times (which indeed was not possible, as whole countries and nations joined the Reformation at once) yet it is incontestable, that, through the grace of God, great advantages accrued by it to Christendom in general, and even to those churches which retain their old constitution. The Holy Scriptures were not only translated into the languages of each country respectively, and put into the hands of the common people; which the hearers could understand; and they sung at the same time edifying hymns. The schools and universities were reformed, and many new ones founded: and the consistories were, by their respective governments, enjoined neither to appoint, nor to tolerate ignorant teachers, or such whose walk was offensive. The greatest consequence however was this, that all the Reformers unanimously, with zeal and energy, urged and inculcated the fundamental doctrines of the holy Scriptures; namely, All men are sinners, and cannot deliver

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themselves from their wretched condition: Jesus Christ is the one only Helper and Saviour, who can and will help all those who come unto him: All men must be directed straightways to HIM: Nothing is of any avail but his blood of atonement: He that finds forgiveness of sins in the blood of Jesus, has life and salvation, and can live holily as a child of God, according to the Gospel: When each in his calling and station, whether he be man or woman, master or servant, parent or child, has God before his eyes, doing every thing he does in the name of Jesus, and also loves and serves his neighbour for Jesus's sake; This is the genuine service of God, and much superior to all self-chosen acts of worship. Thus taught these men of God; and had they not separated from each other about obscure questions, which did not belong to the essence of true Christianity, the blessing of their testimony would probably have produced more fruit. Yet even amidst these weaknesses God, graciously

owned their labours and that of their successors, and we, to this very day, enjoy the blessed consequences of the Reformation.

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The future state of the church of Christ, or of Christendom, may be collected from what Paul writes to Timothy, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come: For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” (2 Timothy 3:1.) Peter says, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” (2 Peter 3:3-4.) See Epistle of Jude, verses 18-19. Paul testifies also to the Thessalonians, “That day shall not come, except there come a falling-away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition: (Antichrist) who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God—whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved: and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 and 8-11.)

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Nevertheless, the church of Christ, which he has built upon himself, the rock, shall not, even at that time, be prevailed against and destroyed by the gates of hell. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ (the members of his body) shall arise first: then we, which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.) Then shall also the parable of Christ, concerning the net which was cast into the sea (Matthew 13:47) be fulfilled; and till that time Christendom will always remain a mixed multitude.

That Christendom, that is, all those who bear the name of Christ, and are called Christians, has been broken into several divisions, is evident from what has been already said. If each of these divisions that called itself a church, or congregation of Christ, was determined to adhere closely to the truths only with which it is entrusted, and to lead a life conformable to them, and continually endeavour to lessen errors and abuses, they might all subsist near each other, and yet not be in each other's way. But when each of these divisions of Christendom, presumes to think of itself, and to assert that is *The Church of Christ*, and the *only* church in which a man can be saved (which was indeed the claim of some in former times; and who, without being put to shame, can say that this way of thinking is laid entirely aside?) it then judges itself with great lenity, and others with great severity. Yet it is incontrovertible, that one division has a preference to another; that in one there is more truth of the Gospel than in another; that there are more hindrances in the way to the godliness that is in Christ Jesus, in one than in another; that the regulations and constitution are in one more consonant to the Holy Scriptures than in the other; the various errors, in opposition to the doctrine of Jesus, have a freer course in one than in another; that a greater restraint can be laid upon scandalous vices and sins in the one, than in the other. However, we may hope in God, that he will bring many a soul who hungers after grace, in each of these division of Christendom, into the way of life. For as in the idolatrous times of Elias he reserved seven thousand to himself, who had not bowed their knee to Baal, so also now, though the degeneracy be every where undeniable, who can doubt of his power to do the same again; and among all the divisions of Christendom to preserve his sheep, who knowing the voice of their good Shepherd, do follow him in simplicity and truth?

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We must not however under the pretext, that God has souls belonging to him, among all the several divisions of Christendom, run out of one religion into another, from a principle of indifference and levity: for instance, if a person, out of views which are wrong in the sight of God, should leave his religion, of the truth of which he is in general convinced, and adopt another, his conduct would certainly be displeasing to the Lord. For a perverse intention, not derived from love towards God, always renders an act sinful. This *conduct* is aggravated by the abuse of the name of God. For although he pretend, that it is done in the presence of God, from the conviction of the truth of the religion to

which he turns; yet he is after all, only seeking to obtain some post of honour, temporal advantage, or some such emolument, in which self-interest is concerned. But if any one changes his religion from a conviction of his heart, an impulse of his conscience, and in simplicity before God, we should then abstain from judging him.

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The souls, who are dispersed throughout the world, whose hearts are attached to Jesus Christ, who are partakers of the Holy Ghost, and worship the Father in spirit and in truth, are properly the body of Christ, the house of God, the flock of the good Shepherd, and belong to the kingdom of God. See ¶236. Here then a question arises, what are these dear people to do, in order to attain the views which our Lord Jesus Christ has with them? If they resign themselves as children to the guidance of the Holy Ghost, their chief concern is to abide individually, in the doctrine of Jesus, to understand the truth more and more, and to obey it faithfully. They cleave to Christ by faith; through him they come unto the Father, and the Holy Spirit maintains their fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. They next endeavour to find some one who is of the same mind with themselves, and who, like themselves, love our Saviour. When God raises up a companion on the way of life, they are thankful to him for it with all their hearts, and rejoice that they have some one with whom they can run their race in fellowship. Their hearts flow together in brotherly love; the one interests himself in the weal and wo of the other; they are helpful to each other in the growth, in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; they comfort, remind, exhort, and reprove one another with all fidelity. Are there still more with whom they can unite in the mind of Jesus Christ, the more pleasing it is to them; especially as they know, that our Saviour has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And, "If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my

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Father which is in heaven." Moreover, they well know, that they are to declare to others, and "to show forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light." Thus it is their concern to be useful to others, according to the grace and measure of the gift that is in them; and at least by their example, if not by words, to show others,

that it is the greatest of all blessings to know that God is gracious; to live in Jesus Christ, and to be a temple of the Holy Ghost; even though, on this account, we should be mocked and reproached, or endure still heavier sufferings for Christ's sake. Therefore when they see corruption in the constitution of the religion in which they live, it is no matter of indifference to them. Oh no! It is a most painful concern to them. But they bear this, which they cannot alter, and endeavour to imitate the patience of God, under such circumstances. That which they deem to be wrong, they do not; but what they know to be right, they do, for Christ's sake. To confess our Saviour and his word, and to suffer for it, is to them pure grace, if they consider the matter aright before our Saviour. They guard against a satirical and censuring spirit, because it is of no service; but, on the other hand they pray, and weep, and recommend his church to him, who is the Head of it.

Should, in any one of the Christian religious denominations, a number of people be found, earnestly intent upon becoming, in all respects, as much as possible, like the primitive churches of Jesus; and were they to unite together for this end, it would be undoubtedly an appearance in the kingdom of our Lord, at which we ought to rejoice. For should not souls who are come to him by faith to Jesus Christ, and have devoted themselves to Him, endeavour to obtain that true fellowship of heart and spirit, for which the apostolic churches are renowned? Whatsoever is written in the holy Scripture respecting the primitive churches, is certainly written for the doctrine and instruction of us all to this very day. This being presupposed, it will be useful to make the following observations upon this subject.

- (1.) A house of God, where "lively stones are (in the language of Scripture) built up together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (1 Peter 2:5 and Ephesians 2:22); that is, a congregation of God, whose members are, through the Holy Ghost, baptized into one body, is, as much as the creation of the world, a work of God, and not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth.
- (2.) Who would doubt that God is able to collect such churches at all times, and even in these last lamentable times, and to make them a city set upon a hill? Surely his hand is not shortened. But whether he will do it, no man can previously pretend to say. Oh that our eyes may be open to observe it, when it takes place!

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- (3.) We ought not to despise the small beginnings of a congregation, which discover themselves, on account of their apparent imperfections. A fine kernel is often found in the rough and tasteless shell.

- (4.) We ought not to look on a society as a new sect, who through the grace of God, unite in the faith of Jesus Christ, and in love to him, and to one another, upon the doctrine of Jesus and his disciples, and thus become a congregation in Jesus Christ.
- (5.) Such a little congregation of Jesus have certainly the same rights, which every laudable community, or society, every where enjoys, under the approbations and protection of their civil magistrates: that is, the society may regulate every thing among themselves, in such a manner as they find fitting. And these privileges, even the heathen emperors did not formerly refuse to the Christian churches.
- (6.) All the members of a church of Jesus are loyal, faithful, and obedient to the higher powers, under whose government they live, and as far as relates to civil life, are willing to remain on an equal footing with all their fellow subjects; and a good and wise magistrate leaves them, on the other hand, in an unrestrained participation and enjoyment of all those rights and immunities, which all subjects without distinction have in common with them.
- (7.) If the civil magistrate be a fellow-member of a living congregation of Jesus, he has the same privilege as any other fellow member in this community. But he has no power, merely as a civil magistrate, to govern this congregation, in respect to its *internal* course: for in this, the doctrine of Jesus and his apostles is the rule.
- (8.) No teacher, not even a fellow member, can be obtruded upon such a congregation; neither has any minister of it any further power, than the congregation itself has invested him with.
- (9.) But although a congregation, which is established according to the mind of the Lord, and by his own hand, cannot be refused the rights and immunities which are usually granted to every society, maintaining good order; yet it should always remember, through the grace of God, to make a proper use of them. For if this is not done, if it does not abide by the doctrine of Jesus and his apostles, if the mind of Jesus does not rule in it, if, without respect of persons, it does not put away that which is evil: it then deviates from the path of grace, and falls in the same manner as others have done before it.
- (10.) A wise civil magistrate always considers, that he is the minister of God. Therefore he, with all diligence and fidelity, and for God's
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sake, to whom he is amenable for all his conduct, maintains the doctrine, order, and constitution of the religion, of which he is, as

it were the guardian. But should any thing discover itself, in the country, under his jurisdiction, which seems to vary from the common course, in this case he ought to use every precaution and care, to prevent, on one hand, any thing of a pernicious nature from taking place; and on the another, that no obstacle be put in the way of any work of grace, which God may intend in Christendom; “lest,” according to Gamaliel’s expression, “*haply he be found even to fight against God.*” (Acts 5:39.)

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Among the extraordinary works of God in our time, we cannot but consider the building of some new places, by occasion of the emigration of some of the posterity of the *ancient Bohemian-Moravian Brethren*, from their native country, where many, concerned for their salvation in Christ, through a wonderful leading of God, met together, united with each other upon the doctrine of Jesus and his apostles, as contained in the holy Scripture, and delivered in the confession of Augsburg, and agreed together steadfastly to maintain good order and discipline. They regard themselves, as a small part of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth; and, under the protection of the governments under which they live, make use of that freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ purchased so dearly for them, and which he bestowed upon them, without any merit or worthiness of their own, to improve and edify one another, in such a manner as is agreeable to the word of God. And as they hold one and the same doctrine with the Protestant church, as far as it steadily adheres to the confession of Augsburg; so they find no reason to depart from it: and they believe, that they cannot, with justice, be separated from it, since the confession of Augsburg teaches expressly, *That the difference of rites and ceremonies doth not dissolve the union and communion of the church.* But how are the congregations of the Brethren to be looked upon? And how do they look upon themselves?

If the *congregations of the Brethren* are looked upon as so many institutions of our Lord Jesus Christ, raised up in his church, with a view of restraining the present rapid torrent of degeneracy in doctrine and practice, it would be wrong. Whoever considers them as an infirmary, in which our Lord Jesus Christ, as the only Physician of the soul, has collected a number of his poor patients under his healing care, that he may attend them himself, and that they may be nursed by his servants; has sufficient reason for it.

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If any one should ask, what can be said in reference to these little congregations of Christ? Possibly, the following may afford such inquirers some satisfaction.

- (1.) Among those things, which are good and valuable in the congregations of the *United Brethren* are the following: they endeavour to take special care of every individual soul belonging to them; by good order to prevent that which is evil; to grow and increase continually in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and at the same time daily to obtain a deeper insight into their own misery and corruption, and to preserve themselves from it in Christ; to put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness; and to be zealous of good works; and they are always to remember that all this is mere grace: for what would they be, if the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ did not keep them?
- (2.) They are never to forget how greatly defective they still are, and how much is expected of them in consequence of the grace which God already hath, and still doth daily show them.
- (3.) They are, at the hazard of their lives and fortunes, faithfully to maintain the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the crucified, in whose sacrifice and offering alone, grace and freedom from all sins is to be found for all the world.
- (4.) They must not be led away, in any wise, from that good order and discipline, which through the grace of God they have among them; but exercise it without any respect of persons.
- (5.) They ought zealously to endeavour, to the utmost of their power, to be in love, peace and fellowship of heart and spirit with all the children of God, who do not belong to their constitution: for this is required by the testament of Jesus. (John 17.)
- (6.) The congregations of the united Brethren have thankfully to acknowledge the labours of many servants of God, before their time, who for the good of the church, endeavoured to establish by their discourses and writings, a particular church reformation, which Luther certainly had in view, though he could not accomplish it: for it is certain, that the Brethren now enjoy, what such servants of Jesus have so faithfully laboured to prepare for them; and they are also obliged to the reformation, for the grace of having attained to a more clear insight into the Gospel, than is to be found in the ancient Moravian Brethren.

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- (7.) They must at the same time be courageous, and afraid of no man; for who can hurt them, if they be followers of that which is good, and if the Lord be with them?
- (8.) They are not to shun the reproach on account of Christ and his Gospel: for unto us it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; and this ought also to be their joy and honour.
- (9.) Their call is not to disturb the different religious constitutions; much less to make any person scrupulous about his own religion; but rather to lead all souls to Christ, not with words only, but also by their lives and conversation.
- (10.) At such times, when they have rest, they are to endeavour with prayer and supplication, and by a faithful use of his grace, that the same may be also verified in them, which is written in Acts 9:31. "Then had the churches rest, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."
- (11.) They are to seek the peace and benefit of the country, where the Lord has planted them; and to pray for it, approving themselves, as useful and obedient subjects of the government under which they live.
- (12.) And, as the Lord hath counted them worthy, and ordained them to go to the heathen also, and to bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain; their vocation ought therefore to be important to them, to humble them in the dust; and they should account themselves happy, when the Lord grants them the grace to die in the labour of gaining souls for the Lamb of God, who bore the sin of the world.
- (13.) Ah! Could we but say with deep humility, "*none of us* liveth to himself, and *no man* dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord." But as we know, that many a one still among us, cannot boldly affirm this of himself, we cannot but be concerned on this account, and will constantly labour, nay, be earnest in prayer and supplication, that there may not be one among us who does not prosper for the Lord.
- (14.) It should be their sole concern both by day and night, that our Lord Jesus Christ, and his holy and good spirit, may rule unrestrained among them; and that his dispensation of grace among them may be carried on, without any interruption, to the glory of their Father, who is in heaven.
- (15.) The congregations of the brethren ought to acknowledge the great preference, which is due to the churches, which enjoyed the ministry of the apostles. For they not only had many gifts of the Spirit, which

are now withdrawn from us, but they were also deigned worthy to be the first fruits of the new covenant, and to break the ice: and this

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furnished them with much useful experience, because faith and patience are often put to the test on this account. Besides they endured more frequent and severe sufferings, and therefore experienced also more consolation: Oh, how gloriously will they shine in the kingdom of the Father! The verbal instructions they enjoyed, they had from the mouths of men, who communicated what they received from the mouth of Jesus, and our Saviour imparted unto them a greater measure of his Spirit, because he placed them as the first persons in his church.

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Ye must still mention, that in such churches as, according to Luther's expression, "will work out their own salvation in good earnest," there may be, and commonly are, some things peculiar to them. Under this head we may select, The Foot-washing, the Kiss of Love and Peace, and the Use of the Lot.

(1.) Our Saviour washed his disciples feet, and said to them expressly (John 13:14); "*Ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*" And this repeats with the words in verse 15, "for I have given you an example, *that ye should do as I have done to you.*" That his meaning was to bring them from the vain thought, which was continually arising in them, "Who should be the greatest?" and to show them, that the greatest among them should be as the servant of them all, is plainly to be seen from the explanation which he gave them after the foot-washing: for there, he says (John 13:13-14); "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet:" that is, none among you ought to think it beneath him to wash the other's feet. For were he even the greatest among you (who are all brethren, and none among you shall be father, or master, or allow himself to be called so) yet he is not greater than I. Certainly I am your Lord and Master; and if I condescend to wash your feet, ought not ye much more to do the same?

But that our Lord and Saviour intended something more by this foot washing, is to be concluded from his conversation with Peter. For when he would not permit his Lord and Master to wash his feet, Jesus answered him (John 13:8); "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." And when Peter would in consequence have his hands and his head also washed, Jesus said to him, (John

13:10); "He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean, every whit: and ye are clean, but not all." John subjoins in verse 11, "For he knew who would betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean." If any one can find nothing further in these words,
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but an external washing of the feet, who would dispute with him? Indeed we find nothing in the Scripture of the New Testament, to show that the disciples of Jesus had in this particular followed the word and example of Christ. But who will for this reason peremptorily pronounce, that they will not practice it? Certainly they loved the Lord Jesus, and he says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." (John 14:23.)

It must not be however forgotten, that this foot-washing, which Christ transacted with his disciples, was different from the common custom of washing the feet among the Jews: for the Jews used to wash their feet before they sat down to their meals; because, not wearing shoes, as we do, their feet were therefore covered with dust. Wherefore our Lord Jesus Christ reminds the Pharisee, that when he came into the house, he had not given him any water to wash his feet, before they sat down to eat. (Luke 12:44.) But "Jesus riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." And John intimates twice in the same chapter, that this was done after supper (John 13:2); "after Supper," and in verse 4, "He riseth from Supper," without doubt for this reason, because it is upon this occasion to be particularly attended to.

(2.) Paul writes to the Romans, (Romans 16:16); "Salute one another with an *holy kiss*." See also 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:12, and 1 Thessalonians 5:26. And, (Peter 1 Epistles 5:14); "Greet ye one another with a *kiss of charity*" (or Love).

This act must certainly have been of importance to the disciples of Jesus, as it is repeated by them more than once. It was a custom not among the Jews only, but among other nations also, for one man to testify the love and regard he had for another with a kiss. Our Saviour, therefore, reminds the Pharisee, who had invited him to eat with him, that he had not received him with a kiss. (Luke 7:45.) Of consequence our Lord Jesus Christ would have accepted a kiss from the Pharisee. But it is however probable, that in the apostolical churches, besides the kiss usual in common life upon receiving or parting with one another, this kiss of brotherly love was made use of at their meetings. We may however conclude from the 2 Epistle of

John, verse 9, that this was denied to persons, who did not abide in the doctrine of Jesus, and were besides pernicious to others.

(3.) Respecting the *Lot*, we read (Acts 1:15) that it was made use of by the apostles, after an ardent prayer, at a meeting of about an hundred and twenty persons. This was after the ascension of Christ. Our dear Lord and Saviour, who had spent forty days upon earth

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after his resurrection, and, during that interval, conversed frequently with his disciples, might certainly have himself nominated some person for an apostle in Judas's stead; but he left it to his disciples; and thus was *Matthias* numbered with the eleven apostles *by lot*. Now, as the lot was made use of by men of God under the Old Testament, in the most important affairs which respected life; so did God also himself during that dispensation with the people of Israel, command it, for instance, at the dividing the land of Canaan.

Solomon says, "*The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.*" (Proverbs 16:33.)

Thus there is no doubt, but that the lot may be made use of in a church of Christ: but all depends upon this, that we know *when*, and *how*, it is to be used.

To make use of the lot in a matter which is already determined in the Holy Scripture, would be undoubtedly wrong. But it is a very different affair when the elders of a congregation, who take the good of the congregation in general, and of every fellow member of it in particular, under their consideration, are to form a conclusion upon some case, which is not decided in the Holy Scripture; and they wish for nothing more, than to know the mind of their Lord and Saviour, not trusting their own powers and insight, because they are very liable to err. For if, in such circumstances, they in confidence look up to the Lord, who is so willing to direct us aright, and pray to him from their hearts, that he would be pleased to let them know, *that* which is agreeable to his mind: he will not put them to shame. But it is to be understood, from the very nature of the thing, that they, to the utmost of their power, be obedient to the direction they thus receive from him.

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Having treated so fully of the Life of man, it is now proper to speak of the end of it, which we call *death*. That we must once die, whether we will or no, is evident to every one. But the Holy Scripture alone informs us of the cause of it. We are there told, that “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” See ¶52. And why hath death passed upon all men? For that all have sinned. (Romans 5:12.) Therefore, it is now according to the order established by God, that man should die; for he would not that man should eat of the tree of life, and live for ever; and for that reason he drove him out of Paradise. (Genesis 3:22.) For God found it good, and that is a sufficient reason. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27.)

Moses, the man of God, bemoaned the loss of 600,000 persons, who died in the wilderness in the space of forty years on account of their sins, as it may be plainly seen in the 90th Psalm. “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days (to reflect upon death) that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” (Psalm 90:10.)

Here the death of the Israelites, in the wilderness, was a particular chastisement and punishment of God (they did not reach the term of life to which they might have attained) and therefore the heart of Moses, the man of God, was so deeply affected by it.

Hezekiah having been sick unto death, the Lord informed him by Isaiah the prophet, that he should die; he then wept and prayed, for he was very anxiously concerned to obtain comfort, and his sins oppressed him. His prayer was heard. God showed tender compassion to his soul, forgave him all his sins, and added unto his days fifteen years. (Isaiah 38.)

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Hence it is clear, that although God has indeed fixed the term of life for man, yet he may, by his sins, as the Israelites did, cause it to be shortened: and that on the other hand this term of life may, for special reasons, as in the case of Hezekiah, be lengthened by God. Thus much we may always certainly believe, that no child of God, nor any servant of Christ, ever loses his life by chance. “Are not two

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sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father (without his will). But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” (Matthew 10:29.)

But on this occasion, we are to observe, that a man ought not to shorten the term of his life, which may certainly be done by self-murder. Seeing that murder (whether committed upon ourselves, or upon others) is a manifest work of the flesh, excluding us from any inheritance in the kingdom of God, according to Galatians 5:19, therefore each should pray to God to be kept by his grace from this, as from all other sins. But a man may also in another way shorten his life. Paul says (Corinthians 7:10); “the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

How many have shortened their lives by such means; how many by other violent passions; how many by intemperance; how many by shameful impurities; and by other wicked practices? Did not many, in the church at Corinth, shorten the term of their lives by sinning at the Holy Supper of the Lord; having been on that account chastened of God, partly by sickness, and partly by death? (1 Corinthians 11:28.) See ¶147. And did not Moses and Aaron die before their time, because they had transgressed against the Lord among the children of Israel? (Deuteronomy 32:50-51.)

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But what is properly death?--When, in this mortal body (Romans 6:12 and 8:11), the circulation of the blood and respiration are totally stopped, the body ceases to live. But the soul, which dwelt in the body, leaves it habitation, and now lives out of the body. That the soul lives after its separation from the body, is plain from the words of Christ, “Fear not them which kill the body, *but are not able to kill the soul.*” (Matthew 10:28.)

This is likewise confirmed by what our Lord Jesus Christ says respecting the rich man, and poor Lazarus. (Luke 16:19.) The poor man died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom; that is, into a place where he lived in fellowship with Abraham, in peace and joy. The rich man died also, and was buried; but came into a place of torment, where he suffered pain. This could not be the case with respect to his body, for it was buried, and was not yet raised up again from the dead. But the soul of Lazarus lived, and enjoyed in Abraham’s bosom, that is,

in his fellowship, peace and joy. The soul of the rich man lived also, was in a place of torment, and suffered

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much. Should it be objected, that this was only a parable, we grant it; but it more certainly establishes the position, that the soul died not with the body. For it is indisputable, that our Lord Jesus by this parable would signify, that we were not to look for happiness in riches and the pleasures of this life; for when a man dies, he immediately reaps the fruits of his walk and conversation upon earth. We are therefore to take great care of our souls; and for this reason, he says, “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26.)

When God is called the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (and he even gives himself this name in Exodus 3:6), our Saviour therefore concludes, “God is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.” (Luke 20:38.) How do they all live unto him? The souls all live unto him. And our Saviour, at the same time, testifies, that the bodies of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob, could not remain in death; but must rise again, because God is, and is called, their God; and they, as to the soul, live already unto him.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said to the malefactor upon the cross, who owned and confessed his sins, and believed him to be the Messiah, “Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43.) How so—this could not be the case with the body, that having been put to death. Our Lord Jesus Christ cried with a loud voice upon the cross, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke 23:46.) Thus he was put to death in the flesh, as to the body; but his soul could not be put to death: that went the same day into Paradise, and he took the soul of the malefactor with him. When Stephen was stoned on account of his testimony, he turned in prayer to Jesus Christ, and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” (Acts 7:59.) “And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge (that is, to the charge of the Jews who stoned him); and when he had said this, he fell asleep.” Thus was his body put to a violent death; but his spirit, his soul, which could not die, was received by Jesus Christ.

“Then shall *the dust return to the earth* as it was; and *the spirit shall return unto God*, who gave it.” (Ecclesiastes 7:7.)

By the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the act of dying is become very different with respect to those, who by faith are children of God. In itself it cannot be regarded but as the penalty for sin; “the wages

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of sin is death,” according to Romans 6:23, but the children of God may now esteem it as a favour and benefit. The reason of which is, that our Lord Jesus Christ has suffered death, as the penalty of sin, for all mankind, because all had sinned and deserved the penalty of death: and in his view the Scripture says, “If one died all, then were all dead” (2 Corinthians 5:14); it being as much as if all had been executed on account of their sin. See ¶70. Therefore the death of those, who believe in Jesus, and obtain an interest in his death, is no longer to be looked upon as a punishment, but as a preparation and ordinance of God, for our consummation and entrance into everlasting happiness. If we presume this, then the following words are very intelligible (2 Timothy 1:10); “Our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death,” or taken out its sting. (1 Corinthians 15:55-56.) For it now hurts us no more, nor can it hurt us: “for we which have believed do enter into rest.” (Hebrews 4:3.) By what means? By death. Therefore, says Christ, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying he shall never see death.” (John 8:51.)

What death shall he not see?--That death, which is the penalty of sin, of which all the world is so much afraid;--that death, of which the Jews had universally at that time such a dreadful notion; and which a Simeon only, and those like him, called “a department in peace.” (Luke 2:29.)

In our Saviour’s discourse with Martha it is said, “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.” (John 11:25-26.)

What kind of dying is here meant?--That which men suffer as a punishment for their sins; that dying which is a proof of the displeasure of God, when by death, men are plunged into still more horrible woe and misery. This manner of dying is certainly very different, from the death of such as believe in Jesus. But this will be clearer by the following words of Jesus. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24.)

What can this otherwise imply, but that the life, which is from God, and which springs up by faith, never ceases in the children of God,

even though the soul depart from the body?--This life is eternal; and we are not to wait for it, until we come to Heaven, but have it already in this world. Wherefore, to those who believe, that which is termed death, is no death, but genuine, true, and everlasting life; the life that comes from God continues in them. Thus he that "dieth

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unto the Lord" (Romans 14:8); "he that dieth in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13); he liveth, although he dieth; nor will his life ever end. And this is particularly the case, when any one, like Peter, "should glorify God by his death" (John 21:19); that is, when any one for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, loses his natural life. See Revelation 10:4. Therefore, the death of the faithful is only called, "A putting off this tabernacle," in which their soul dwelleth. (2 Peter 1:13-14.) In other places it is termed "falling asleep, a coming into peace, resting in the chambers, going home unto the Lord."

If, agreeably to this, we are able to say with Paul, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8): then we may be happy and confident even in our death. According to Proverbs 14:32, "The righteous hath hope in his death."

In this sense Paul says, "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present (or at home) with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8.)

And, "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." (Philippians 1:23.)

Oh how sweet are the thoughts of death unto us, and how do we long for the last hour in this vale of tears, when the death of Christ for us, is manifested to our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and our hearts burn with love to our Lord Jesus Christ!

But how wretched is the state of those unhappy men, who refuse to receive the grace of God in Christ, which is offered to us all in the Gospel; who spurn at this grace, choosing rather to live in sin, than to be redeemed and set free from it! To them death is actually death, and a passage out of one distress and misery into another far greater; and this misery is the more lamentable, because they willfully plunged themselves unto it. This is, I say, the dreadful end they have to await; and this end is, alas! But too certain. (Psalm 49:14, Romans 6:23 and 5:12, and Hebrews 9:27.)

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Our Lord and Saviour, a few days before his death upon the cross, spoke much with his disciples concerning the end of the world. He told them, that the costly temple at Jerusalem, which they so much admired, would be totally demolished, and not one stone left upon another. Some of the disciples asked him, Master, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? The reply he made, we find particularly taken note of in Matthew 24:1, Mark 13:1 and Luke 21:5; and we ought well to distinguish between that, which refers immediately to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the circumstances connected with it, and the words which relate to the end of the world. Although we might not be greatly mistaken, if we should apply much of this, as well to the one, as to the other: because it is probable, that the destruction of Jerusalem was figurative of the end of the world. For instance, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with suffering, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." (Luke 21:34.) Likewise, "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass." (Luke 21:36.) This is as applicable to the one as to the other. But the following passages from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, above cited, refer, without doubt, to the end of the world.

"There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon and in the stars:-- the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven. And upon the earth shall be distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but my Father only. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. Watch ye, therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning, lest, coming

suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all; Watch.”

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Whilst our Lord Jesus Christ was ascending up into heaven, his disciples were looking steadfastly after him, they were admonished by the angels in this manner, “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11.)

This remained deeply impressed upon the hearts of the disciples. And Paul says, among other things: “Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the LORD Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 3:20.)

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Thus did they wait for him. Peter said, “the end of all things is at hand” (1 Epistles 2:18); and Paul, “The Lord is at hand.” (Philippians 4:5.)

On this subject Peter exhorts us, “But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (2 Peter 3:8.)

Paul had written to the church at Thessalonica, “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (That is, at a time when we do not expect it.) For when they shall say, Peace and safety! then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.—Therefore let us know sleep as do others; but let us watch, and be sober.” (1 Epistles 5:1.)

As the church at Thessalonica had conceived upon this occasion, by means of various discourses and epistles, that this would come immediately to pass; Paul wrote the second time to them, and further explained himself, “We beseech you, brethren, by (or according to the G. T. concerning) the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit (that is, by pretended revelations) nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition: who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is

worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God (the church, or congregation of Jesus) showing himself that he is God.” (2 Thessalonians 2:1.)

Upon this he speaks further and more fully afterwards.

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The resurrection of the dead is connected with the coming Christ. Whoever, according to the Scripture, believes that God governs all things, and that men are especially the objects of his attention; and that under his government, nothing but wisdom, loving-kindness, holiness, and righteousness prevail; cannot possibly doubt of a future life, immediately after this; and will therefore believe with all his heart, all that which our Saviour and his apostles mention concerning the resurrection of the body. For, as men have here, either served the Lord, with soul and body; or with soul and body have sinned against him; therefore will the recompense also, which is certainly to be expected, according to the Scripture, relate both to body and soul. Our Saviour has illustrated this by the example of the rich man, and of poor Lazarus;--and how many similar instances do we not meet with in the present day. But as the heathen philosophers, when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, scarcely thought it worthy of the least attention (Acts 27:32); so neither had the Sadducees, who however, made no small part of the Jewish church, any greater liking to it. (Acts 23:8 and Matthew 22:23.) Although they could not make any reply to the arguments, our Lord Jesus Christ opposed to the irrational scruples which they advanced; yet they, after all, retained their own ideas. But we need not be surprised at this. For men, who are in love with sin, and yet believe, that God hates evil, and will sometime or other punish it, wish there may be no resurrection; and endeavour to persuade both themselves and others, that there is none, in order to get rid of the fear of it.

However, this must take its own course: we will only keep to that, which the Holy Scripture teacheth us on this head. Our Saviour says, “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” (John 11:25.) “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his (that is, the Son of Man’s) voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” (John 5:28-29.) Paul testifies, “I have hope toward God,--that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” (Acts 24:15.) Further, “We know, that he which raised up the

Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus.” (2 Corinthians 4:14.) “If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Romans 8:11.)

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the RESURRECTION of the DEAD.*

Hence it appears, that the resurrection of the dead is a work of God; and that Christ, by whom all things are created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible; who upholdeth all things by the word of his power; who gave himself a ransom for all; in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;--is also he by whom the dead shall be again raised up.

¶265

There are still some very particular words of our Saviour upon this head, which are to be taken notice of. For example, “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: *and I will raise him up at the last day.*” (John 6:40.) Again, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me to draw him: *and I will raise him up at the last half day.*” (John 6:44.) Likewise, “Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; *and I will raise him up on the last half day.*” (John 5:54.)

Here the resurrection of the faithful is promised as an especial privilege and prerogative; and yet, the unjust and evil doers will be also raised up from the dead. How are we to understand this? And, in what doth the privilege and prerogative of the faithful consist? First in this, they will rise first, and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. For so Paul speaks: “This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and *the dead in Christ shall rise first.* Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-16.) “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: *Christ the first fruits;*

afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end." (1 Corinthians 15:22-24.)

Secondly, they shall be all made like unto Christ, as well those who rise again from the dead, as those who shall still be here on earth at the time of his coming, and shall be changed. Of this it is said, "We look for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who *shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all

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things unto himself." (Philippians 3:20-21.) "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but *we shall all be changed*, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." (1 Corinthians 15:51-42.) "*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*" (1 Corinthians 15:53.) "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when HE shall appear, *we shall be like him*; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2.) "They that have done good, shall come forth unto *the resurrection of life*; and they that have done evil unto *the resurrection of damnation*," according to the words of Christ. (John 5:29.)

Thirdly, the faithful abide with Christ for ever, and shall become partakers of his glory. "We shall ever be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:17.)

This includes all happiness, and is the sum of all glory, that we shall see him, and be with him. If we moreover, combine and compare the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, and the twentieth chapter of the Revelations, we shall observe, that the one illustrates the other.

Of the GENERAL JUDGMENT.

¶266

After the Resurrection will be the *General Judgment*, of which it is said in the Scripture, “*GOD will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first (as greater despisers of grace) and also to the Gentile.*” (Romans 2:6 and 9.)

This must be explained by other passages of Scripture. Thus it is said, “*The Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*” (John 5:21-23.) “*The Father hath given him authority (to the Son) to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man.*” (John 5:26-27.) Thus the apostle Paul also speaks: “*God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.*” (Romans 2:16.) “*Jesus Christ is ordained of God to be Judge of the quick and the dead.*” (Acts 10:42 and 17:31.) See also 2 Timothy 4:1.

This judgment will be very glorious; for, “*When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall He sit upon the throne of his glory.*” (Matthew 25:31.) “*He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.*” (2 Thessalonians 1:10.) “*The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all.*” (Jude, verse 14-15.) As Paul also says, “*Do ye not know that the saints (believers) shall judge the world?--Know ye not, that we shall judge angels?*” (1 Corinthians 6:2-3.) See 2 Peter 2:4. Particularly shall the twelve apostles of the Lord, “*when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, sit also upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” (Matthew 19:28.)

John speaks likewise of this glorious majesty of Christ: “*I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.*” (Revelation 20:11.) And Peter testified on that day of the Lord, “*In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the words that are therein, shall be burnt up.*” (2 Epistles 3:10.) Adding farther, “*Seeing then that all those things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God,*

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wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2 Epistles 3:1-12.)

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Now, as the bodies of all men shall be raised up again from the dead, whether they have been sunk in the sea, or whether they have been interred in the earth; and as all souls shall return out of the regions in which they have been, either at rest and in peace, or in pain and torment, into their own body, which they formerly inhabited; so shall therefore all men appear before the judgment seat of Christ, as is manifest from the following passages of Scripture: "*We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*" (Romans 14:10.) "*We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*" (2 Corinthians 5:10.) "He shall sit upon the throne of his glory: and *before him* shall be gathered *all nations.*" (Matthew 25:31-32.)

However, believers, although they shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, will not be condemn. For our Lord says expressly, "He that believeth on the Son of God is not condemned." (John 3:17-18.)

And this our dear Lord and Saviour repeats, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and *shall not come into condemnation.*" (John 5:24.) And how could he be condemned? Are not all his sins forgiven him for the sake of Jesus? (1 John 2:12.) He, through faith, is become a child of God, and an heir of everlasting life: and the Holy Ghost was within his heart, the earnest of his inheritance.

The words of Jesus are particularly applicable in this place: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of *him* shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." (Luke 9:26.) "Whosoever shall confess me before men, *him* shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God." (Luke 12:8.)

¶268

As all things are naked and open before the eyes of our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore no man that ever did, or doth now, or shall hereafter,

exist in the world, can be hidden from him. To speak after the manner of men (for the Holy Ghost condescends to lay the divine transactions before us in such a manner, that they be, as far as is

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necessary, intelligible to us) it is thus expressed, “The books were opened;--and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” (Revelation 20:12.)

And whereas the Lord, our Saviour, is so righteous and holy; that it is impossible for him to pronounce any other judgment, but such as is most perfectly conformable to righteousness and holiness, every one will therefore be undoubtedly convicted in his own conscience, that no wrong is done him.

In general, it is said concerning this judgment (Romans 2:12); “*As many as have sinned without law* (this means the Gentiles, who had indeed no written law, but who, however, felt and knew within their own hearts, that which they should, and that which they should not do) *shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law* (these are the Jews, unto whom God gave the written law, and by it plainly informed them, as well what they were to eschew, as what they were to pursue) *shall be judged by the law.*” Likewise, “*He will take vengeance on them that know not God* (this means, such Jews, Turks, and heathen, who have not heard the Gospel, and who are not faithful even to that which they knew, or might know concerning God and his will; but act quite contrary to their knowledge) *and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,*” (this points at such as hear, or may hear and read the Gospel; but abide in their unbelief, choosing rather to serve sin, than to be redeemed and freed from it). (2 Thessalonians 1:8.)

In the day of judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, not only the counsels of the heart, but also the words and works of all men, will be particularly brought into remembrance. Of this, the Scripture speaks: “Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, *and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.*” (1 Corinthians 4:5.) “I say unto you, *that every idle word* that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” (Matthew 12:36.) “For the son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then *he shall reward every man according to his works.*” (Matthew 16:27.)

According to the words of Christ, (Matthew 25:31), the issues of this judgment will be, That besides the saints, and all the believers who come along with Christ,

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- (1.) All nations will be gathered together before our Lord Jesus Christ.
- (2.) Among these a division will be made, when the sheep will be set at his right hand; but those who do not belong to the sheep will be placed at his left: and, according Matthew 13:49, this will be executed by the angels.
- (3.) Then will our Saviour first address the sheep in a very friendly and consolatory manner: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25:34.)

At the same time, he will bring to their remembrance the good which they have done unto him, when he was either hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison. "Then shall the righteous answer him, saying Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee*? Or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? Or naked, and clothed *thee*? Or when saw we *thee* sick, or in prison, and came unto *thee*? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matthew 27:37-40.) He at the same time will own all his believers, in presence of all the holy angels, and before all men, that thy are his brethren, and joint heirs with him.

- (4.) Then will he address those who are placed at his left hand, in a way suitable to his righteousness and holiness; saying to them, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

On this occasion, he will remind them, that they have not observed and improved the opportunity, they once had of showing love and kindness to him. "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I

- say unto you, In as much as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.” (Matthew 25:42-45.)
- (5.) The issue then is, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” (Matthew 25:46.)

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¶270

If we take this all together, there are three sorts of men, who appear at this great judgment. First, those who rose first from the dead, and are caught up to meet him in the clouds (see ¶265), coming along with him to the judgment, whom our dear Saviour openly confesses as his brethren; and who are in so close a connection with him, that every thing which befell them he looks upon, as if it had been done to himself in his own person. Secondly, The sheep placed at his right hand, who are known to none but him. Thirdly, Those who are on the left hand, and go away into everlasting punishment. Upon this head, we have to notice the following:

- (1.) Those who stand at his right hand, and inherit salvation, have not obtained it by the merit of their works, but receive it for Jesus' sake, who became a sacrifice for them.
- (2.) The good which these people have done, flowed from faith, according to Hebrews 11:6, and from love which they had not in themselves, but by the grace of God. The following is applicable to them: “It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13.)

As certain as this is, so certain it is also, that God will judge all men according to their works; for the Scriptures plainly attest it, when for instance (Romans 2:5-6), after the righteous judgment of God has been spoken of, it is said, “Who will render to every man *according to his deeds.*” Again, “I, the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even *to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*” (Jeremiah 27:10.) “Unto thee, O LORD, belongeth mercy; for *thou renderest to every man according to his work.*” (Psalms 62:12.) “The Son of man *shall reward every man according to his works.*” (Matthew 16:27.) “*Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.*” (1 Corinthians 3:8.) “*Every one shall receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*” (2

Corinthians 5:10.) “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Revelation 22:12.)

Upon this head it is still to be observed: when our Saviour sent his twelve apostles unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he said, among other things, unto them: “Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city shake off the dust of your feet. Verily, I say unto you, *It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.*” (Matthew 10:14-15.)

Whence it is evident, that one man transgress more than another. The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were sins that cried unto heaven; on
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which account these cities were destroyed by fire and brimstone. The Israelites, unto whom the Gospel was preached, and who despised and spurned at it, transgressed, as our Lord testifies, still much more. Wherefore they have also to expect a more heavy and severe punishment at the last day, than that of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is certain, therefore, according to the word of God, that HE will punish every man according to his deserts. He that heaps up sin, heaps up punishment. He that transgresseth with horrible sins, will have horrible punishments to undergo: and in particular, “*He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy.*” (James 2:13.)

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¶271

The holy Scripture indeed mentions several things profitable for doctrine, respecting the everlasting torments of those, who are banished from the presence of God, and the eternal life of those chosen by God, but we must, however, confess, that the greatest part remains obscure; as we cannot deny, that many whose consciences are awakened, and who do not, at the same time, know our Saviour, may even here feel something of that torment, in which the damned will remain eternally; so, on the other hand, God, according to the riches of his grace, gives a man, who is covenanted to him, a foretaste of that happiness, which he shall enjoy with him to all eternity.

Who are those, who, according to the Scripture, shall not inherit life everlasting, or come into the kingdom of God, but shall be damned? In the first place, it mentions those, who live in manifest works of the flesh, who do not turn from them to God, do not receive JESUS in faith, but die in their sins. Thus Paul says, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they *which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*” (Galatians 5:19-21.) “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend (children of the wicked one, who ensnare and offend others) and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire.” (Matthew 13:41-42.) See verses 49 and 50. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10.) See Revelation 21:8. “Without (out of the city of God as described in Revelation 21:10) are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” (Revelation 22:15.)

Secondly, The Scripture mentions those who are like trees, which do not bring forth good fruit; who know how to do good, and yet do it not; who proceed in this wicked course; casting the faith in Christ from them, and therefore do not become new creatures, or, such trees as bring forth good fruit. This is the language of our Lord Jesus Christ: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no

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meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.” (Matthew 25:41-43.) “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” (Matthew 7:19.) See Matthew 25:30. “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he (my Father) taketh away.” (John 15:2.) “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them (such withered branches) and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” (John 15:6.) “For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy.” (James 2:13.) See Matthew 28: 23-34.

In general, the Scripture declares, that all these shall be damned, who having heard the Gospel concerning Christ, yet do not receive it by faith, and who are therefore not clothed on with Christ, whom we put on by faith (Galatians 3:26-27) and therefore cannot stand before God. “He that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:16.) “He that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18.) See verse 36. “When the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither *not having a wedding garment?* And he was speechless. Then said the King to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into the outer darkness.” (Matthew 22: 11-13.)

We must first add to this class those in particular, who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away and sin willfully, after that they have received the knowledge of the truth; and, as much as in them is, crucify to themselves the son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame, tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing, and do despite unto the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 6:4-6 and 10:26-29); for such there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. (Hebrews 10:26-27.) Now this takes place, not because their sin was greater than the grace of God; but because they reject Christ, in whom grace and forgiveness of sins are alone to be found, and do despite unto the Spirit of Grace, resisting him, when he would bring them back again to the knowledge of their sin, and to the faith in Christ:

for he that rejecteth Christ, has no other propitiation; and the wrath of God abideth on him. (John 3:36.) See also Revelation 14:9.

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¶272

Condemnation, or damnation, as has been said already, commences even in this life, with such as either willfully and wantonly spurn at the counsel of God, concerning their salvation, or act in opposition to that insight and knowledge of God, and of his will, which he has bestowed upon them. The Lord, our Saviour, says, "*He that believeth not is condemned already*; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 2:10 and 3:36.) "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but *the wrath of God abideth on him.*"

He that is already condemned, and upon whom the wrath of God abideth, is certainly in a damnable state. Here the word of Jesus is applicable: "Whosoever committeth sin *is the servant of sin*" (John 8:34); as also that sentence of John: "He that committeth sin *is of the devil*" (1 John 3:8); and of Paul: "To be carnally minded is death: because the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8:6-7); but they who are carnal, are also carnally minded.

Now, is any one a servant of sin, is he of the devil, is he an enemy of God, is he in death? Then is he also a lost man, and his own heart condemns him. If his conscience should be awakened, he also feels his misery and wretchedness, and can have no rest either by day or night.

But many men are like those who are drunk; and indeed they shout aloud, like drunkards, in the chains of sin, with which they are fast bound. Others are like men, who are sleeping in their misery; who are occupied with a dream of happiness; but upon their awaking find themselves in the most dismal condition. Again, others are like people that are insane, the one conceiting this, another something else, a third imagining himself a king. In a word, such men as have no life from God, either do not reflect at all upon the lamentable condition they are in, or if they see and feel it, stupefy themselves with the things of the world, to which their hearts are attached, making farther and farther advances every day on the broad road of sin. One aspires after grandeur, and his thoughts are like the wheels of a clock, which never stand still; for his mind is continually employed, both by day and night, how he may become great. Another wishes to amass wealth in this or the other way; and having proposed a certain sum to himself, which he would willingly

attain, can rest neither day nor night, until he obtains it, and then not satisfied, his insatiable desire leads him continually to wish for more: another seeks to feast the lusts of his flesh, and is in this quite insatiable. All his schemes and efforts are bent upon that, which

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gratifies his flesh only; nor is it possible to enumerate every particular, which the natural man, sold under sin, makes the scope of his actions, which he pursues with eagerness; and yet after all finds no true contentment.

¶273

When the souls of those, who have spent such a life of wretchedness, are separated from their bodies, they take all their corruption with them into eternity. They retain their idolatrous self-love, conceit of themselves, enmity against God, contempt and aversion to his commandments, discontent in his ways, inclination to evil, resentment against this and the other person, wrath, hatred, envy, unmercifulness and implacability, blindness and folly, erroneous sentiments and false judgments, impure fancies and filthy dreams, and every thing else of this kind. They cannot of themselves shake them off, since they did not come to Jesus Christ, who has alone the power to save and deliver us from our sins: their worm which gnaws, which plagues, devours, and torments them, that is, their evil conscience dieth not. And this our Lord Jesus Christ probably means by the words thrice repeated in one discourse. That thou mayest not “go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; *where their worm dieth not.*” (Mark 9:43-48.) It is a farther addition to the misery and wretchedness, which is already in them, and is even here an hellish torment, to find themselves eternally deprived of all that happiness, in which the faithful through Christ have an interest. They have no comfort in Jesus Christ, and in the sacrifice he has made for us; they do not taste how good and gracious the Lord is; they have no feeling of the peace of God, which poor sinners enjoy, and which passeth all understanding, they are separated from the joy in the Holy Ghost, with which the blessed of the Lord are everlastingly replenished; they are eternally deprived of the beauteous light, and the glorious lustre, in which they would have dwelt, had they not despised the grace of God; for they are cast out into outer darkness. (Matthew 8:12.) They have no share in the praises of God, with which the blessed of the Father in

Heaven employ themselves unwearidly (Revelation 7:9); for in the place where they are, there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 25:30 and 23:42.) They have no fellowship with God and his children, neither with the Holy Angels; for they are in the lake of fire, into which the devil, who deceived the whole world, is cast. (Revelation 20:10.) In brief, they must give up forever all that good, which they would have possessed, and which is the portion of the

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children of God, if the grace of God had not been tendered to them in vain. (Revelation 7:14.)

Thus they are in the most deplorable state, and, besides this, the Scripture says: That the cursed must go into “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matthew 25:41.) That “they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8.) That “they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” (2 Thessalonians 1:9.)

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The Scripture proves, beyond doubt, that everlasting life doth already commence in this world. Our Saviour says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath everlasting life.*” (John 5:24.) “Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, *hath eternal life.*” (John 6:54.) “*This life eternal,* that they might know thee the only true God (in contradiction to idols) and JESUS Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3.) “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the son of God *hath life.*” (1 John 5:11-12.) See John 3:36.

For when, through faith in Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven, we enjoy a quiet conscience and peace in our hearts. See ¶127. The anxious fear, or dread of God, ceases, and we, on the other hand, are disposed towards him as children; the galling yoke of sin and the devil is broken, and we are set free from the slavery of it; the Holy Ghost takes up his abode in us, replenishing us with love, peace, joy, and other good fruits; we come into a confident converse of heart with our Lord and Saviour, and HE gives us daily fresh proofs of his love and friendliness. Are we in want of any thing, are oppressed with any thing? In such cases we may boldly draw nigh to Him, and through Him, to our dear Father; and we may be assured (the Holy Ghost gives us this assurance)

that our prayer does not remain unheard: at the same time he gives our hearts the hope of future happiness. Whoever understands and experiences all this (but who is able to describe it all?) he also knows, that we have, in a certain measure, even in this vale of tears, life everlasting.

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But amidst all the grace we partake of, there are many heavy circumstances which still oppress us: such as,

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- (1.) That sinfulness in soul and body, which we ever retain, as long as we are in this tabernacle, even though sin hath not dominion over us.
- (2.) The constant danger to which we are exposed, of being tempted and overcome by the wicked enemy, who, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.
- (3.) The wicked world, with which the children of God must have intercourse, and which omits no opportunity of either enticing us to its own ways, or disturbing us in ours.
- (4.) The weakness of the soul and body, which, though not sin in itself, is often an hindrance to us in the service of God and our neighbour, and causes us much pain.
- (5.) Various other circumstances, which are combined and connected with this poor life; all of which we cannot indeed specify, but they often prove a burden to us.

Now, all these things, which, notwithstanding our state of grace, hinder us whilst we are in this world, from a full enjoyment of all blessedness, will cease as soon as we shall be eternally with the Lord: for,

- (1.) Our Lord Jesus Christ, as soon as the world is ended, will “make all things new.” (Revelation 21:5.) And Peter says, “We, according to his promise look for *new* heavens, and a *new* earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (2 Peter 3:13.)

Then, when all things shall become new, and when righteousness shall dwell in the new heavens, and upon the new earth, he will also in mercy deliver our souls and bodies, from that sinfulness which is still in us. This does not imply that we shall be deified. No, for we shall always remain creatures: but that we shall be set free from that sinfulness, which still weighs us down, is also evident from the

declaration of our Saviour, when he says, that “in Resurrection, we are as the angels of God in Heaven.” (Matthew 22:30 and Luke 20:36.)

- (2.) We shall have nothing farther to fear from the devil and his angels: for the devil, who deceived mankind, will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and will, without cessation, be tormented there for ever and ever. (Revelation 20:10.)
- (3.) The wicked world will have no intercourse with us, or we with it; for they will be banished from the presence of our Saviour into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels; and they shall go away into everlasting punishment. (Matthew 25:41-46.)

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- (4.) When we shall be as the angels of God in heaven, and when our bodies shall become like unto the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ; then the weakness both of soul and body, and all the pain, which they occasion, will also be at an end.
- (5.) The wretched circumstances, connected with the poor life we now live in this world, will also cease; for we shall be for ever with the Lord; and together with him, inherit all things. “We shall be heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17); and have “an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.” (1 Peter 1:4.)

What more can we want? What can give us the least pain and sorrow? In a word, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes (the eyes of his children) and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Revelation 21:4 and 7:15.)

Neither indeed will the things exist any longer, which cause sorrow, pain, crying and tears.

Moreover the believers, who then shall see the Lord face to face, shall not only there retain all the blessings, with which they were favoured in this vale of tears; but these shall also be incredibly increased. For example, Paul was possessed of an excellent knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, he says, “We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part, shall be done away.—For now we see through a glass darkly, but *then face to face*: now I know in part; but *then shall I know even as I also*

am known;” that is, as our Saviour now knows me, so shall I then know him, and every thing that is conducive to my happiness. (1 Corinthians 13:9-12.)

John says likewise the same, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when HE shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see *him as he is.*” (1 John 3:2.)

Having this knowledge, with every thing before our eyes, which we have hitherto believed, faith ceases, that faith by which we firmly adhered to that which we did not see; moreover, prophesying, by which we speak to one another “to edification and exhortation, and comfort” (1 Corinthians 14:3) will also cease: but love (or charity) will (1 Corinthians 13:8), not only never fail, or cease, but continue with an ardour, resembling the love of God and Christ.

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But when we speak of the glory and salvation, which shall be the portion of believers in life eternal, though we have indeed many an imitation of it in the Holy Scripture; yet we must always agree with Paul, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9.) See Isaiah 64:4.

For even that, which God sometimes permits his children to know of his glory (as indeed the Scripture speaks of persons, “who have tasted the powers of the world to come,” Hebrews 6:5); and Paul says, “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit:” the things which “eye hath not seen nor ear heard” (1 Corinthians 2:9-10); yet it is only a reflection of it; and it remains beyond our reach in this time: neither could we be able to bear it. All the glory we shall have with Christ, will cause us great joy: but we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, that we shall see with our eyes our Lord Jesus Christ, whom, according to 1 Peter 1:8, having not seen, (here) yet believing, we love. For “we shall ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:17); “we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2.)

We poor sinners, unto whom it is given, by grace, to believe in Jesus Christ, to love him, and to serve him, shall in truth experience what he has said. (John 12:26.) “*Where* I am, there shall also my servant be:” also, what he has obtained for us by prayer: “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.” (John 17:24.)

All this glory and bliss will be our portion, not for the sake of any merit, or worthiness of our own, but out of pure grace for Christ's sake. "For by grace are ye saved (says Paul) through faith; and that *not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works*, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9.) And, God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation *by our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:9.) The same is confirmed by the following words: "Though He were a Son (the son of God), yet learned He obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect (he said, *It is finished!*), *He became the Author of eternal salvation* unto all them that obey Him," (in faith). (Hebrews 5:8-9.)

With this the following passages of scripture harmonize: "This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and *believeth on him, may have everlasting life.*" (John 6:40.)

Having laid down his life for his sheep, it is now said of them: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and *I give*

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unto them eternal life" (John 10:27-28): yet all in this sense, "He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life.*" (John 3:36.)

From the words of Paul, "there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:41-42); we may infer, that, even in the reward of grace, which God will bestow upon his children in eternal life, there will be a difference. They will all inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, as the blessed of the Father. (Matthew 25:34.) Moreover, they will be *all* of them for ever with Christ, and Christ will change and glorify their vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body: and all this by grace for Christ's sake. Yet will a greater glory be given to one than another; perhaps on account of one having suffered much more than another in this world, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; or on account of a greater fidelity in the application of the grace and gifts bestowed upon him. See Matthew 10:41-42.

Finally, these words (Galatians 6:7-9) are to be taken due notice of: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh (that is, doeth the will of the flesh) shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit (that is, acts according to the mind of the Spirit) shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with us all.

A M E N!